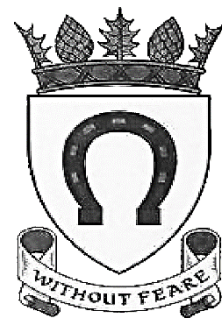


**MINUTES OF A GENERAL MEETING OF
DORNOCH AREA COMMUNITY COUNCIL (DACC)
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 2022
IN PERSON AT DORNOCH HUB & VIA ZOOM**



PRESENT

Patrick Murray – PM (Zoom)
Jerry Bishop – JB (Acting Chair)
Genevieve Duhigg – GD
Davie Macbeath – DB
Jimmy Melville – JM
Graeme Ross – GR
Lesley Strang – LS

IN ATTENDANCE

Jim McGillivray – Cllr – JMc; Leslie-anne Niven – Cllr – LN (Zoom)
Gordon Sutherland – C4C – GS; Prof David Bell – DB; Nicola Drummond – ND (Item 5)
Tom Dargie; Andrew Mackay; John Campbell (Zoom) plus one other (Item 5)
Morven Urquhart – MU; Joyce Everitt – JE; (Item 6)
PC Steven Clarke – SC (Item 15); Matthew Gallon (Zoom – Dornoch Firth 3-18 Campus)

PLEASE USE THE LINKS IN THE HEADINGS (WHERE APPLICABLE) TO ACCESS CORRESPONDING DOCUMENTATION.
FULL DOCUMENTATION IS AVAILABLE [here](#)

| | | |
|-----------|---|------------|
| | | |
| 1. | APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies understood from Yvonne Macrae (YM) | |
| 2. | DECLARATION OF INTEREST None were intimated. | |
| 3. | ADOPTION & ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (21/9/22) The minutes of the last meeting here were proposed by PM as an accurate account of the meeting and seconded by GD. Prior to this, the meeting moved to cover Items 5 & 6 (Visitors & Planning application 22/04650/FUL) before proceeding with the rest of the agenda from Item 4. | |
| 4. | MATTERS ARISING (NOT OTHERWISE COVERED IN AGENDA – (NUMBERS RELATE TO THE LAST MEETING POINT)) | |
| a. | Item 6; Planning – JB confirmed that he has set up a Facebook page to explain the role DACC plays in the planning process. As regards the applications relevant to Pitgrudy and The Meadows, PM stated that consultation has been requested. There was subsequent discussion on control areas and place plans. | |
| b. | Item 8; Provost's Robes and Chain – PM indicated that there had been as yet no response to his letter but would take up the matter in due course with the Ward Manager in the first instance. GR commented that the documentation he had researched provided clear evidence as to possession of these items. | PM |
| c. | Item 14(b) from September minutes – GR asked for an update on the fate of the Free Parking sign at the Eagle and the Parking sign at Trevose. JMc | JMC |

| | | |
|----|--|-----------|
| | replied that local Roads Officers had no knowledge of this, and the matter was to be pursued with Shane Manning. | |
| d. | Item 14(d) – Burghfield Steps – JMc had paid a site visit. In general, the steps were in reasonable order but there was a small stretch of wall which needed attention. It was left open as to how this would be addressed | |
| 5. | VISITORS | |
| a. | <p>GS introduced this item by stating it was a courtesy visit, that the Golf Course application would be submitted shortly, and that a further attendance would be requested thereafter.</p> <p>ND summarised planning progress to date, that an in-depth assessment of the documents pertaining to the previous application had been carried out, and that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was in its final stages. She said that considerable changes had been made to the course design in view of the Reporters' 2020 comments and that the footprint of the course had been considerably reduced to accommodate these criticisms.</p> <p>DB highlighted the primary economic features: the current huge demand for golf worldwide, the alignment with current Scottish Government policies as there had been no recovery since Covid, the place of golf clusters in Scotland, the National Strategy for Economic Transformation, and Scotland's part amongst international Wellbeing Governments. He identified the 5 different types of capital, the problems the area faces through depopulation and skewed demographic structure and emphasized that in his opinion the new course would be highly successful.</p> <p>The Chair thanked GS, ND & DB for their submissions and assured everyone that there would be future opportunities for more discussions once any planning application had been submitted and validated by Highland Council.</p> | |
| | | |
| | ITEMS FOR DECISION | |
| | | |
| 6. | PLANNING & LICENSING APPLICATIONS here | |
| a. | <p>22/04650/FUL Erection of 12 units at Croft Pedde</p> <p>MU was aware of the 6 plots but said that 12 units was an excessive development especially as land levels were above those in Elizabeth Crescent and asked if 2 storey houses are necessary for an ageing population.</p> <p>JB noted the recently appended sectional view which showed finished floor levels 18" higher than the base of the boundary wall.</p> <p>After further discussion, PM requested that an extension be asked for, but JB recommended seeking a consultation on this application and that was the decision of the meeting.</p> | JB |
| b. | <p>22/04977/FUL Planning Renewal for House at the Pillars</p> <p>No comment to be made</p> | |
| c. | <p>22/04488/FUL Change of use in Wallace Street</p> <p>There was considerable discussion over this application with PM urging a consistent approach to this type of application, JM pointing out that the shop had closed years ago, whilst GR was clear in his objection. The final decision was to request consultation.</p> | JB |
| d. | <p>22/04273/FUL House at Lednabirichen</p> <p>No comment to be made</p> | |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|------------|
| e. | 22/04256/FUL Accommodation unit at Cyderhall Cottage No comment to be made | |
| 7. | FUNDING APPLICATIONS | |
| a. | DACIC Common Good Application here and here PM spoke to the email he had previously circulated and stated that this application would be money well spent. The following points were made in response: GR – a complete waste of money in view of MUGA at the school PM – the school closes around 4pm and at weekends GD – both facilities needed especially for NHC students and local sports groups. Community consultation has been thorough, and she is totally in favour JM asked if this would cause any delay for the new community centre, but JB stated that this would cause no delay DM said that the more that was happening the better LN pointed out that the cost of the Helmsdale MUGA was over £400K JB said that the project also depends on £50K from the Coastal Communities Fund. When put to the vote, the motion in favour of supporting this application was passed by 5 votes to 1. | |
| b. | Extra Item – Beinn Tharsuinn Fund The Chair stated that this was a late application from the Community Garden Group for £400 to create a wild-life orchard. PM said that in his opinion this should have gone to the Common Good Fund. JB approved the application but agreed that any award should come out of the Common Good as the Beinn Tharsuinn Fund had always been reserved for applications from out-with the burgh. | |
| ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION | | |
| 8. | FINANCE UPDATE JB stated that there was little to report and that the update here should be taken as read. He raised the issue of the Zoom licence and asked that a third contribution come from the DACC account. This was approved. | JB |
| 9. | PROJECTS UPDATE | |
| a | DACC MAINTENANCE PROJECTS here JB has been informed that it is not advisable to plant rose bushes at this time and that Spring would be better. He added that an application was going to the Common Good for Xmas Trees. It was agreed that it would be expedient to use the £958 roses money for this purpose. | JB |
| b | HIGHLAND COUNCIL PROJECTS JMc spoke to the attached report here which updated the situation as regards Council projects which still needed attention. He still has to organise a walk-round with the Roads Officer but that will be done shortly. The identity of the new Planning Officer responsible for the haul track at the Springfield development has yet to be clarified. | JMC |

| | | |
|------------|---|-------------------|
| c | DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS PM summarised the situation applying to Voluntary Charging at the Beach, and that the new RDGC lease was pending. Seagull Control – LS stated that there would be no benefit unless tried. GR asked where exactly the problem was. JM commented that it could be costly. PM pointed out that there might be more opposition in the context of Bird Flu. JB noted that the Invergordon cull had been halted. LS was asked to make enquiries about the experience of Invergordon and Inverness and to report back. Dog Waste – this had become more obvious at the Airfield and at Camore, and that there is a need for more bins. DM and LS to follow up. | PM, LS, DM |
| 10. | COST OF LIVING CRISIS GD gave an update on the funding opportunities to support community efforts. PM noted that work was under way across Dornoch to provide warm hubs and noted the initiatives of DACIC, the West Church Hall and the Free Church. JB noted that the Dornoch Firth Group was applying to DTAS for funding. | GD |
| 11. | ROADS AND PATHWAYS | |
| a. | This item was held over to the December meeting. | |
| 12. | PARKING IN THE SQUARE In the ongoing absence of the Council Parking Officer this was deferred to a future meeting and to be kept on the agenda. | GD |
| 13. | EXCEPTIONS TO “NO PARKING” IN THE SQUARE This was also held over till the December meeting. | |
| 14. | XMAS LIGHTS PM mentioned that the new lights work and that volunteers are required to do the necessary preparation and erection. | PM |
| 15. | POLICE REPORT here Police Officer Steven Clarke was welcomed to the meeting. He stated his intention to attend more meetings. He reported that there had been 30 calls in Dornoch, which involved assisting other agencies, medical matters and online fraud. He also indicated that sextortion was a growing problem. JB raised the issue of speeding traffic, road racing and 20mph enforcement. SC replied that warnings can be applied to both car and person, and that complaints can be reported by calling 101 or via the Police website. | |
| 15. | CORRESPONDENCE | |
| a. | Relevant correspondence can be found here | |
| 16. | AOCB | |
| a. | JM and LS raised an issue with Grange Cottage, but the meeting was informed that this had been dealt with. | |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| b. | JB mentioned the Coastal Erosion at Golspie document circulated at the request of Dr Dargie. No action to be taken at this point. | |
| | | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">THE MEETING CLOSED AT: 21:05</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WITH NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO DISCUSS, THE CHAIR EXTENDED HIS THANKS TO THOSE WHO ATTENDED AND CLOSED THE MEETING.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING IS STATED BELOW.</p> | | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 21ST DECEMBER 2022</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LOCATION: HYBRID: ZOOM & THE DORNOCH HUB</p> | | |

| Ref No. (LINKS) | Description | Public | | Recommendation |
|------------------------------|--|---------|---|--|
| | | Comment | Notes | |
| 22/04650/FUL | Erect 12no dwellings - North Of Croft Pedde Court Dornoch | 3 | Discussed at Nov meeting - consultation received, response expected | Request alternative design for houses 3-8 is explored (e.g. 1½ storey) to reduce ridge heights |
| 22/04488/FUL | Change of use from shop to domestic Wallace Street, Dornoch | 0 | Discussed at Nov meeting - consultation received, response expected | Object - loss of valuable commercial space for use as office/shop/workshop |
| 22/05297/PNO | Prior Notification for enlargement of Camore Woods Car Park | 0 | Prior Notification only | No comment |
| 22/05641/FUL | Installation of 2 new oil tanks & screen wall to rear of Dornoch Hotel | 0 | Affects Burgh Gardens | No comment |

LINKS

[Town Centre Strategy](#)
[Conservation Area](#)

Dornoch Area Community Council
Financial Report
1 April 2022 - 15 December 2022

| Dornoch Community Funds | DACC Account <i>(Note 1)</i> | Common Good Fund <i>(Notes 2-4)</i> | Beinn Tharsuinn <i>(Notes 5 & 6)</i> | Totals |
|--------------------------------|--|---|--|--------------------|
| Opening Balance | £4,183.56 | £244,250 | £6,980.21 | |
| Add: Income | £10,302.67 | £58,950 | | |
| Less: Outgoings | -£9,328.19 | -£54,489 | -£400.00 | |
| Closing Balance | £5,158.04 | £248,711 | £6,580 | £260,449.25 |

| | | | |
|---------|-----------------------|------------------|---|
| Note 1: | CC - unreserved funds | £3,879.65 | £958 for rose bushes/Xmas Trees + £320 for Treasure Walk brochure |
| | CC - reserved Funds | £1,278.39 | |
| | Total | £5,158.04 | |

Note 2: *Managed by Highland Council on behalf of the Residents of the Royal Burgh of Dornoch.*

Note 3: *Balance is DACC Treasurer YE estimate based on latest information from Highland Council (November 2021)*

Note 4: *DACC Dornoch Common Good Fund 3-year Cash Flow forecast can be seen [HERE](#)*

Note 5: *Held by Beinn Tharsuinn Trust on behalf of all IV25 residents subject to complying with the terms of the Trust.*

Note 6: *Balance at 16/11/2022 per Ward Manager*

Dornoch Area Community Council

Cash Movements

1 April 2022 - 15 December 2022

| | | | | Unrestricted | Restricted | Total |
|------------------------|-----|-------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Opening Balance | | | | £3,735.40 | £448.16 | £4,183.56 |
| Income | R1 | Common Good Fund Grant | Xmas Tree lights | | £ 5,789.76 | |
| | R2 | Dornoch Trust | Repayment of Loan | £ 2,000.00 | | |
| | R3 | Highland Council | Revenue Grant | £ 677.91 | | |
| | R4 | Highland Council | Common Good Maintenance Grant | | £ 1,835.00 | |
| Outgoings | P1 | HSBC | Bank Charges | -£5.00 | | |
| | P2 | The Dornoch Trust | Loan | -£2,000.00 | | |
| | P3 | Keep Scotland Beautiful | Beach Award | | -£360.00 | |
| | P4 | HSBC | Bank Charges | -£5.00 | | |
| | P5 | Calico | Internet | -£28.80 | | |
| | P6 | SoloPress | Signage (Cemetery) | | -£76.76 | |
| | P7 | Mackay & Co | Accounting | -£180.00 | | |
| | P8 | HSBC | Bank Charges | -£5.00 | | |
| | P9 | Blachere Illumination | Xmas Tree lights | | -£5,789.76 | |
| | P10 | HSBC | Bank Charges | -£5.00 | | |
| | P11 | Jimmy Melville | War Memorial Centenary Celebration | -£189.50 | | |
| | P12 | HSBC | Bank Charges | -£5.00 | | |
| | P13 | HSBC | Bank Charges | -£5.00 | | |
| | P14 | Woodland Trust | Trees for Queens Green Canopy | | -£443.70 | |
| | P15 | Solo Press | Dibond Signs (Toilets & Car Parks) | | -£124.31 | |
| | P16 | HSBC | Bank Charges | -£5.00 | | |
| | P17 | Jimmy Melville | Remembrance Day Wreath | -£42.40 | | |
| | P18 | HSBC | Bank Charges | -£5.00 | | |
| | P19 | J. Bishop | Zoom subscription | -£47.96 | | |
| | P20 | HSBC | Bank Charges | -£5.00 | | |
| Closing Balance | | | | £3,879.65 | £1,278.39 | £5,158.04 |

Dornoch Area Community Council**Outstanding requests to Highland Council (HC) and other authorities****As at 12th.December 2022****Action points in blue bold.***Progress since last update in green italics*

| Date request lodged | Request details | Follow-up responsibility and Priority | |
|---------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| May 2020 | REPAIR GAP BETWEEN RAILING AND BRIDGE WALL There is a dangerous gap between the railing and the wall of the wooden bridge beyond the Medical Centre. | JM to get quote | |
| August 2020 | “NO THROUGH ROAD” SIGN NEEDED ON CHURCH STREET BETWEEN NO. 8 AND KERRISDALE <i>Brian Fraser originally agreed we can pay for and put up a new sign but now HC may do it themselves..</i> | HC | |
| January 2021 | UNEVEN PAVEMENT OPPOSITE FREE CHURCH | JMc Priority B | |
| March 2021 | PRONCYNAIN CEMETERY RESTRAINERS HC's Shane Manning is reviewing all Cemetery car parks in the Highlands and Proncynain is included <i>In the meantime the 4 signs DACC installed have been at least partly effective.</i> | JMc Priority A | |
| March 2021 | PRONCYNAIN CEMETERY EXTENSION Working on extension <i>Hoping to complete early 2023</i> | JMc Priority A | |
| Apr 2022 | ROSE PLANTS <i>We have bought rose plants for several Burgh locations.</i> Plant in spring 2023 | DACC | |
| Apr 2022 | REGULAR DACC MEETING WITH ROADS OFFICER BRIAN FRASER First DACC meeting held with Brian Fraser: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OK for DACC to pay for and put up no entry sign at Carnaig Street (<i>Brian changed his mind on this see above</i>) • Ok for DACC to pay for and put up sign for no campervan parking beyond playpark. (<i>Brian changed his mind on this too. Now working through Shane Manning</i>) • Brian agrees DACC/DACIC should ask Shane for a square stencil mark at bus park saying Bus Stance 10 minutes <i>Done</i> | HC DACC/DACIC | |
| July 2022 | Temporary Haulage Road: Poles Road to Springfield Still awaiting approval from Highland Council Roads department | JMc | |
| July 2022 | Dornoch Square Toilets PM has notified HC's Debbie Sutton and Sharon Barrie about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious shortcomings • Asking for more information in relation to HC's suggestion to DACC to take over these toilets | DACC | |
| August 2022 | Repair holes in Road: Castle Street at junction with Sutherland Road. <i>Repaired</i> | Done | |
| Oct 2022 | Jimmy's point about improving roads around North Street ‘Maybe 2024-5’ | HC | |
| Oct 2022 | Back bank steps need tidying up and minor repairs | JMc | |

Dornoch & District Community Council (DACC)

Updates on matters outstanding from previous meetings as at 10/12/2022

Action points in blue bold.

Progress since last update in green italics

1. Proposal to address car and motorhome parking at Beach

Highland Council's Shane Manning is working on a proposal which will be put to Community Consultation shortly.

PM to chase Shane Manning re:

- 'No campervan parking ahead' road-signs warning **before** the top car park
 - Jerry is progressing this with Brian Fraser
 - **Consultation for voluntary charging for bottom 2 car parks**
- Still no progress

2. Springfield site

PM discussing with Stuart Morrison (SM) the following:

- Possible new access at Poles Road. Springfield are in principle agreeable to this and will:
 - **Draft plan of possible access points and possible road configurations and**
 - **Seek regulatory approval ASAP**
 - SM have lodged application for planning permission. *HC still have not approved after 11 months.*

3. RDGC contract

Signature of RDGC lease contract should be imminent but this has been true for 6 months.

4. Seagulls

Seagulls are causing problems including becoming aggressive with residents. Lesley Strang has identified a company that will remove eggs from nests that are particularly inappropriate for the town. However we were not fast enough to get Common Good Funding this year.

Review and agree exactly where we need to remove eggs and make formal application for Common Good Funding in September well in time to put in place the removal in spring 2023.

5. Dog-poo problem

YM and DM to identify exactly where they want bins and/or what other action they wish to be taken.

6. Clean up and repair Dornoch Burn

Davie MacBeath to chase a quote from contractors.

Items outside DACC's responsibility other than liaison with other Groups:

7. Meadows

A subcommittee of the Meadows Trust is working on a plan to replace the existing buildings.

Still no progress.

Ongoing items

8. Path by 2nd.Green at RDGC

RDGC now acknowledge that the path is a right of way and have agreed to clear that part of the path which is on the land they lease from Dornoch Common Good. **Matt Dent visited and RDGC agreed what is required adequately to maintain the path on the land they lease from Dornoch Common Good as:**

1. Path towards Embo beside 2nd Green:
 - a. Cut path to a width of 1.5 metres so that it never dwindles to a width of below 1m.
 - b. Ensure that path beside 2nd green is kept flat by a one-off grading scraping below the surface to remove roots etc. and then maintain the flatness thereby achieved on an ongoing basis.
 - c. Consider moving the path so maintained midway between the wall and the old 'right of way' path. However location is really up to RDGC to decide.
2. Path towards Embo from second Green to end of Common Good Land:
 - a. Cut path to a width of 1.5 metres so that it never dwindles to a width of below 1m.
 - b. Consider improving the path by levelling it however some Common Good contribution would appear appropriate to do this because the meaning of the word 'maintenance' is unclear.
3. Path towards Embo on RDGC's own land: no obligation to maintain. However public volunteers and/or the Common Good has a right to improve/maintain if it wishes to.

See emails of 1st.July and 4th July 2022.

From: Maxine Smith (Councillor) Maxine.Smith.cllr@highland.gov.uk 
Subject: RE: Dornoch Community Council - Seagull Management
Date: 6 December 2022 at 13:37
To: lesley lesley@lesleystrang.com

MS

Hi

We did a nursery reduction scheme in around 2017/18- we removed with cherry pickers and a licensed firm from Glasgow about 200 nests in early April then again in June. It was very effective and culled the population for 2 years, with year 1 being a noticeable reduction. We did houses in Invergordon and Alness. It cost £14000 at the time.

Cheers,
Maxine

From: Lesley Strang <lesley@lesleystrang.com>
Sent: 06 December 2022 13:31
To: Maxine Smith (Councillor) <Maxine.Smith.cllr@highland.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Dornoch Community Council - Seagull Management

CAUTION: This email was sent from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Maxine thanks so much for taking my call today.

I look forward to receiving your summary email on your experience

All the best
Lesley


LESLEY
STRANG
• event production •

M: 07709 823291
E: lesley@lesleystrang.com
W: www.lesleystrang.com

On 17 Nov 2022, at 10:43, Lesley Strang <lesley@lesleystrang.com> wrote:

Good morning Maxine

I hope this finds you well?
I am contacting you on behalf of Dornoch Community Council to gauge some more information on your seagull management plan you put in place.

From: Janice Worthing janice@inverness.uk.com 
Subject: Inverness Gull Programme
Date: 7 December 2022 at 09:27
To: Lesley Strang lesley@lesleystrang.com

JW

Hi Lesley,

It was great to talk to you last week.

Inverness Background

In response to concerns expressed by the public, councillors, and businesses at the number of gulls in the Inverness area and the mess and disturbance they were causing, in late 2011 Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot) were approached and asked for advice on what could be done to reduce problems in this area.

Inverness BID had undertaken the original review of other gull managements schemes including liaising with the successful programme in Dumfries. BID was asked to deliver an egg & nest removal programme in both Inverness city centre and the outskirts as part of an intervention

Outcome

Over the years the programme has been extended to include additional properties in Carsgate Industrial as well as the Longman and the city centre.

Following the initial programme in 2012, both the Inverness Common Good Fund and BID have continued to support the programme 66.6% : 33.3% basis.

It is stressed that without intervention the number of breeding gulls were projected by NatureScot to continue to grow by 7% annually.

It is recognised the Inverness Gull Programme has been successful and effective in reducing the growth in the Gull population in the City and surroundings.

It is important to note that no evidence has been found of Gulls relocating to nest into the residential areas of Inverness where of course they are often seen seeking food.

Summary

As previously stated, it has always been accepted that to control and seek to reverse the growth of gull population that had occurred over so many years, intervention in the gull breeding cycle by annually removing/destroying eggs would need to be undertaken for the long term.

During the 2021 breeding season we were able for the first time have a plane go up and take some ariel shots of all the roofs in the central Inverness area. A detailed review of each photograph was undertaken to find any additional breeding nests which we hadn't been aware of – this enabled us to identify nests which were impossible to view via our foot surveying previously undertaken (at high vantage point at each area) that were hidden against roof plants etc. which we included in our 2022 programme.

Preparation

- December Quote from licensed Pest Control (we use Northeast Pest Management – Derek Ross)
- December Inverness Common Good Fund application made
- End of February start of March Gulls pair off
- Into March Gulls can be seen sitting in pairs
- Mid March list put together of potential nesting buildings/premises
- Late March meeting with Pest control
- Start of April licence applications for each premises filled out and sent to NatureScot
- Permission from each building/premises required for access
- End of April/start of May annual survey of area
- First weekend May removals start
- Removals continue every 14 days until 4 x visits
- Throughout each removal numbers recorded
- End of programme egg & nest numbers submitted back to NatureScot for each individual licence

Inverness table

| GULL NUMBERS 2012-2022 | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------|--|
| YEAR | NESTS | EGGS | PROPERTIES | |
| 2012 | 620 | 1339 | 26 | |
| 2013 | 789 | 1610 | 33 | |
| 2014 | 474 | 1145 | 45 | |
| 2015 | 709 | 1753 | 49 | |
| 2016 | 976 | 2433 | 56 | |
| 2017 | 643 | 1683 | 57 | |
| 2018 | 551 | 1507 | 59 | |
| 2019 | 704 | 1456 | 53 | |
| 2021 | 627 | 1357 | 47 | |
| 2022 | 987 | 2098 | 72 | |

Kind regards,

Janice Worthing

Inverness BID Ambassador
Telephone – 01463 714550





Company Number - SC339914

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The Highland Council
c/o The Highland Council
Per Mr Dale MacDonald
Council Offices
84 High Street
Dingwall
Scotland
IV15 9QN

Please ask for: Sheila Tomelty
Direct Dial: 01408 635375
Our Ref: 22/01912/NDOM6
Your Ref:
Date: 6 December 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

BUILDING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2003
DEMOLITION OF HOUSE AT JANITOR'S HOUSE, EVELIX ROAD, DORNOCH, IV25 3HR

I refer to your application for building warrant and enclose warrant No. **22/01912/NDOM6** along with one set of the plans docquetted with the reference number. You should note that it is a condition of the warrant that the works have to be in accordance with the building regulations.

Please be aware that it is not the function of the building standards surveyors (BSS) to act as clerk of works. The responsibility rests with the relevant person (see notes) to ensure works are carried out, not only in accordance with the regulations and the approved plans but to the standards which they seek in relation to quality of workmanship, materials and finishes, and consideration should be given to the need for independent professional advice during construction phases.

BSS will carry out targeted inspections in accordance with the **Construction Compliance and Notification Plan (CCNP)** (enclosed) and your help is important to us for its completion. Please arrange to notify this service as early as possible of any inspection that the CCNP identifies to be carried out.

Once you are in a position to commence works a **Notice Regarding Start of Work** (Form J) should be completed and submitted, and if the services of a Certifier of Construction have been indicated in your application and a fee discount given then a **Notice of Intention to use an Approved Certifier of Construction** (Form L) must also be completed and submitted.

Any forms that you require to notify us are available online via the ebuildingstandards.scot Portal by visiting <http://www.ebuildingstandards.scot> – If you are unable to access and submit forms to us online using the Portal, you can also access printable forms via our website by visiting <https://www.highland.gov.uk/ebuildingstandards> or you can contact the Service Centre via the telephone number below to request a form to be sent out to you by post. Any paper forms should be submitted by post to our eProcessing Centre, Highland Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX.

A **Completion Certificate Submission** (Form 5) must be completed, signed, dated and submitted when work is complete and ready for inspection. An electrical test compliance certificate may also be required and must confirm the installation has either been tested or installed by a qualified electrician and complies with BS 7671 as amended. In addition, for new buildings a copy of an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) and sustainability label should be provided, the originals being fixed within the building. Other certificates may be required for a new building, as indicated on your CCNP and Completion Checklist. Also may I draw your attention that it is your responsibility to request a postal address from the Council prior to the completion of a new building, this can be requested online on our website <https://www.highland.gov.uk/CAG>

Your views are important to us, please take a moment to share your experience in the national customer

satisfaction survey for building standards.

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/BuildingStandardsNationalSurvey/?la=Highland>

Yours faithfully

Sheila Tomelty
Principal Building Standards Surveyor

BUILDING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2003
BUILDING WARRANT

This warrant is granted by the Highland Council in connection with the application by:-

**The Highland Council per The Highland Council Per Mr Dale MacDonald Council Offices 84
High Street Dingwall Scotland IV15 9QN**

Dated **16 November 2022** for the **Demolition of house** at **Janitor's House Evelix Road Dornoch
IV25 3HR**

The reference number of this warrant is **22/01912/NDOM6**

The following conditions will apply:-

1. That the work involved will be carried out in accordance with building regulations, and that from the date of commencement of work the demolition will be completed within **4 weeks**.
2. That the work will be carried out as described in the building warrant and in accordance with building regulations and that nothing in any drawing, specification, or other information submitted with the application indicates that the building when constructed will fail to comply with building regulations.

A copy of the agreed plans is returned.

..... **Glenn Campbell** (Signed) for the Highland Council

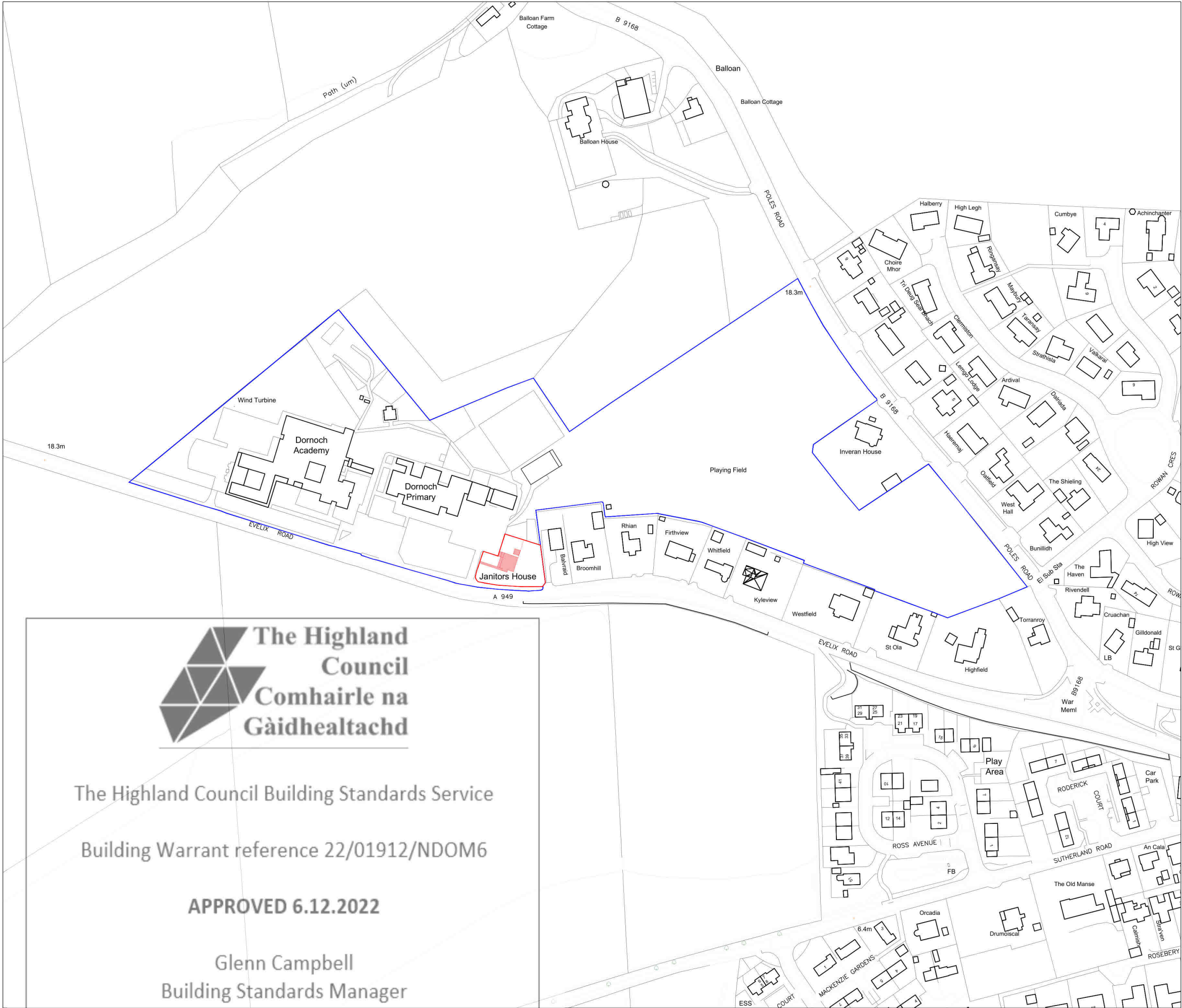
Dated: 6 December 2022

WARNING

1. A BUILDING WARRANT DOES NOT EXEMPT YOU FROM OBTAINING OTHER TYPES OF PERMISSION THAT MAY BE NECESSARY E.G. PLANNING PERMISSION OR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT. CONSULT THE LOCAL AUTHORITY IF IN DOUBT.
2. THE ISSUE OF THIS BUILDING WARRANT GIVES NO GUARANTEE OF THE STANDARDS OF WORKMANSHIP CARRIED OUT ON SITE. APPLICANTS ARE THEREFORE STRONGLY ADVISED TO ENGAGE THEIR OWN PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS AT ALL STAGES OF CONSTRUCTION.
3. IT IS AN OFFENCE TO USE OR OCCUPY THE BUILDING(S) BEFORE EITHER OBTAINING AN ACCEPTANCE OF THE COMPLETION CERTIFICATE OR PERMISSION FOR TEMPORARY OCCUPATION HAS BEEN OBTAINED (UNLESS THE WORK IS FOR ALTERATION ONLY).
4. THIS WARRANT IS AN IMPORTANT DOCUMENT THAT MAY BE REQUIRED DURING PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS, AND SHOULD BE KEPT IN A SAFE PLACE.

Notes

1. This warrant is valid for **3 years**. A completion certificate must be submitted when the work is complete, however if a completion certificate is not going to be submitted within the 3 year period, an extension of the duration of the warrant must be applied for before the original warrant expiry date. For demolitions, an extension must be applied for if the period for demolition specified on the warrant will not end within the 3 year period.
2. Once you are in a position to start works reference should be made to the **Construction Compliance and Notification Plan (CCNP)** which is provided with this document.
3. Note that you must send a copy of the CCNP to the owner of the building if different to the applicant. And you should also make sure the contractor is aware of the CCNP and the notification arrangements, etc. that are necessary for its successful completion.
4. Once all the works are completed a **Completion Certificate Submission** (Form 5) must be completed, signed, dated and submitted to this service by the person who is either the applicant or agent named in this warrant or the actual building owner who is the relevant person. Authorisation of any other party who may be making the submission must be clearly indicated on Form J.
5. To be considered as a limited-life building, expiry must not be more than 5 years from the relevant date, which is the date of notification of acceptance of the completion certificate for the work, or the date of any permission for the temporary occupation or use of the building before acceptance of the completion certificate.
6. For construction, the stages specified in the procedure regulations are –
 - a) Construction of foundations, or
 - b) Such other stages as the Verifier considers appropriate having regard to any guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers
7. For demolition, the stages specified in the procedure regulations are –
 - a) Isolation and removal of services, fixtures and fittings,
 - b) Isolation and protection of adjacent structures, or
 - c) Such other stages, appropriate to the method of demolition, as the Verifier considers appropriate having regard to any guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers.
8. It should be noted that where the owner is not the applicant, then the Verifier will notify the owner of the grant of the building warrant as is required in terms of section 9(7)(b) of the Building (Scotland) Act 2003.



Dornoch Academy - 1:2500

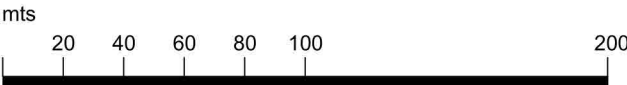
Address: Dornoch Academy, Dornoch,
Evelix Road, IV25 3HR

Easting: 278,879 Northing: 889,959

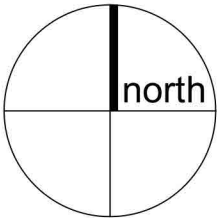
Key:

Denotes Highland Council Ownership

Denotes Site Boundary



Scale 1:2500



The Highland Council Building Standards Service

Building Warrant reference 22/01912/NDOM6

APPROVED 6.12.2022

Glenn Campbell
Building Standards Manager

| Rev. | Description | By | Date |
|------|-------------|----|------|
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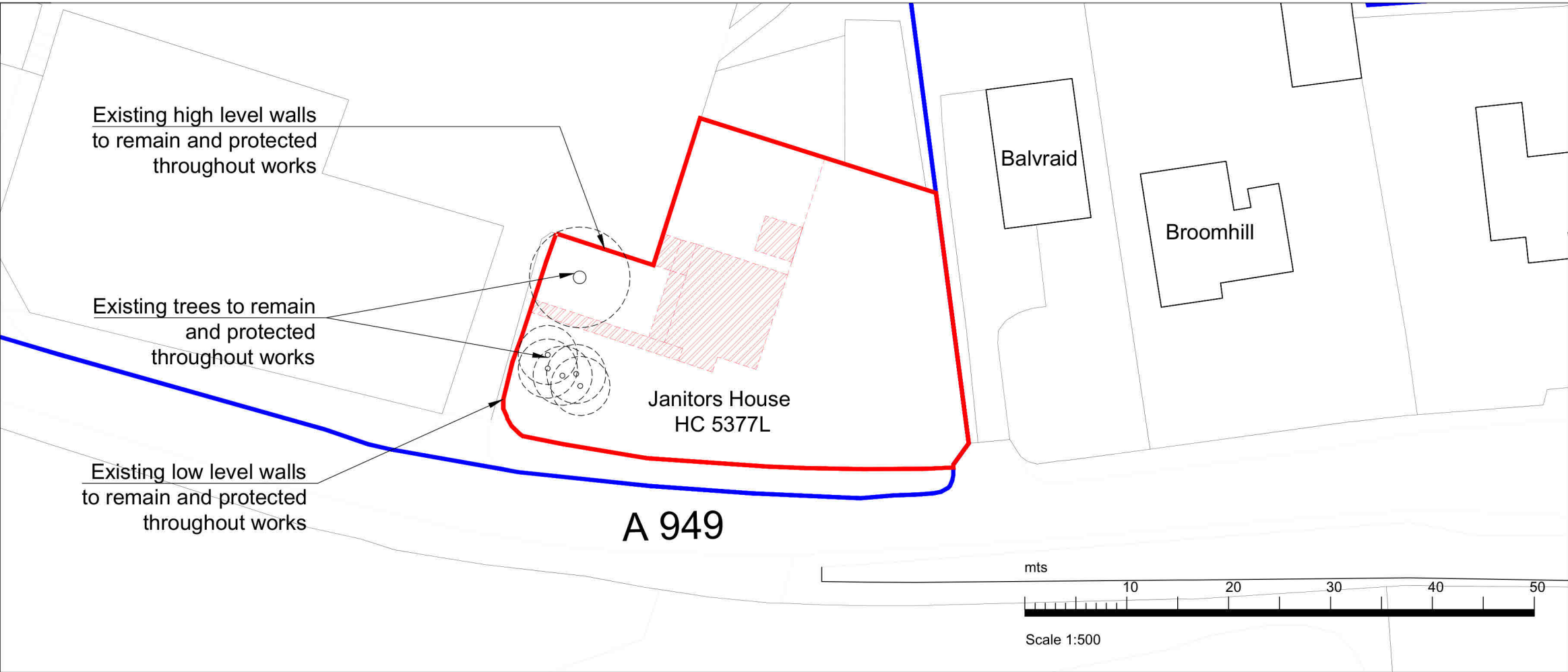
Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. The Highland Council 1997 LA09036L



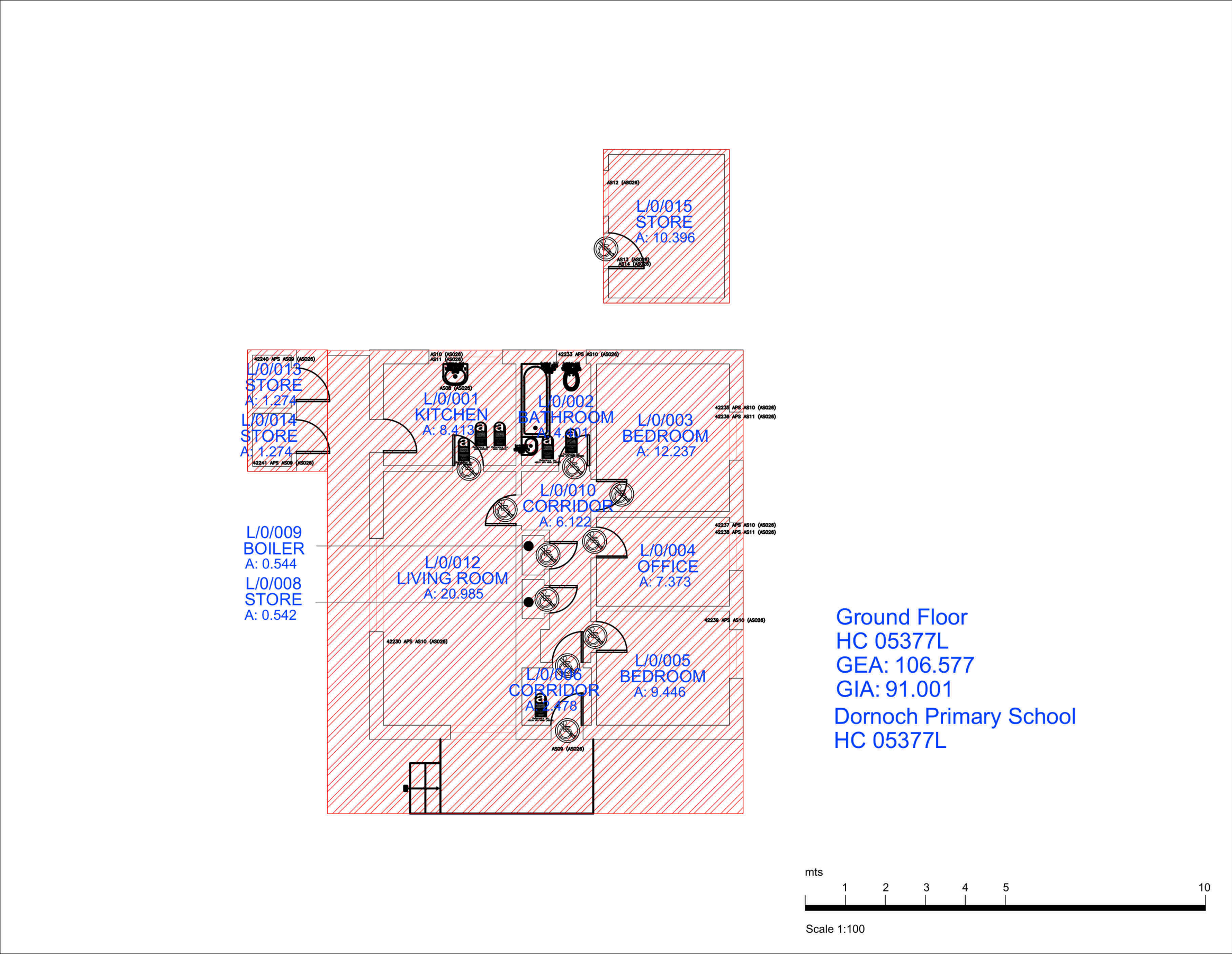
HOUSING AND
PROPERTY SERVICE

| | | | |
|------------------|--|------------|---------|
| CLIENT | Development & Infrastructure | SCALE | 1:2500 |
| PROJECT | Dornoch Academy - Demolition of Janitors House | DATE | Nov '22 |
| CONTACT | Dale MacDonald | DRAWN BY | DM |
| DRAWING TITLE | Location/Block Plan | CHECKED BY | |
| PURPOSE OF ISSUE | WARRANT | PAPER SIZE | A3 |

| PROJECT NUMBER | ORIGINATOR | VOLUME OR SYSTEM | LEVELS AND LOCATIONS | TYPE | ROLE | CLASSIFICATION | NUMBER | REV |
|----------------|------------|------------------|----------------------|------|------|----------------|--------|------|
| DIP22045 | -THCPR- | ZZ | - XX | - DR | - A | - Ac_25_20_24 | - 0001 | - 00 |



Site Plan - 1:500



Existing GA Plan - 1:100

Dornoch Academy - 1:2500

Address: Dornoch Academy, Dornoch, Evelix Road, IV25 3HR

Easting: 278,879 Northing: 889,959

Key:

Denotes Highland Council Ownership

Denotes Site Boundary

Denotes Building/ Outbuildings to be demolished

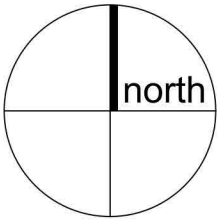


Image 1 - Janitors House, Entrance

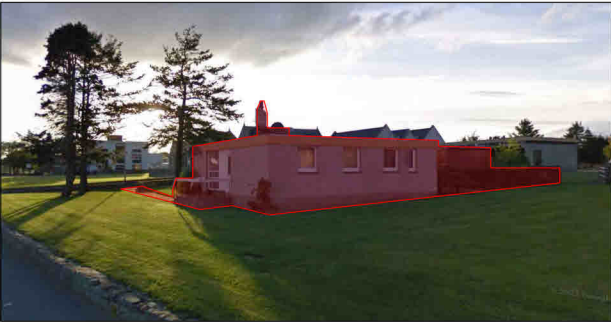


Image 2 - Janitors House, Rear View



The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

The Highland Council Building Standards Service

Building Warrant reference 22/01912/NDOM6

APPROVED 6.12.2022

Glenn Campbell
Building Standards Manager

NOTES

Prior to demolition: A method statement will be provided by the appointed contractor, in compliance with BS 6187:2011. As well as a developed Demolition Plan, and Risk Assessment appropriate to the project. These will be passed to building control on completion of the vetting and acceptance procedure. To comply with Regulation 13: Protective fencing will be erected to exclude the public from the works areas. To comply with Regulation 14: The contract with the Demolition Contractor will require the cleaning of the areas adjoining the site and the suppression of dust during the demolition process. To comply with Regulation 15: The contract with the Demolition Contractor will require the contractor to keep the works safe and secure as far as is reasonably practicable. Please refer to Refurbishment/Demolition Asbestos Survey report. If any ACMs are identified during the works the contractor will remove and dispose of any ACMs with safe practice and procedure. The Special Waste Amendment (Scotland) regulations 2004 apply and will complete a Hazardous Waste Consignment Note. Existing services: Electrical, telecom and water supplies to the areas to be demolished will be disconnected locally. Contractor is to isolate water and appropriately cap off supply. The contractor will undertake a full services survey of the works are using service location device operated by a suitable qualified person with all locations clearly marked. Bat survey: A fully bat survey has been conducted - please see the following document for results: DIP22045-THCPR-ZZ-XX-SU-Y-0001. Construction: 1960's era traditional block built single storey presumed double block cavity wall with flat roof clad in bitumen felt with solid concrete floor. The building has been derelict for a number of years. Once begun it will be a continuous operation to be completed in two weeks. Existing drains are to be grubbed up or capped off as appropriate, demolition to be down to and including foundations with all visible contaminants and sharp objects removed. All foot paths and steps around the building to be removed. All materials will be removed from site and safely disposed of with the remaining ground to be contaminant free in line with subsoil BS 8601:2013 Note 2 and topsoil BS 3882:2015 Note 3 - Attention is drawn to the Environmental Protection Act 1990[1] (EPA) and to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[3], under which there is a requirement for subsoil to contain no concentrations of chemical contaminants that would cause a significant risk to human health and the environment. Post demolition: The footprint area of the former classroom block will be compacted and finished level with existing ground levels, ground will need to be raked, soiled and seeded for grass.

| Rev. | Description | By | Date |
|------|--|----|----------|
| 1 | Development & Infrastructure | DM | Nov 2022 |
| 2 | Dornoch Academy - Demolition of Janitors House | DM | Nov 2022 |
| 3 | Demolition Plan | CH | |
| 4 | Warrant | | |

| PROJECT NUMBER | ORIGINATOR | VOLUME OR SYSTEM | LEVELS AND LOCATIONS | TYPE | ROLE | CLASSIFICATION | NUMBER | REV |
|----------------|------------|------------------|----------------------|------|------|----------------|--------|-----|
| DIP22045 | -THCPR- | ZZ | -XX | DR | -A- | 00 | -0002- | 00 |

The Highland Council Access Rangers

Annual Report 2022

Season Summary

In 2022, the Council employed 18 Access Rangers, patrolling large areas across the Highlands and 4 Visitor Site Wardens focussing on key visitor hotspots. There was a phased intake of staff from 1 April to 1 June with staff numbers increasing as areas became busier. Eleven of these posts, which started in June, were funded by the Better Places Fund administered by NatureScot. The seasonal employment ended on 30th October 2022.

Over the summer, there appeared to be an alternating pattern of a busy weekend followed by a quieter one. Key weekends were exceptionally busy, coinciding with bank holidays and schools breaking up and returning. The Glasgow Fair weekend had a very noticeable impact in Lochaber. The weather also acted as a key determining factor in visitor numbers.

This year there was a higher percentage of European registered vehicles, and an increased numbers of coach tours. Whilst the vast majority of visitors welcome the advice and information from the Access Rangers there still continues to be a high number of irresponsible and occasionally confrontational behaviours encountered.

Data was collected by the Access Rangers whilst patrolling on three days per week, the key points to note include:-

- The areas with the highest informal camping numbers and associated problems, particularly fires, litter and toileting, continue to be North-West Sutherland and Lochaber, with Loch Ness and South Skye not far behind. East Lochaber, Caithness and Loch Ness were far busier than last year. Forty-seven abandoned tents were found, most commonly in Loch Ness, East Lochaber and South-West Ross. Over 7,377 off-site tents were recorded this year compared with 8,639 last year. Whilst there is a decrease in the total number this is still far higher than was evident pre-pandemic.
- High recreational vehicle (RV) numbers were recorded in Lochaber and Skye and around the NC500. A total of 35,993 were recorded this year, compared to 25,000 last year. This figure includes roof-top tents as well as motorhomes and campervans
- Fire marks & damage are most commonly found around Loch Ness (480) and East Lochaber (685). Over 3300 fire marks were recorded Highland wide, slightly lower than 2021 (3463) with 93 fires put out by Rangers (183 in 2021) that may have posed a risk of spreading.
- The problem of blackwater toilet waste dumping was most often found in North Sutherland and Lochalsh. **Sixty two** incidents Highland wide have been recorded.
- Lochalsh continues to suffer from high levels of outdoor toileting issues. This contrasts with its lower camping numbers and so may often be due to people stopping to relieve themselves in laybys rather than overnighting.
- Parking issues appear most prevalent in North-West Sutherland and Skye, with most warning notices issued for inconsiderate or obstructive parking. Chanonry Point, in the Black Isle area, recorded a high figure as a Warden is on site who issues reminders for non payment of the parking fee. In total, 782 notices were issued Highland wide.

- The number of dogs seen not under control was highest in Inverness & Nairn, although that will likely include exercising on beaches. It is perhaps more of a concern in crofting areas in North Wester Ross and South Skye, if on common grazings.
- The Rangers collected nearly 2050 bags of litter to date, reported 219 waste/fly tipping issues and 62 incidents of motorhome waste dumping.
- To the end of October, the Rangers have engaged with 28,500 people mostly to inform them of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and facilities available.

The presence of the Access Rangers has had a significant impact in reducing the irresponsible or inconsiderate behaviour of many visitors and potential causes of distress to Highland communities and other visitors. With Access Rangers patrolling countryside sites, their presence increased compliance within Invitation to Pay car parks, increased responsible behaviour and the work that they carry out in removing litter and immediate repairs ensures ongoing visitor enjoyment of our countryside, increasing the likelihood of repeat visits and positive reviews to increase the economic benefit gained from tourism.

This summer some of the Access Rangers were filmed by TV company Purple Productions for a series on the North Coast 500, to be shown on Channel 4, in spring 2023.

The Seasonal Access Ranger Team Set-up & Operation

The Rangers job description was to;

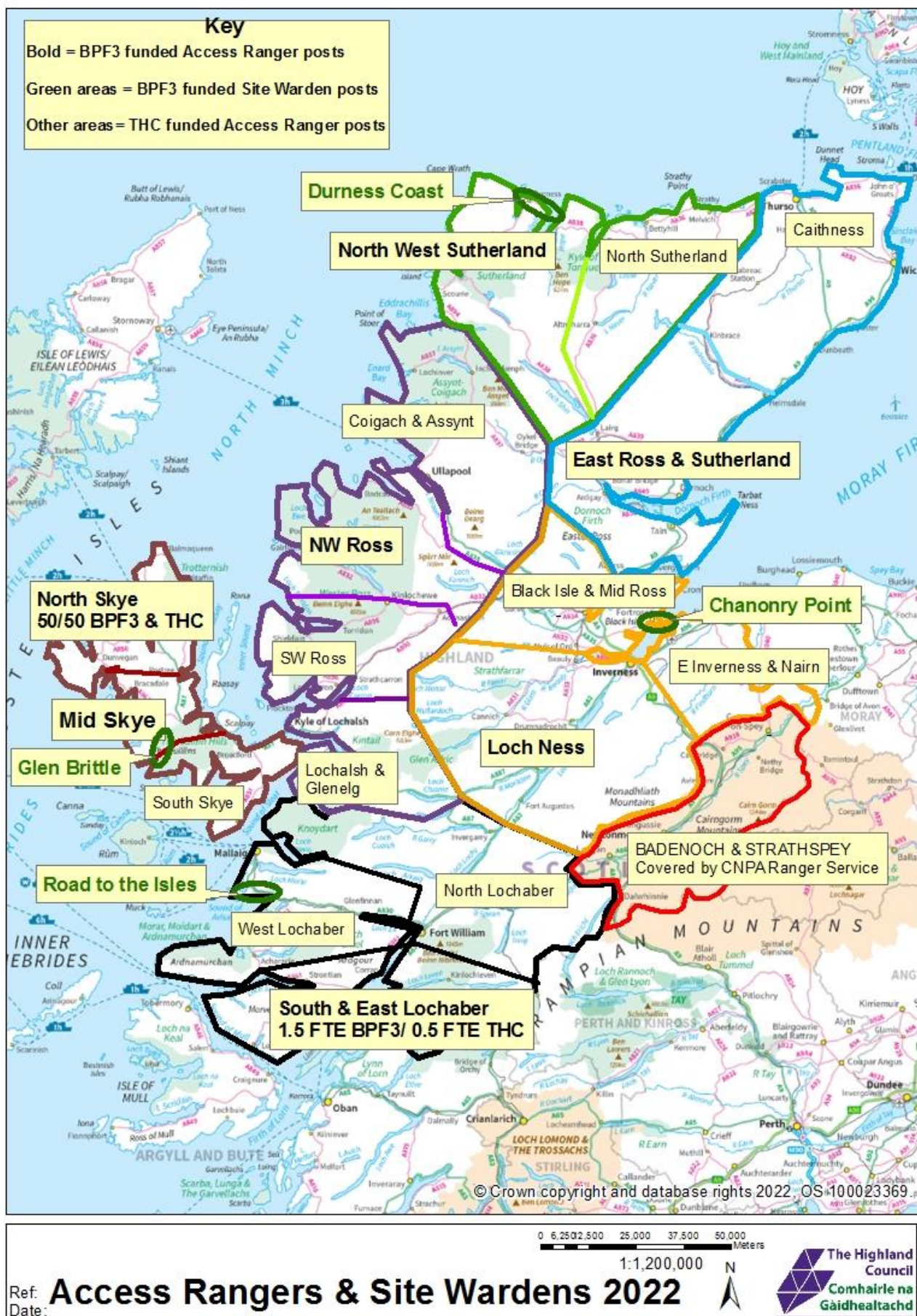
- Engage face-to-face with visitors to explain and encourage responsible behaviour following the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.
- Monitor visitor use, impacts and incidents and reporting on a weekly basis.
- Speak to informal campers to explain responsible access and leave no trace
- Reduce the number of open fires by explaining the impacts which cause damage to vegetation and alarm to residents
- Reduce the amount of litter by encouraging visitors to take home what they bring. Rangers will also collect litter when necessary and report large quantities.
- Encourage responsible parking and prevent obstructive parking. Rangers will assist with parking enforcement if necessary with the issuing of Parking Warning Notices
- Liaise with communities and landowners when issues arise, working together on solutions. Establish local volunteer rangers to assist in busy periods
- Improve and maintain Highland council owned or managed countryside sites and work with land managers on other sites
- Improve and maintain some of the most heavily used paths particularly to popular natural visitor attractions

Seven Access Rangers were in post for 7 months (April to end Oct), 4 posts were appointed for 6 months (May to Oct) and 11 posts were recruited for 5 months (June to Oct). The latter 11 posts were funded by the Better Places Fund administered by Naturescot. A condition of the funding was a commencement date of 1st June and ceasing on 31st October 2022.



Deployment

The 18 Access Rangers and 4 Site Wardens covered the areas on the map below;



Equipment for the team included a hired van with THC and Ranger magnetic logos, THC and Ranger branded uniform, a mobile phone and in some cases a laptop. Each ranger was given a tool bag of hand tools, plus several other tools to undertake basic maintenance on visitor sites or paths especially where public safety was a concern.

Training was primarily a two day induction course on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and devised Standard Operating Procedures for many of the main issues, delivered by experienced Access, Parking and Waste Officers. It also included sessions with Police Scotland and Scottish Fire & Rescue Service. A further session on tool training was given when those were issued. The training was supplemented by webinar training arranged by Naturescot.

Some individual Rangers had opportunities for Outdoor First Aid and Sea Mammal Stranding Courses

Supervisory Management of the Ranger team was undertaken by two Senior Rangers with reference to the Outdoor Access Manager. Other assistance was given by the three Access Officers and the Facilities Officer.

The Rangers worked five days per week which include weekends, having two days off mid-week. They patrolled on 3 days per week, recording the figures for those days. This was always on a Saturday & Sunday, and usually a Friday but this may be different if local knowledge considered another day more appropriate. Over the course of the summer they spoke to over 28,500 people. They were most vigilant in engaging with people conducting irresponsible behaviour but often advised on actions to leave no trace. They would also provide a welcome face for general information on the area or nearby facilities. As a conversation starter, handing out a guidance leaflet for responsible campers or motorhome users was especially useful. During these patrols they recorded numbers for site monitoring reports specifically on camping, vehicles and any remains of camping activities. Whilst on patrol they may clear a dirty site, note it for further work or report it to another Council or agency service. On the two other working days, the rangers made community or land manager contacts, worked on popular sites, arranged volunteer workdays or carried out core path inspections.

Visitor Engagement, Site Monitoring & Reporting

The site monitoring reports had to be completed weekly and submitted to the Senior Rangers every Monday. A collated continuous summary of these has been attached to this report. The data collected in this continuous recording over the six month period has been used to create graphs & charts showing the distribution of specific types of visitor and a number of issues. This information will be made available to various services and can aid identification of areas to target service or infrastructure improvements. These figures are representative and can be comparable between areas and years but cannot show the absolute numbers.



1. Access Ranger Patrols & Sites

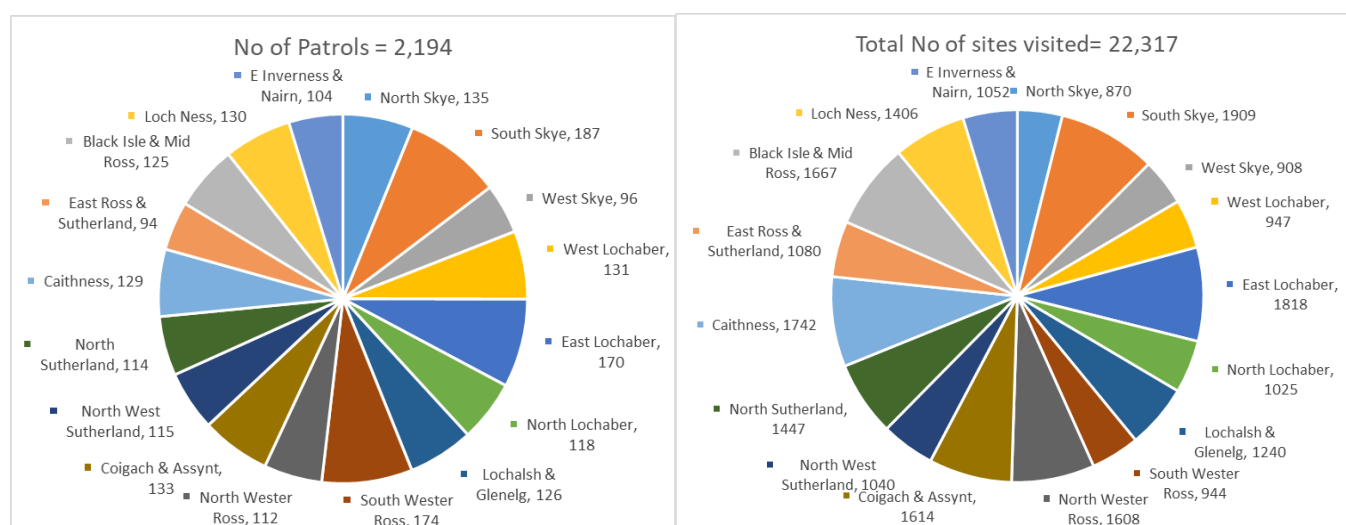
The Access ranger patrol areas that were decided upon in 2021 worked well and were retained in 2022 with some minor adaptations in Skye and Lochaber. A West Skye patrol area was created from the start of July, to better reflect the data collected by the three Skye rangers and the Glen Brittle Warden. West Lochaber was divided, north and south for patrols but then were added together, with Warden figures, for data recording purposes.

It was also accepted that keeping the same patrol areas would provide continuity in the collection of the data. These areas took into consideration, known popular locations, reports of issues from the past 2 seasons and where existing Rangers from other organisations covered. The involvement of specific destination groups; Glencoe & Glen Etive Community Trust, Skye Connect, Wester Ross Biosphere, Visit Inverness/Loch Ness (VILN) & Applecross Trust also ensured a focus in those areas. The final deciding factor on patrol areas was the location of successful candidates. Temporary accommodation in much of the Highlands is extremely difficult to find, four appointed candidates had to withdraw as local accommodation could not be found. There is certainly an advantage to being able to find suitable candidates that live locally.

The Highland Council area (not including the Cairngorm National Park Authority area, which operates its own Ranger service) was divided into 17 patrol areas. Most were patrolled by a single ranger but some did have cover by two rangers or an additional Warden. The size of these patrol areas varies from 900 to 1700 sq Km but average 1400 square kilometers. However, much of this area is only accessible on foot, cycle or horse under access rights. The vast majority of people accessing remote land know the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and are experienced with 'leave no trace' principles. It is the land close to the roadside, within a 1km of a public road, that is under most pressure from people unfamiliar with the access code. It is these roadside areas, and in particular popular visitor sites that the Access Rangers pay most attention and record their observations.

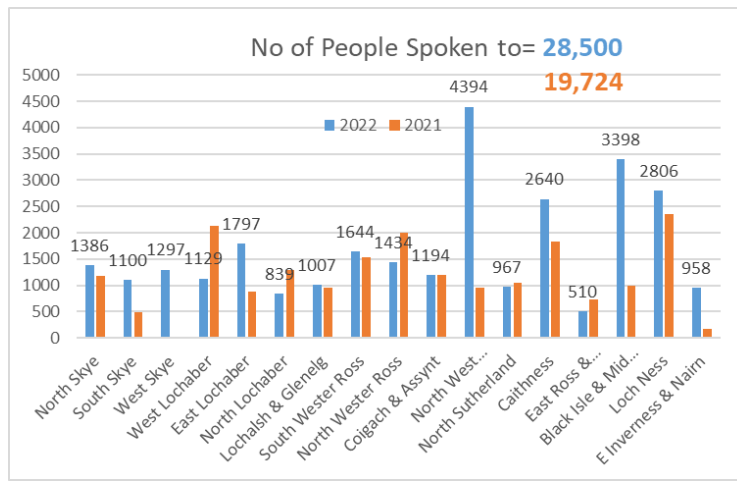
The number of patrols was more evenly divided throughout the Highlands this year with a larger team whereas in 2021 some areas only had sparse coverage.

The number of sites in a patrol area can vary due to size, attractions and popularity. The chart below shows their distribution. Areas with fewer sites can allow the ranger more time on a site to talk to people or carry out maintenance.



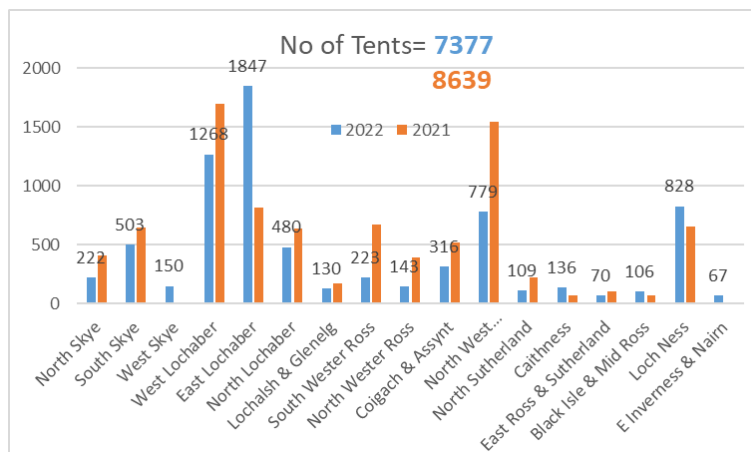
2. Visitor Engagement

The Access Ranger role is primarily to engage and educate people on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code but they will also welcome people with advice and information about the countryside, landscape and the area they are visiting. This year the Rangers were able to engage with almost 10,000 more people, a 30% increase on 2021 (graph below). This was helped by a larger team and significantly so, with the Visitor Site Wardens in Durness and Chanonry Point.



4. Number of Tents

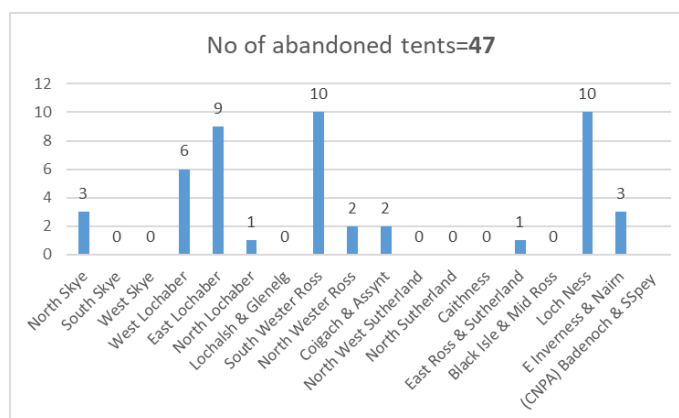
These are the number of tents observed camping off a formal campsite. They are most often by the roadside or in close vicinity to a vehicle, and perhaps not truly wild camping. The Access Rangers will engage with the people seen to ensure that they are aware of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and show consideration for both the environment and people living or working locally.



These figures show a change from 2021 with a roughly 15% decrease in the number of tents seen but still a relatively high figure, and considerably higher than anecdotal pre-covid numbers. There also appears to be a change in the distribution with last years hotspots of Arisaig, Durness, Assynt and Applecross showing decreases but an increase in Glen Etive, Loch Ness and other east coast areas (graph above).



There were also a number of abandoned tents and equipment discovered, left to litter the landscape. Although, this data was not collected in 2021, a procedure for this was developed and continued this year. Involving placing a laminated notice on the tent when observed untouched for 2 days and then removed if still seen after 5 days. The removal process is done carefully, photographing everything and packed in bags. It is then stored for at least 2 weeks before either given to charities, if in good order, or binned if not.



Cumulative camping is a particular problem in some popular locations even when some individuals are following Scottish Outdoor Access Code guidance. As soon as one group leaves the space is occupied by another group. The vegetation has no time to recover, degrades and eventually bare earth or sand appears.

This year we trialled creating small camping exclusion areas on two beaches, Traigh at Arisaig and Ceannabeinne at Durness. Whilst the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code are vague on this, there is scope within sections 3.45 & 3.47 that highlight damage to habitats with repeated recreational activities. The areas showing most degradation were identified, after consulting with the landowner and the Local Access Forum. In July, signs were erected at access points explaining the excluded areas and why we had taken this action. The areas, approx. 10m diameter were either roped off, with a single line of blue rope or surrounded by green barrier mesh. Both methods were chosen specifically so as to be visually subtle in the surroundings. Smaller signs stating 'Please Keep Out- Habitat Restoration In Progress' were attached to the rope or mesh. The Rangers were able to check on these areas on each patrol. They discovered that no visitors camped in these areas and they were respected. Occasionally campers were found right up to the rope/mesh or they were used as drying lines. The ropes and mesh was taken down at the end of October. They will be reinstated next April, thus for a longer period and we will assess if the area size or number should be increased. We will also consider if other locations also should have excluded areas.



Camping Exclusion Areas at Ceannabeinne in yellow (photo-left).

This machair grassland habitat is becoming eroded due to heavy and constant use by campers. The grass sward is worn down and fire sites burn off the vegetation. (photo below left)

The excluded area has begun to show signs of recovery (photo below- right)



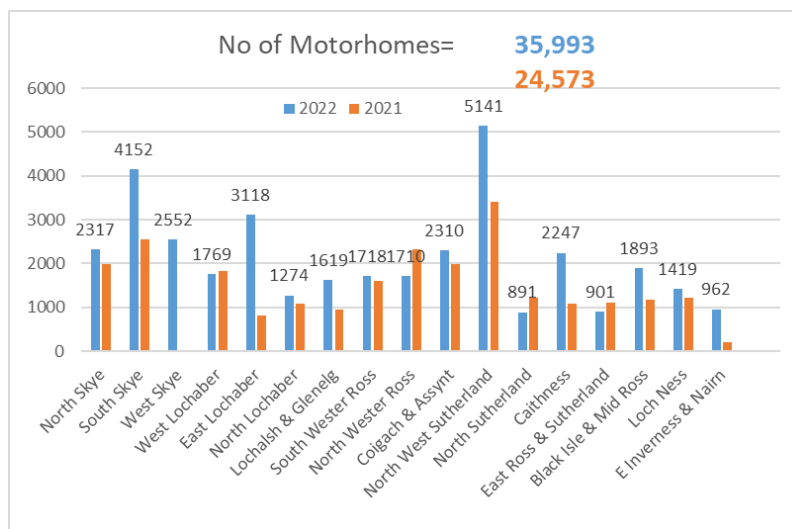
Recommendations from Access Ranger De-briefing

- Clearer & precise definition of 'wild camping' in Scottish Outdoor Access Code. E.g have a minimum distance from road, building etc, specific min or max tent size, maximum number of tents per site.
 - Continue and expand camping exclusion areas
 - Promote 'Leave No Trace' message
 - Areas that most need attention are:
Ceannabeine, Traigh, Toigal, Ardvreck, Glen Etive, Glen Brittle, Glenelg, Duntelchaig, Dalcrag, Loch Tarff, Clunes, Loch Arkaig, Duncansby Head
5. Number of Recreational Vehicles (RVs)

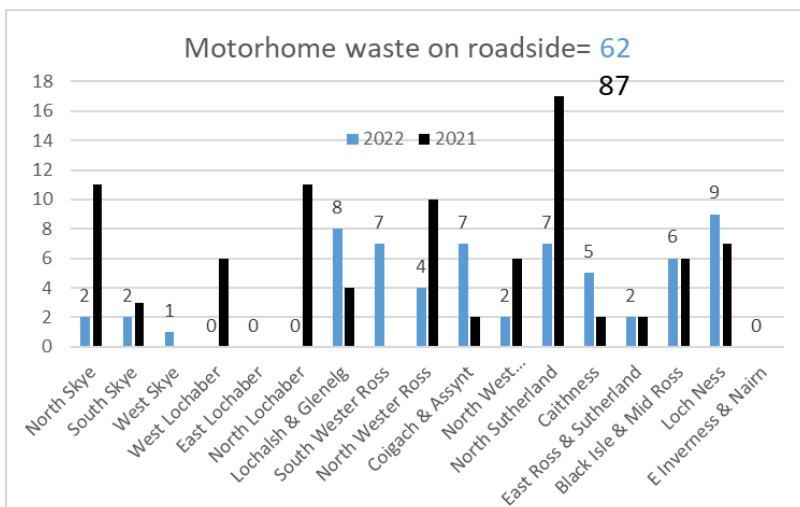
These are the numbers of motorhomes, campervans and roof-top tents observed parked up, mostly overnight but some may be in daytime car parks. There is no distinction made between types of vehicle other than they are all 'adapted for sleeping purposes'. The inclusion of roof-top tents was necessary as this was an increasing phenomenon this year. Being on a vehicle, they do not have access rights and so are more akin to motorhomes although overnight parking without 'encamping' is unlikely in this type of vehicle, and thus is an offence in section 129 of the Roads(Scotland) Act 1984, but difficult to enforce. There is also resistance by these owners to be referred to as motorhomes.



There has been a huge increase in visiting RVs in the Highland area, almost a 33% rise. The main hotspots remain Durness area and Isle of Skye but there were big increases in East Lochaber, Caithness and Black Isle & Mid Ross. Some areas did show small declines (graph below).



Incidents of motorhome black waste dumping were slightly reduced this year but it is still a problem that causes great concern. Being a mixture of chemicals and human waste it can cause great harm in water courses and to vegetation, and distress to anyone, or their pet, that steps in it. Currently the Council do not have an effective method of clearing these spills.



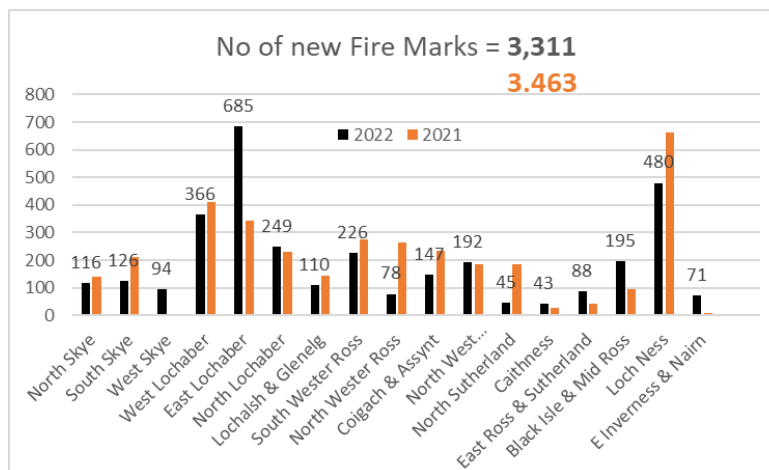
This season 12 council car parks were trialled to permit overnight parking for motorhomes for a £10 fee. The vehicles must be in designated bays and be self contained.

Recommendations from Access Ranger De-briefing

- Increase number of motorhome aires and waste disposal points, especially in areas listed below.
- Leaflets were extremely well received and a good conversation starter.
- Provide clear information online as well as continue with leaflets
- Work with hire companies to ensure bookings, waste disposal and parking areas are understood
- Check other online sites give correct information e.g On SOAC, overnight parking laws etc
- Areas that most need attention are:
Ceannabeine, Oldshoremore, Balnakiel, Strathy, Gruinard, Redpoint, Torridon, Traigh, Toigal, Ardvreck, Achmelvich, Glen Brittle, Duncansby Head.

6. Visitor Behaviours

Associated with tent camping, and to some extent RVs, are a number of activities that may cause concern to communities or land managers. These are fires, outdoor toileting and litter.



Camp fires are often seen by many as an essential accompaniment to camping. However, many people do not consider the risks and damage that they can cause. There is potential to spark a wildfire in prolonged dry periods and especially in woodlands or on peaty ground. Even in other areas damage to the ground or vegetation used to fuel the fire can take years to recover. There is existing legislation aimed to prevent fires close to roads or buildings but it is very difficult to enforce. The evidence of previous fires in an area often encourages others to light their own. The Rangers do discourage fires unless it is raised off the ground and it is likely to leave no trace.



Disposable barbecues are counted here too as they scorch the ground and are often left behind as they remain hot for a long time. If buried in sand have been known to burn feet. On occasion these are placed in bins, whilst still hot and may cause bin fires (photo below- right).



Rangers placed advisory No Fires signs, endorsed by The Highland Fire & Rescue Service, which were successful in reducing fires in some locations, but not in others, where signs were removed or even burnt. The numbers of fire marks seen this year is similar to last year.

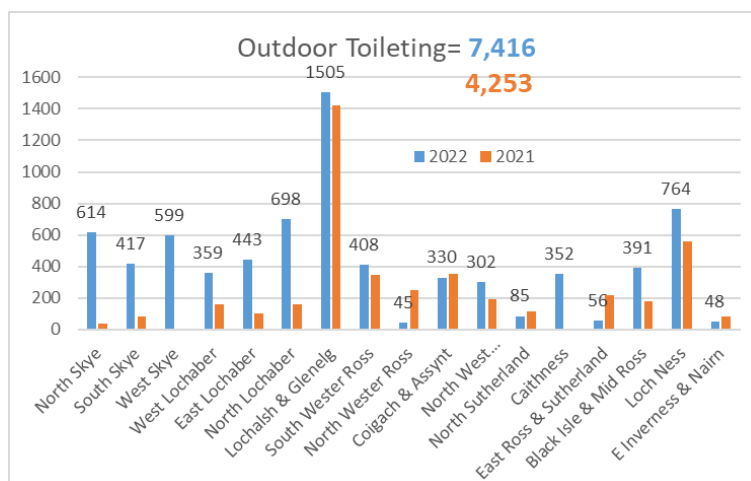


Most fire sites were removed to discourage further use, however there is debate about retaining some fire sites to minimise new ones being created. A method used by Rangers near beaches was to cover fire sites with sand once the debris was removed. This made the site less unsightly, and was often where any new fires were lit reducing any new damage to the grassland. The sand could also promote vegetation re-growth. Other methods of restoring fire sites were tried, covering with seaweed, covering with turf, staking hazard tape around site, jute matting. All these methods worked to some degree and encouraged vegetation regrowth but it was variable as to whether visitors left them undisturbed. No method was completely successful in deterring further fires.



Reccommendations from Access Ranger De-briefing

- Promote 'Leave No Trace' message
- Permanent signs required in worst locations
- Better understanding with Police & Fire Service when called out
- Better promotion of No Fire message nationwide. Target 'bushcraft' courses and popular imagery
- Lobby local shops and/or supermarkets not to sell disposable BBQs



Outdoor toileting is often found in association with campsites but also on roadsides, in laybys. There is a considerable increase in this in 2022 particularly in Skye and Lochaber. This may partly be due to clarification on recording to this years team.

Lochalsh shows a particular problem area in both years. There are relatively low camping numbers here and so may often be due to people stopping to relieve themselves in laybys rather than overnighting. The trunk road through this area is frequented by many commercial vehicles and coaches as well as visitors. Suitability of toilet facilities should be reviewed in this area and elsewhere. Areas where this should be considered are mentioned in Appendix 1.

The Rangers did their best to discourage this by placing signs notifying the nearest public toilets. This years signs were printed and thus more 'official' and included a QR of a public toilet map.

In areas where there was overuse and rocky ground, encouraging people to bag & bin their poo. '#Bag It and Bin It' was a promoted Highland Council campaign on social media and with signs and posters around the area.

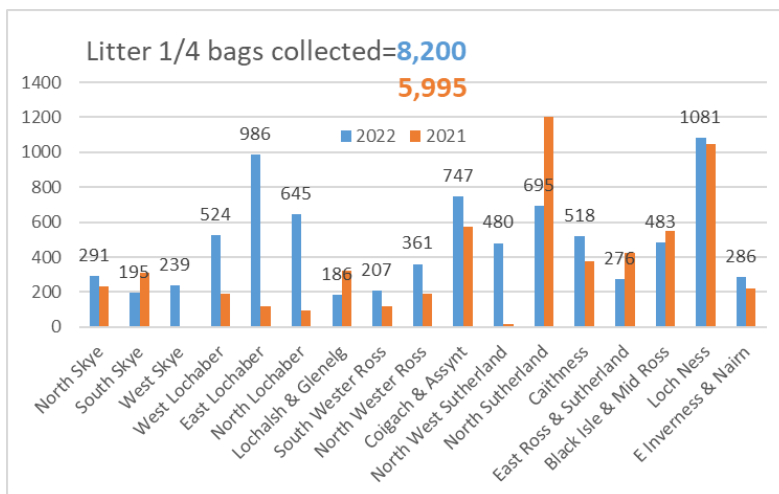


Recommendations from Access Ranger De-briefing

- Encourage more comfort scheme sites in worst areas, e.g Lochalsh. Discuss with Amenities team
- Need to find a way to install temporary or low cost public toilets in some remote locations, e.g. Ceannabeinne, Camusdarroch, Duntelchaig
- Continue with 'Nearest Toilet' signage, with map QR code

Litter is collected by the Access Rangers at popular countryside sites around the Highland area. This is usually litter beyond the road verge that otherwise would not be collected the Waste team. However, sometimes the rangers will collect overflow rubbish outwith bins that may be spread by animals or wind.

The data shows a sizeable increase in the amount collected over last year. It is noticeably so in Lochaber where there was not a Seasonal Waste Operative this year. Over 2000 full bin bags were collected, being 500 more than 2021.



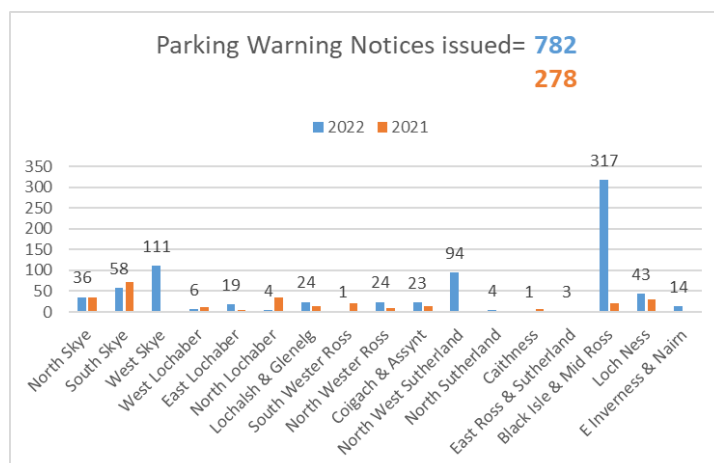
Recommendations from Access Ranger De-briefing

- Promote 'Leave No Trace' message
- Some locations require more bins whilst others should have bins removed, discuss with Waste Team.
- Large lockable bins required for Ranger use when some distance from Recycling Centres e.g Drumnadrochit
- Worked well with Waste Operatives, need to continue increased frequency of collections.

7. Other Council Services

Parking

As well as additional litter collection, the Access Rangers undertake a few activities that assist other Council services. One of these is parking, where the Rangers issue Parking Warning Notices provided by Parking Services, to advise that someone is illegally parked and that they should move or may risk receiving a penalty charge. This often has the desired effect and discourages others from similar parking. The areas with highest figures coincide with Visitor Site Wardens at Chanonry Point, Durness and Glen Brittle. At Chanonry Point the Notices are often for failure to buy a ticket, which other people see attached to windscreens and then buy a ticket. Thus the Warden makes a significant impact on the income generated without having to issue Penalty Charge Notices.



In addition 12 car parks were installed with parking meters inviting payment for day use. Whilst a voluntary payment it was seen that the rangers presence increased compliance, either as the site was well maintained, users felt a service was being provided or they thought they may risk getting a fine. There are a number of other car parks where this model could be appropriate, these are mentioned in **Appendix 1**.

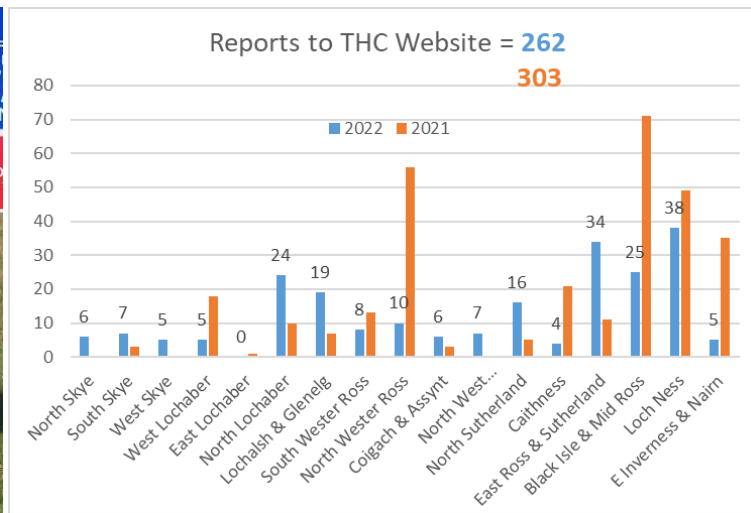


Recommendations from Access Ranger De-briefing

- 'Invitation to pay' sites mostly good but more needed. List of 22 provided to Parking Services.
- Some ITP car parks need improving, resurfacing or marking e.g Duncansby, Bonar Bridge, Gruinard
- Some areas need clearway orders and/or No Parking areas before next Easter especially if close to pay car parks e.g Arisaig, Glen Brittle, Glen Etive, Smoo, Gruinard, Ceannabeinne, Claigan/Coral Beach, Rosemarkie, Balnakiell, Plockton
- Some sites require increased car parks e.g. Mellon Udrigle, Stac Pollidh, Dores, Duntelchaig, Whaligoe, Duncansby Head, Dunnet Head.
- Explore Park & Ride/Walk possibilities at: Arisaig, Glen Brittle, Claigan, Storr, Fairy Glen, Plockton.

The Rangers will often make reports on the The Highland Council's website 'Report a Problem' to advise other services of something that requires attention. This most frequently will be Waste for full/overflowing bins, Environmental Health for fly-tipping or Roads for issues seen.





These figures and charts give an initial picture of the issues and their distribution around the Highland Council area in 2022 and how that compares to 2021.

De-briefing

Monthly progress reports were submitted to highlight the busiest hotspot sites and groups worked with. At the end of season, a collated hot spot recording form was requested along with site improvement report. These can be used to justify the allocation of resources and as supporting evidence for any future funding bids.

These were not received in time from every Ranger. However, this was partly anticipated and a De-briefing workshop was held on the last Friday of the contract to gather the thoughts of the Rangers on service improvement, working with others and site management suggestions outlined in **Appendix 1**.



The Ranger De-briefing Workshop

Working With Others

The Rangers were provided with contact numbers for appropriate Council staff, i.e Access officers, Parking enforcement, Waste operatives, Dog Wardens, Roads and Amenity Services. They also had contacts for local Police, Fire Service and other organisation's Ranger services. Contact details for community representatives and land managers were also given and they were encouraged to make more.

During the season the Access Rangers worked hard to co-ordinate their patrols with other organisation Rangers and to inform Services and Police about any relevant incidents. They contacted most of the community councils or trusts in their areas (approx. 62), gaining information and building trust. Some volunteer workdays were arranged with these groups including path works on Skye and Wester Ross, vegetation clearance in Nairn and beach cleans in Dornie, Glen Brittle and Ullapool.



Many land managers were contacted and discussions were had regarding managing visitors on their sites to co-ordinate any actions and provide assistance. The Access Rangers created Whats App groups with Forestry & Land Scotland, NatureScot and National Trust for Scotland rangers in specific areas. This greatly improved co-operation and co-ordinated their patrols.

The OAM was involved in weekly Visitor Management Operations groups in North and South Highland, reporting and co-ordinating actions with other Council services, emergency services and land managers. After establishing a Highland Ranger Managers Group in 2021 this continued through 2022 on a more infrequent basis. There was also regular contact with the other ranger partners within the council area. The OAM also attended the monthly national Visitor Management Strategy Co-ordination Group and the VM Operational sub group. He submitted fortnightly RAG reports to the national Visitor Management Strategy Group for the North Coast 500 and Arisaig/Morar areas.



Site Improvement Works & Maintenance

The Rangers were able to undertake a number of tasks that improved popular visitor sites. Some of this was maintenance works whilst other work was to reduce damage caused by vehicles or people. Where possible contact was made with local groups and involved volunteers. These projects were done at Poolewe, Gairloch, Glenbrittle, Mallaig, Dingwall, Chanonry Point, Dornie, Gruinard, Thurso, Dores and Durness.

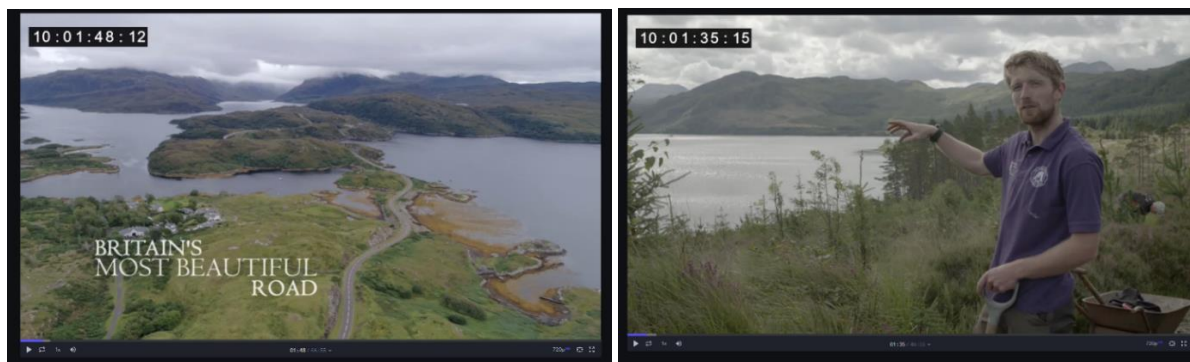


Communications

An ideal way on reporting and contact for the public has still not been established. However, the generic email address continued and was often used to inform the Ranger team of incidents or for general queries was set up as a stop-gap but remained the main way for people to report or contact the Rangers. Some rangers having worked with the Council over winter were in place at Easter and on the IT system, others took some time to be set up and these messages had to be forwarded by the OAM or Access Officers. Eventually the Rangers received Council email addresses and were able to make direct contact. There were similar delays in issueing of phones.

A Facebook account for the Ranger team was also set up. This became a good way to issue information & advice and show the work of the Rangers. The page had achieved 5000 followers by July. The maximum reach by a single post was 135,494 people with 9 others reaching over 10,000. Some posts caused some controversy but when further explanation was given overwhelming support was achieved. During the season a number of press releases were issued to give updates on the teams progress and this was reported in the Inverness Courier, Ross-shire Journal and other local papers.

During July and August a Purple Productions TV crew filmed some of the Ranger activity to be included within a Channel 4 documentary on the North Coast 500. This was agreed to on condition of highlighting responsible behaviour along with the challenges.



Support and Moving Forward

The Access Ranger team has received numerous compliments and messages of support from local residents and visitors. This has been directly by word of mouth, email and Facebook posts. This support has also been recognised by Highland Council Ward Members, particularly after The OAM and Rangers gave a series of presentations to almost all the Ward areas within The Highland Council.

Reports and updates of the Rangers actions and progress was made to several Highland Council Committees, notably the Infrastructure & Economy Committee and Area Committees who unanimously commended the Ranger team on the difference they were making to our local communities and countryside.

This years team of 22 Access Ranger & Site Warden staff have been able to make an even greater difference to visitor management within the Highlands. Total visitor numbers appear to be almost 33% higher than in 2021 and they were able to speak to twice as many visitors and co-operate with many more local organisations. The phasing in of the team over three months also appeared to be successful with an earlier presence but not being over staffed in quieter periods. However having to recruit the majority of the team every spring is time and resource consuming on the Access team, particularly the Outdoor Access Manager. It can mean a loss of continuity and experience after each season and having to equip, train and set-up new staff into the Council's IT and payroll systems each year can lead to delays in operation. The ability to retain five Rangers over winter in 2021/22 was a great advantage and enabled those staff to be ready for the Easter holidays. This year we are trying a different method by retaining 8 Rangers part-time over winter, this allows a slightly larger team to remain within the Council's systems and be fully equipped, ready to return to full time work in April 2023.

Unfortunately, there is great uncertainty about allocations of the Council budget for 2023/24 and at the present time it is unknown if the Access Ranger team will be recruited and available for the summer season.

As some of the Council's visitor management funding for 2022/23 allocated to Rangers remains, we have been able to employ 8 Rangers, on a part-time basis for a further 5 months over the winter season. Three Rangers will produce and begin to implement a number of Location Action Plans for Assynt, Applecross & Lochcarron and Chanonry Point. All the Rangers will carry out site improvements on a number of heavily visited sites and core paths such as Duntelchaig, Foyers, Gruinard, Melvich, Ardvreck, Applecross, Chanonry Point and signposting around Skye. They will continue working and liaising with communities and land managers to improve visitor sites in preparation for future years.

Philip Waite, Outdoor Access Manager

28th November 2022

APPENDIX 1

Issues of Concern in Highland Areas

Caithness

- Car Parks at Duncansby Head, Whaligoe Steps
- Parking on access road to Dunnet Head.
- Parking at Red Point/ Drumhollister. Dangerous roadside parking, current fencing not improved issue.
- Path upgrade required at Duncansby Head
- No toilets at/near Whaligoe and Ousdale Broch
- A99 traffic management near Whaligoe

Sutherland & Easter Ross

- Car parks at Ceannabeinne, Balnakiel, Oldshoremore, Bonar bridge, Melvich beach, Ardvreck, Inchnadamph, Tarbetness, Portmahomack beach- all candidates for ITP.
- Coach parking and extension at Smoo Cave.
- Improvements to car park surfacing and picnic sites at Oldshoremore, Bonar Bridge, Tarbet Ness
- Toilets required at/near Caennabeinne.
- Path improvements at Caennabeinne, Bonar Bridge
- Motorhome waste disposal needed in Durness area.

Wester Ross & Lochalsh

- Car Parks at Achnahaird, Mellon Udrigle, Gairloch Beach, Redpointc, Applecross, Lochacarron, Torridon- all candidates for ITP.
- Parking areas need improvement at Wailing Widow Falls, Achmelvich, Achnahaird, Bone Caves, Stac Pollaidh, Gairloch Harbour, Kintail
- Path improvements at Wailing Widow Falls
- Toileting issues along A87 Kintail and A890.

Isle of Skye

- Car parks at Lealt, Glen Brittle, Coral Beach, Kilt Rock, Elgol, Duntruim- all candidates for ITP
- Parking areas at Neist Point, Elgol, Staffin slipway, Duntruim, Fairy Glen, and Sleat need improvement or signing.
- Ferry terminal parking capacity issues at Uig and Sconser
- Road improvements needed in Glen Brittle on approach to Fairy Pools and road end.
- Public toilets needed north of Staffin, Coral Beach, Neist Point.

Lochaber

- Car Parks at Ballachulish peninsula, Laggan Locks, Traigh, Camusdarroch, Glen Etive- candidates for ITP
- Parking improvement needed at Cuil Bay and Kintail
- Public toilets at Ballachulish need improvement. Also issues in Glen Garry and Tougal (opening)
- Bins and waste issues at Glen Garry, Loch Lochy and Camusdarroch.
- Path improvements needed at Tougal.
- Shuttle bus services would be advantageous at Glen Etive, Glen Nevis, Aridaig/Morar

Inner Moray Firth

- Car parks at Silverbridge, South Souter – candidates for ITP
- Parking improvement needed at Nairn (signs), Chanonry Point (signs, height barrier), Rosemarkie, Dores, Newhall Point, Jemimaville, Lochindorb(height barrier)
- Bins & waste issues at Secret Beach, Dores, Alturlie.

https://1drv.ms/f/s!AjWEhKgkXCaakFYE9O-dLH_K7z5J