

# Dornoch Visitor Management Plan



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**Dornoch**  
You can do it all from here

In association with:  
Highlands and Islands Enterprise  
Dornoch Area CIC  
Dornoch Focus Group  
February 2021

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## 1. Executive Summary

This Plan seeks to establish a sustainable approach to improving the way visitors to Dornoch enjoy its special qualities and their impact on the local environment, community and businesses. It was prepared between December 2020 and February 2021 and involved engagement and consultation with the community, Dornoch Area Community Interest Company (DACIC), Dornoch Focus Group, Dornoch Area Community Council (DACC), tourism businesses, The Highland Council, Highlands and Island Enterprise (HIE) and other community representatives.

The plan aims to address the forthcoming 2021 tourism season and longer-term visitor demand expected in Dornoch, providing a cohesive strategy for visitor planning. It is hoped this will bring together all of the ideas from businesses and the community, providing some “joined up thinking”.

This is a working document that the DACIC and other community groups can use for reference and guidance to implement measures to ensure the impact of Dornoch’s successful tourism marketing does not prove detrimental to the local population and environment.

Visitor Impact	<b>Spatial Distribution</b>	Visitors to the beach and town centre cause traffic and parking issues. Particularly larger vehicles such as campervans.
	<b>Impact on the Community</b>	The community is proud of its town and is welcoming to visitors. There are concerns that any measures to manage visitors should not adversely affect the local residents.
	<b>Impact on Business</b>	The businesses welcome the influx of visitors who support the local economy. There are concerns that any measures to manage visitors should take into account the fragile local economy.

Visitors numbers for 2021 are predicted to be similar if not higher than last year, due to Covid-19 travel restrictions and general uncertainty around travelling abroad. These visitor numbers are a fantastic opportunity for Dornoch to market the town for the future and continue to build its reputation as a holiday destination. The longer-term measures should be flexible to allow for a changing market.

### Summary of Action Plan

Communication and capacity are key. Adding information to the Dornoch websites and social media will allow visitors to plan their trip before arriving. Information on where to park and where facilities are located, should be mirrored by the local signage. Capacity issues have been tackled in the short term by looking at areas that could be used as overflow car parks and for overnight parking. Improving the layout and information at current parking hotspots has also been reviewed.

#### Short term



#### Long term



## 2. Introduction

The Royal Burgh of Dornoch is a seaside town in Sutherland, in the Highlands of Scotland with a population of approximately 2,570<sup>1</sup>. This East Coast town has sandy beaches stretching from Dornoch Point, past Embo beach, all the way to the Loch Fleet National Nature Reserve.

It is famous for its golf course, the Royal Dornoch Championship Course, which attracts golfers from all over the world. It has an attractive town centre, with a good range of shops, cafes and restaurants, as well as an impressive cathedral, dating back to 1224.

The North Coast 500 route passes just 2 miles away, along the A9, making Dornoch an attractive stopping place.

The Dornoch Area Community Interest Company (DACIC) is a well-established and networked organisation that delivers projects to benefit the community. They also manage the Visit Dornoch website, which promotes the area and provides a wide range of information about the local businesses.

The Dornoch Focus Group was set up by HIE to drive forward actions from the Dornoch Economic Masterplan. The stakeholders within this group identified visitor management as a priority project and DACIC were asked to help facilitate the development of this plan with SKS Scotland.

Dornoch's Masterplan Objectives have had a positive impact on visitor numbers; there have been new businesses established in the town centre and there is an impressive calendar of festivals and activities. The Dornoch brand has been a large part of this success and is helping Dornoch reach its full potential.

Tourism is a vitally important industry in Dornoch as many businesses and livelihoods depend on the visitor economy, with much of their income generated during the summer season.

2020 saw a sudden increase in visitors which, whilst welcome economically, has brought with it a number of challenges. Dornoch is being successfully marketed as a visitor destination and therefore the arising issues must be tackled in a strategic way, both for the benefit of local people and also to ensure that the future visitor experience is a positive one.

The increase is attributed to the Covid-19 travel restrictions during the summer of 2020; with 2021 predicted to also have some restrictions still in place, Dornoch aims to have a plan in place which covers visitors and locals.



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<sup>1</sup> 2011 Census

## Objectives

SKS have been contracted by HIE and DACIC to produce this plan on behalf of the Dornoch Focus Group. The primary objective was stakeholder engagement, facilitating a debate on problems and solutions, which has informed the strategy development.

SKS were asked to look at a number of issues including:



Stakeholder feedback indicated the need to prioritise the points on the top line.

The Visitor Management Plan (VMP) prioritises and articulates the actions required and it is recognised that a collaborative approach across all stakeholders will be needed to achieve this effectively.

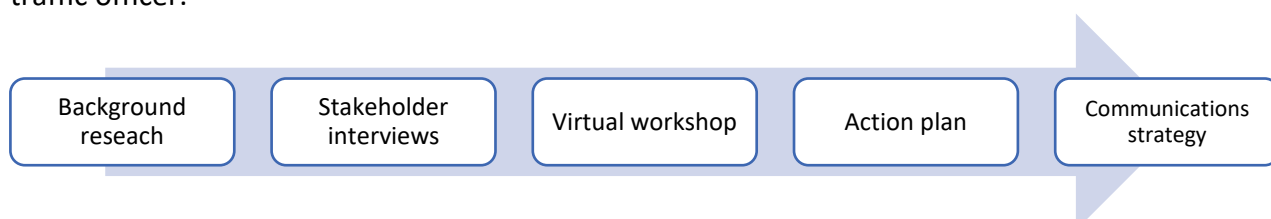
Due to current social distancing regulations a public or face to face meeting was not possible, and therefore SKS ran an online workshop and held one-to-one interviews to allow stakeholders to articulate concerns, gather all points of view, and identify practical and pragmatic solutions that can be implemented effectively.

The DACIC, DACC and Focus Group have already begun work to tackle issues, particularly based around the beach area. These ideas have been incorporated into this report.

The outcome of this piece of work is a collaborative stakeholder action plan to deliver carefully planned visitor management that will enhance visitor and local community enjoyment of the Dornoch area.

## How this plan was prepared

The preparation of this Plan took place between Dec 2020 and Feb 2021. It involved a number of different stages shown below. Virtual meetings and a workshop were held with community organisations, DACIC, DACC, Dornoch Focus Group, tourism businesses, councillors and the local traffic officer.



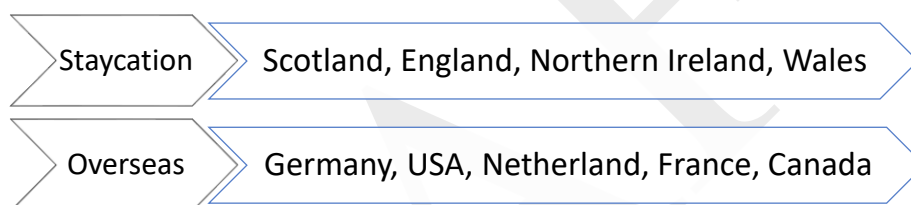


### 3. Tourism Market & Trends

The Scottish tourism industry has a positive outlook for the future. A good recovery from Covid-19 restrictions is expected, with visitors increasingly choosing destinations they perceive as less crowded. There has been a shift from city-based tourism to rural and coastal areas. These are characteristics which have accelerated the increase in visitor numbers to Dornoch.

#### Growth Markets

UK domestic visitors have always constituted the majority of tourists in Scotland and this trend will increase as the country recovers from Covid-19. Looking to future markets, overseas visitors are expected to return once the vaccine has been distributed and confidence to travel returns. A pent-up demand of overseas visitors is predicted, with renowned golf courses in particular, expecting a huge demand from both members and visitors.



Visitors<sup>2</sup>

#### Visitor Statistics

Looking back at trends before the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on tourism, Visit Scotland notes that 2019 was a very good year for tourism in the Highlands.

“The volume and value of overnight travel to the region exceeded any other year back to 2013.”

The Highlands attracted 17% of all overnight trips and 13% of the total overnight tourism expenditure in Scotland. Even pre-Covid-19, the driver behind this strong regional performance in 2019 was domestic tourism.

Residents of Scotland travelled much more to the Highlands compared to previous years, and while this was observed across many Scottish regions in 2019, the Highlands also witnessed a big increase in overnight tourism from residents of England and Wales. Trips, bed nights and expenditure of travellers from the rest of Great Britain all increased by 21% from 2018.

Visit Scotland’s accompanying statistics below show the average length of stay at 3.9 nights, slightly higher than the Scottish average.

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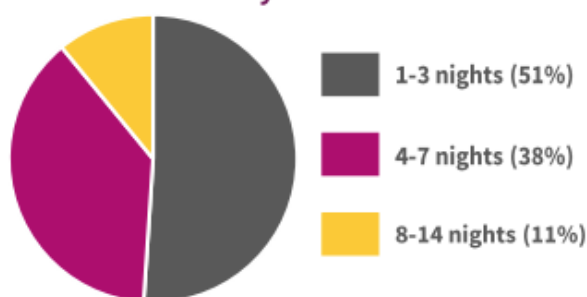
<sup>2</sup> VS Key Facts in Tourism 2018

### Domestic Overnight Tourism, 2019

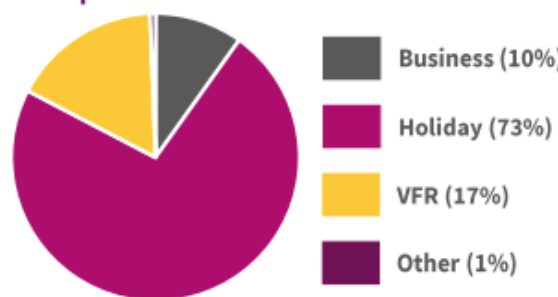
Indicators	Scotland		Highland	
	Key Facts in 2019	% Change 2018/19	Key Facts in 2019	% Change 2018/19
Visits (000s)	13,810	+17%	2,448	+45%
Spend (£M)	3,200	+16%	575	+35%
Nights (000s)	46,413	+15%	9,487	+32%
Average length of stay	3.4 nights	-2%	3.9 nights	-9%
Average spend per day	£69	+1%	£61	+3%
Average spend per visit	£232	-1%	£235	-7%

Source: GBTS, 2019.

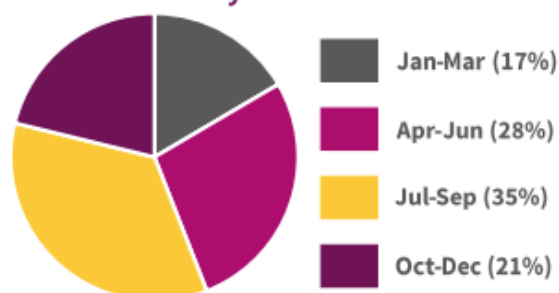
#### Duration of Stay



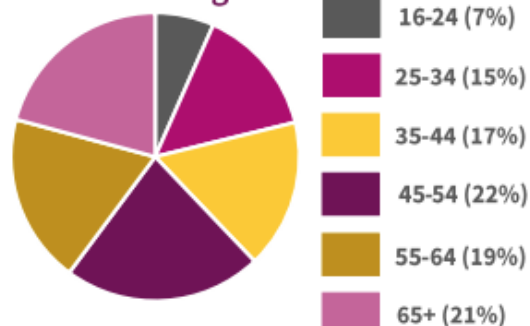
#### Purpose of Travel



#### Seasonality



#### Visitors' Age



Source: IPS. All charts are based on 3-year average data (2017-2019) on visitors to the Highlands. Figures may not sum up due to rounding.

3

### Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism Markets

The 2020 tourism season had a late start, but once people could travel, Dornoch and many areas in Scotland benefited from the huge increase in people holidaying at home. Visitor management planning for 2021 is based on the assumption this increase will continue once travel restrictions are lifted. This is the picture coming out of the pandemic, but the aim is to use this opportunity to engage tourists and ensure they become repeat visitors.

Visit Scotland identify five key consumer drivers<sup>4</sup> that have come out of the Covid-19 era.

<sup>3</sup> Visit Scotland – Highland Fact Sheet 2019

<sup>4</sup> Visit Scotland - Navigating the New Normal - Post-COVID19 Tourism Consumer Trends



Tourism businesses who can be adaptable and flexible are driving tourism recovery. Businesses that have been unable to adapt to the new regulations have suffered.

Looking at the Covid-19 era trends, Dornoch can benefit from:

- a sharp increase in short distance holidays to rural destinations, with tourists avoiding crowded places. This is anticipated to continue into 2021.
- domestic travel recovers fastest. With countryside and natural areas recovering faster than city locations.
- Summer travel is about finding fresh air and space
- Rural and coastal areas were and are popular as destinations matching travellers' requirements for open space, nature and clean environments.

### Tourism Strategy

Scotland Outlook 2030<sup>5</sup> focuses on four key priorities.

**Our passionate people.** *"We will attract, develop and retain a skilled, committed, diverse and valued workforce".*

**Our thriving places.** *"Our natural assets – our landscape, scenery, natural and built heritage will be cared for, protected and invested in for our current and future generations to experience and enjoy"*

**Our diverse businesses.** *"We will build business resilience, sustainability and profitability. "*

**Our memorable experiences.** *"Today's traveller looks for immersive experiences and limitless discoveries where they can experience a different way of living for a short time in a new place."*

A Visitor Management Plan will help ensure Dornoch continues to be a thriving place where visitors have memorable experiences.

### Responsible Tourism

Responsible tourism focuses on developing sustainable tourism that looks to benefit communities, protect landscapes and develops the economy, alongside providing a fantastic experience to the visitor. The four points in the table above are central to this theme.

### Transformational Tourism

*"The future of tourism is ensuring that visitors receive the transformation they seek while understanding the needs of locals and the environment."*<sup>6</sup> Trends 2020

<sup>5</sup> STA Tourism Strategy 2030 - <https://scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Scotland-Outlook-2030.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Trends 2020: Travelling towards transformational tourism. <https://www.visitscotland.org/binaries/content/assets/dot-org/pdf/research-papers-2/insights-trends-2020.pdf>



Dornoch can tap into this new trend for transformational tourism by communicating the need to protect the local environment and community.

### Overtourism

Studies have shown that the influx of visitors and tourists in Scotland and the Highlands & Islands in particular over the last few years due to the success of various marketing initiatives, has had a major impact on some communities. Possible impacts, as highlighted by 'Sustainable Tourism or Overtourism on the NC500' by Lucy Hutton, include wild camping, irresponsible behaviour, socio-cultural impacts and economic impacts (the latter two impacts having generally positive outcomes).

The University of Brighton<sup>7</sup> reported on over-tourism and suggested that destinations put greater emphasis on qualitative elements of tourism development (i.e. profitability; local employment, fair pay rates) rather than focus on continued arrival growth.

## 4. Visitors and their impact on Dornoch

Tourism is an important part of the local economy, accounting for a large proportion of employment. There is an ongoing process of delivering infrastructure improvements in Dornoch, documented in the [Dornoch Economic Master Plan](#). Work has already begun on parking solutions, toilet management and other issues such as wild camping.

The information on impacts (positive and negative) of visitors and their activities on Dornoch is mainly subjective, collected from the experience of individuals and groups who were consulted during the preparation of this Plan.

MAIN AREAS OF IMPACT	
<b>Spatial Distribution</b>	Visitors to the beach and town centre cause traffic and parking issues. Particularly larger vehicles such as campervans.
<b>Impact on the Community</b>	The community is proud of its town and is welcoming to visitors. There are concerns that any measures to manage visitors should not adversely affect the local residents.
<b>Impact on Business</b>	The businesses welcome the influx of visitors who support the local economy. There are concerns that any measures to manage visitors should take into account the fragile local economy.

### 4.1 Visitor Parking

Dornoch has seen a steady increase in visitors since 2016, with improved signage on the A9 encouraging NC500 visitors to divert into Dornoch.

*"On busy days such as regular summer markets, the Meadows carpark, Castle Street & High Street are full and irresponsible parking results, in the side streets and near junctions."*<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.brighton.ac.uk/about-us/news-and-events/news/2019/01-25-its-time-to-address-overtourism.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> Planning application 20/03765/FUL - Design & Access Statement

In September 2020, the DACIC carried out a survey of 100 residents to the Dornoch South Car Park<sup>9</sup>, presenting them with ideas to improve parking in the area. The results show a strong desire to improve the current situation.

Summary of results:

Question	% agree
There is not enough vehicle parking in Dornoch	87
A new vehicle park is needed to get coaches (and now motorhomes) off the Square	94
The current arrangement in the Square for coaches & motorhomes is dangerous	91
Current car parking on side streets is often dangerous	85
Dornoch South is a good location for a new vehicle park	90
The proposed parent and child parking would be welcome	74
The proposed cycle & motorbike parking would be welcome	79
Seasonal car parking charges (e.g. with low or no cost residents/business/employee pass) is acceptable	71

Example comment:

*“This is a vital addition to the town but we must be extremely careful to ensure locals (not just Dornoch residents but the wider area) can still park for free on the streets. Our strong local retail economy relies heavily on short term but street parking. As we know our population skews over 60 and this ability to park locally keeps everyone safe and the town thriving.”*



There are 4 car parks at the beach.

TOP Car Park	OVERFLOW Car Park	PLAYPARK Car Park	AIRFIELD Car Park
Owned by The Highland Council	On Common Good Land	On Common Good Land	On Common Good Land. Operated by THC

The Top Car Park gets overcrowded in the peak season. Overnight parking is not allowed, but it has become a problem, partly because the car park is mentioned on some websites as “one of the best places for wild camping”.

The Overflow and Playpark areas have less formal parking spaces, they need work to level areas and mark parking spaces.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix 1 Parking Survey



There are 4 main areas to park in town (Dornoch South is in development, see 9.5) :



The town is regularly visited by day-trippers from cruise ships in nearby Invergordon.

On busy days, up to 6 coaches are parked in the town square on a five-way junction. This causes problems for pedestrians, local buses, local traffic and impedes the view of the historic town square.

In 2020, there were less coaches, but these were replaced by a large cars and motorhomes. This created overcrowding in the car parking areas and access problems.

Other parking problem areas:

Castle Hotel area – better parking bay marking suggested.

Eaglefield Road – yellow lines suggested.



#### 4.2 Overnight Parking and Waste Facilities for Motorhomes

The two campsites closest to Dornoch Town Centre which cater for motorhomes are:

[Dornoch Caravan and Camping Park](#) can currently accommodate 125 visiting caravans or motorhomes and has one motorhome service point for disposal of grey waste. They reached full capacity for 6 weeks during the summer. An extra service point will be added for 2021.

**Dornoch Lochans** (Davochfin Farm) currently has 5 pitches for caravans/campervans but has an overspill site down at the Loch that can accommodate more. They are considering whether to make this overspill 'official' pitches – it could have 5 vehicles and already has 2 electric hook-up points, toilets and water access there - no decision has yet been made. Non-residents did use the Lochans grey waste disposal last year but this is something they don't want to encourage (even if they charged) as users have to drive over the site.

#### 4.3 Single Track Roads

The roads leading to the top beach carpark, Golf Road and Beach Road are both single track. There is no signage to warn visiting drivers which can cause problems turning long vehicles when the car

park is busy. The Golf Road is closed when the Gold Club hosts major competitions, which adds to this problem.

#### 4.4 Excessive Speed

This has been mentioned on the beach roads and on Castle Street, A949 the main road leading into town, especially at the West Church Hall.

#### 4.5 Wild Camping

People slept in tents on the beach and the waste/human waste they left behind became a problem at the height of the summer season 2020. There is clear signage that camping is not allowed.

#### 4.6 Litter

There were initial problems at the beach in 2020 when Covid-19 travel restrictions were lifted, these have now been addressed with more regular collections. A blue recycle bin will be introduced in 2021.

In town, there were issues with motorhome owners using commercial business bins to dispose of their rubbish or leaving black bags beside the bins.

#### 4.7 Toilets

The beach toilets are run by the DACC, they are currently being upgraded. There are public toilets on Shore Road, just off the main square, these are run by The Highland Council. The DACC is actively pursuing a cost-effective upgrade solution for the public toilets in the Square, to be paid out of the Common Good Fund.

#### 4.8 Public Realm

The Dornoch Masterplan praises the town for its attractive streetscape; “joined by a network of quaint lanes and paths, which require exploration to discover the towns hidden depths”.

However, the document later describes the poorly defined main square and lack of informative signage. Much has been done to improve signage for pedestrians, but not vehicles and the main square still remains a problem area. The safety of pedestrians in this area needs to be considered.

#### 4.9 Accommodation

Accommodation in Dornoch appeared to be at capacity last year, particularly in July and August. We can assume this led to more people visiting with motorhomes and potentially more wild camping.

## 5. Comparators

### Visitor Management & Parking

It is useful to examine other towns or areas facing similar challenges surrounding increasing visitor numbers to understand different approaches and learn from their experiences.

Embo, Nairn, St Andrews, Chanonry Point and the French Alps were considered useful comparators.

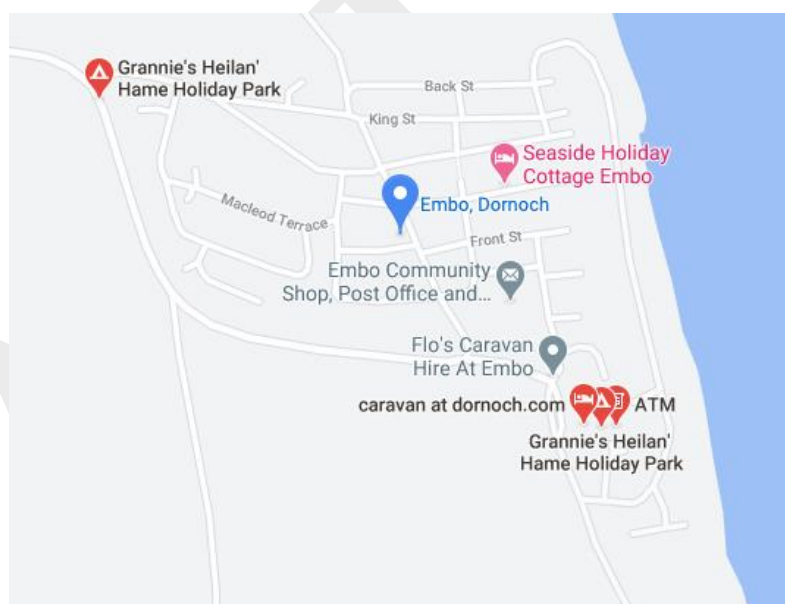
#### Embo

The Highland Council are currently looking at a similar situation. They report that:

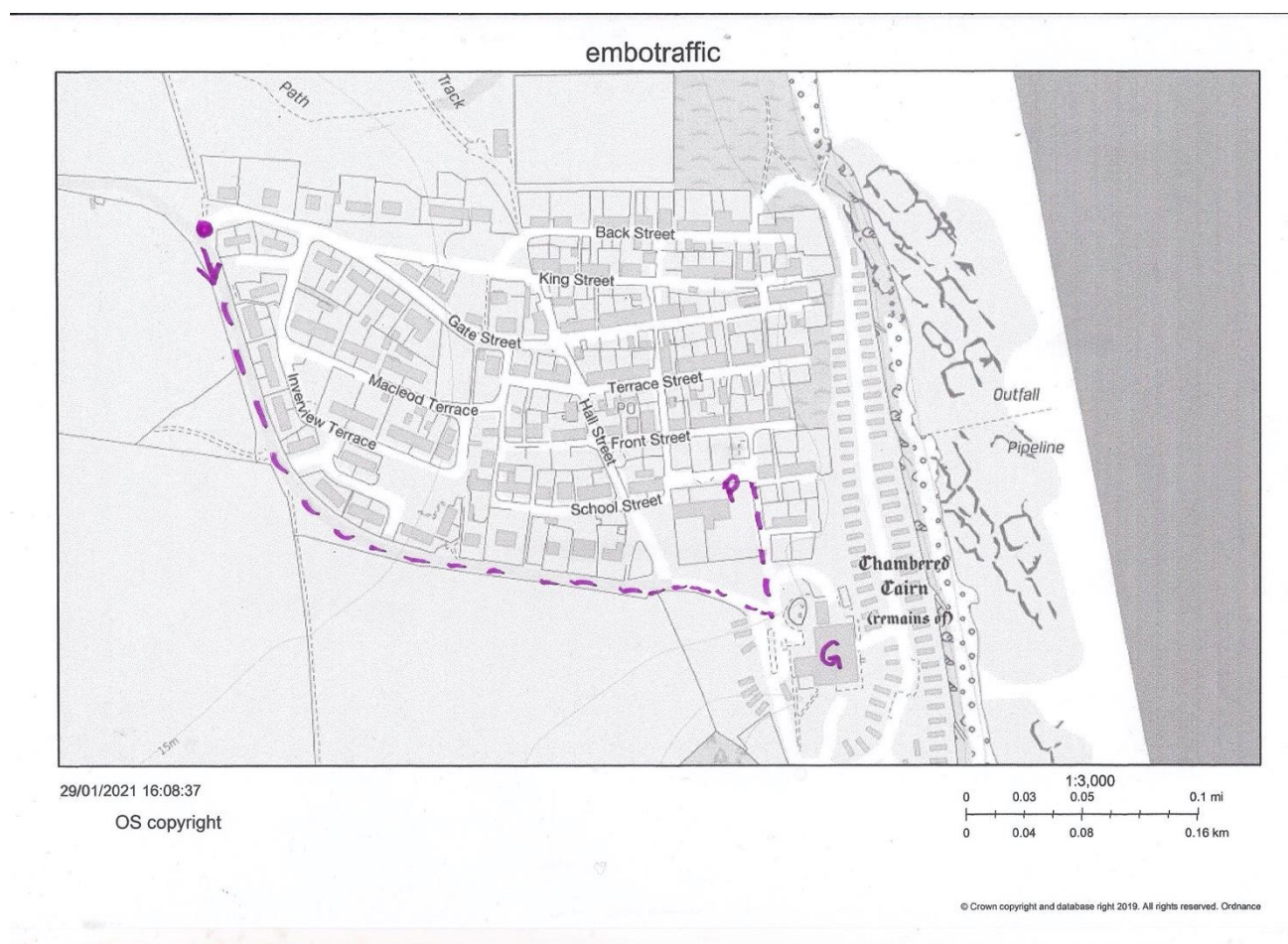
*'There has been a steady flow of traffic at busy times heading for the beach by way of the first entrance to the village, then down the various streets, including Back Street, looking for the private dirt track at the bottom of Back Street which leads them to the parking area for the North (Cluan) Beach. These are very narrow streets, and the dirt track is steep and due for some erosion with the level of usage we're getting.'*

They are considering the following potential solution:

*'There should be signage at the first entrance to the village directing beach traffic round the ring road down as far as Grannies (see map below, marked G) then left to park either in the grounds of the Old School or round the north perimeter of those premises. Also, trim back some of the marram grass in the Council area at Embo Pier to permit more visitor traffic to park there whilst not blocking the area marked for turning.'*



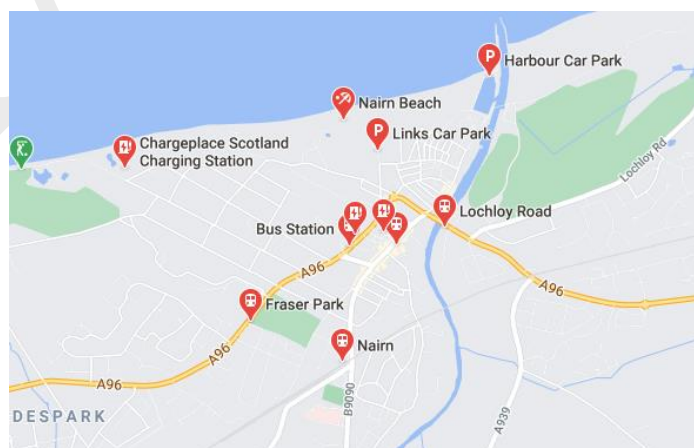




## Nairn

Parking enforcement was introduced in areas within the town of Nairn in 2019 to alleviate issues around visitor parking / motorhome parking, causing debate amongst residents<sup>10</sup>. Two zones were implemented in the town by Highland Council<sup>11</sup> (with eligible residents applying for annual permits costing £40).

Reviews on Trip Adviser talk about plenty of good free parking near the beach.



<sup>10</sup> <https://nairn-blog.blogspot.com/2018/02/free-parking-in-nairn.html>

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20006/parking\\_and\\_car\\_parks/215/parking\\_permits/3](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20006/parking_and_car_parks/215/parking_permits/3)



## St Andrews

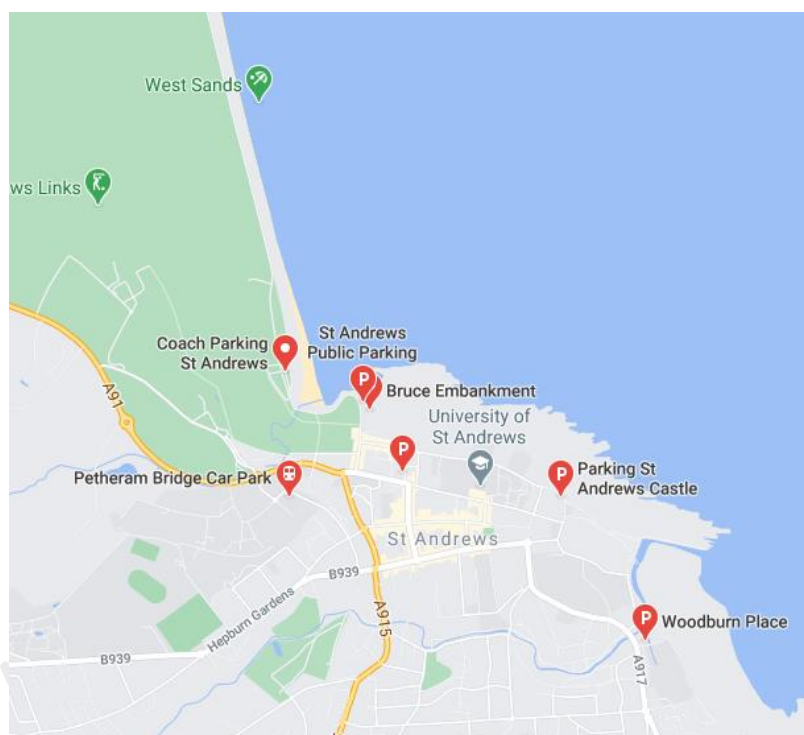
St Andrews has been a popular destination for tourists and visitors for many years, often struggling with the influx of traffic in this busy university town. It has a mix of on-street parking enforcement and also public car park fees, enforced by Fife Council. There is a large, free car park at West Sands beach, which is ten minutes' walk from the town centre, which also accommodates coaches/motor homes (see map below).

There is usually availability of spaces, but congestion can occur at peak times with people leaving the car park (and queues at the small round-about exit).

Trip Adviser comments reflect the fact that generally car park spaces can be found as there is a good supply of car parks. There are no negative comments regarding having to pay parking fees.

During Covid-19 in 2020 car parking charges were lifted in St Andrews. It is proposed that this happens again during lockdowns in 2021, but this has raised some objections, with Dominic Nolan, a Conservative councillor being quoted in *The Courier*<sup>12</sup> as saying:

“Scrapping parking charges may work for some areas but it’s not appropriate for St Andrews. We have already seen last year that without proper parking enforcement, St Andrews comes to a standstill. We’ve all had a difficult year but if there is little turnover of people making use of these spaces the threat posed to the town centre goes far beyond lost income.”

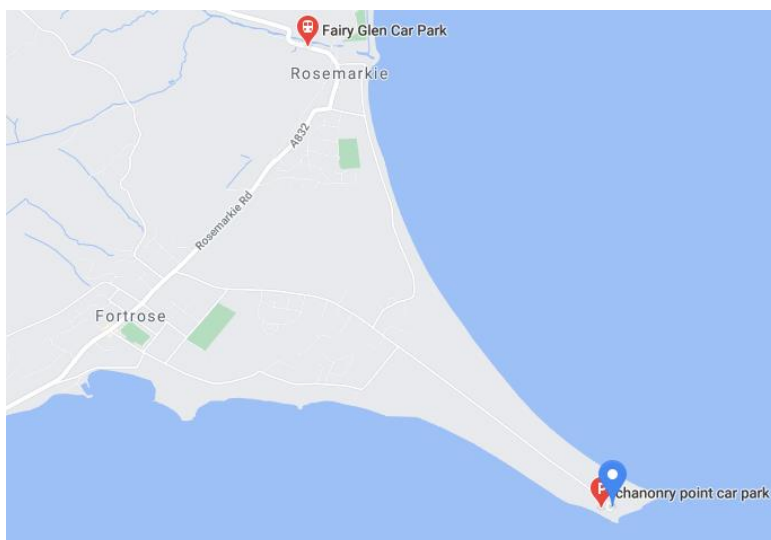


<sup>12</sup> <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/local/fife/1873936/its-not-appropriate-for-st-andrews-concern-raised-as-fife-parking-charges-suspended-from-monday/>

## Chanonry Point, Fortrose

Chanonry Point, located between the villages of Fortrose and Rosemarkie, is a popular location for dolphin watching with visitor numbers estimated at over 120,000 every year.

A phased approach to visitor management improvements have taken place over a number of years. In 2015/16 improvement to its car park and visitor management was undertaken, because it was *“a victim of its own success and congestion has become a problem.”*



At the time it was recorded that an ‘enhanced visitor experience’ would be facilitated through the *“refurbishment of the existing car park area, provision of disabled parking spaces, cycle stands and new seating. There will be a clearer route between the car park and the existing all-abilities path leading to the Point and information on the wider locality will encourage visitors to better understand the area, extend their stay on the Black Isle and /or to revisit in the future.”*<sup>13</sup>

In 2016, Highland Council then further upgraded facilities<sup>14</sup>, with a redesign of the car park, building of new pedestrian footpaths and new dolphin inspired artwork.

Chanonry Point has its own Facebook page, which gives the following information re car parking: *“If you do arrive by car, there are daytime parking charges at Chanonry Point during the season (until October 31<sup>st</sup>). Overnight parking is not permitted, and the area is not suitable for camping. There is, however, an excellent campsite a short walk away, towards Fortrose.”*

## The French Alps

Countries around the world suffer similar issues caused by ‘over-tourism’.

In September 2020 an article was published in ‘Walk Highlands’<sup>15</sup> that examined over-tourism and what lessons could be learned, focusing on the French Alps which has a shorter but busier summer season than Scotland and more motorhome traffic.

*“With overseas holidays largely off the agenda, and formal accommodation capacity in Scotland much reduced due to Coronavirus measures, social media has been ablaze with anger at littering and poor behaviour, tension between visitors and locals, and talk of “over-tourism”.*

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/9138/improvement\\_works\\_to\\_commence\\_at\\_chanonry\\_point](https://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/9138/improvement_works_to_commence_at_chanonry_point)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/inverness/715522/improvements-ahead-for-facilities-at-chanonry-point/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/news/managing-tourism-lessons-from-overseas/?s=03>

The article focuses on the following areas and possible solutions:

### 1. Litter

- More bins with larger capacity.
- More public toilets.
- More signs and enforcement.
- More public education.

### 2. Wild camping

- Public education.
- Ban campfires/dogs/mountain bikes (see photo of French signage, right).
- Bivouac-only in the locations most under pressure.



### 3. Campervans

- More overnight parking. In France you can park your campervan overnight at the roadside, car parks at trail heads and towns. Park4Night type apps.
- Changing attitudes (*"including an acceptance from campsite owners that campervans cannot be forced into being customers. Why not allow parking out in the forests and countryside to be used at night?"*).
- More campervan service points (see photo right) – in industrial estates?



### 4. Traffic management

- More public transport.
- Close roads during 9am-5pm – except for locals.

In conclusion, all these areas have experienced over-tourism and are using different mixes from the options open, such as parking restrictions, improved information/signage and improved/more facilities to alleviate the specific problems they face.

## 6. Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews were carried out with key stakeholders during January/February 2021 to gather more information and community feedback for the Visitor Management Plan. Complete interview notes can be found in Appendix 3, with the following section being a brief summary of these.

### Shane Manning, Principal Officer, Traffic Management & Control, Highland Council

Shane, who also attended the workshop, is supportive of Dornoch's actions to improve traffic management and is keen to assist where he can. He would like a traffic management plan implemented, and also to improve the infrastructure to formalise restrictions. Other issues discussed included parking near the beach, issues around residents' parking permits, a local parking season ticket and/or a self-administered community scheme. Campervan parking in the town and

at the beach was further discussed, along with possible alternative car parks, signposting and Highland Council's Visitor Management Plan which is being worked on for 2022. Shane identified the key issues as being:

- Get campervans off the streets
- Stop dirty camping at the beach

### **Dornoch Medical Centre**

It was noted that the Practice's main concerns regarding motorhomes parking near the surgery on Shore Road, is visitors wandering in the middle of the road when GPs are called out to an emergency. The other main problem is litter caused by visitors dumping their rubbish in the surgery wheelie bins or leaving black bags beside their bins.

### **Dornoch Caravan & Camping Park (DCCP)**

The Caravan & Camping Park has 200 spaces but 75 of them are for permanent static caravans. The 125 available can be used for either caravans or motorhomes. In a normal year (ie pre- Covid-19) the caravan park would be full 3 nights a year, in 2020 the park was full, from mid-July until the end of August. September was slightly quieter, but they were fully booked for electric points. It is believed that 2021 will be similar to last year (ie they will be full) but thereafter it will revert back to more or less what it was. DCCP is looking to extend the park but requires significant investment and increased rent.

It would be unreasonable for DCCP to support any initiatives that promote overnight camping in Dornoch as that would be direct competition. As a result of the NC500, half of the business is single night stays. It is reasonable to think that if more visitors were encouraged to use DCCP facilities, issues of litter and waste would be reduced.

### **Inspector James Rice, Community Policing, Alness Police Station**

Inspector Rice noted that accommodation in Dornoch appeared to be at capacity last year, which leads visitors to wild camp/informal parking of motorhomes. He suggests that the key thing areas of improvement in the short term are:

- Signage – people must know where they are going and be encouraged to take certain routes.
- Online communication – most people look at town/area websites before they visit. Tell them where they can park/go to the toilet/where the caravan park is/where litter bins are.

Could temporary 'over-flow' motor home / camp sites be set up, that the caravan park manages? It happens for big events, such as the Black Isle Show and Belladrum – would this work for Dornoch during 2021?

### **Dornoch Lochans (DL)**

The Lochans has up to 5 pitches for caravans/campervans, with some overflow space down at the Lochs. This area by the Lochs could be made into an 'official' area for another 5 vehicles. The Lochans is a member of the Caravan & Motorhome Club. It was particularly busy last year.

Nothing has been decided yet as to whether DL will extend.

DL would like its grey waste disposal facility to be reserved for their customers, due to its location.

DL see dirty camping as being the worst problem Dornoch faces from over-tourism, and if The Lochans can help alleviate the problem by utilising all their spaces (and using the pitches down at the Loch) they are happy to do so.

## 7. Virtual Workshop

A virtual workshop with key stakeholders was facilitated by SKS Scotland on Tuesday 26 January using the Zoom platform to discuss the community's needs, the challenges that a large influx of visitors to Dornoch bring and possible solutions that are integral to the route forward, both in the short term (during 2021) and in the longer term.

Full details of the methodology including attendees and the format is included in Appendix 2, along with notes taken during the meeting. The following is a summary of that information.

### **Summary of the Workshop**

The workshop was successfully carried out with 14 attendees (plus SKS facilitators, Nicky and Claire). It had been agreed during previous discussions between DACIC and SKS that three main areas should be focused on:

1. Campervans & motorhomes
2. Visitor car parking in town
3. Visitor impact on the town centre... other issues

A presentation was created to communicate the issues to be addressed and facilitate the mapping and scoping of potential options or actions to address them, using screen sharing and annotation of points raised and made as the discussion progressed.

The attendees were also divided into three chat rooms of four/five participants for three different short discussions and after each short discussion the full group was reconvened so that each of the three groups could report back on their findings, and these could be recorded.

The resulting discussions raised the following points, solutions and risks for each of the three areas focused on:

<b>1. Campervans &amp; motorhomes</b>	
Where are the problem areas in town?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motorhomes feel they can park wherever they like – in the Square, but also in side streets (in front of houses) and beach.</li> <li>• The Square &amp; Castle Street are pinch points.</li> <li>• The favourite ad-hoc motorhome parking places in Dornoch cause interruptions to traffic flow and emergency vehicle access and pedestrian safety.</li> <li>• They cause a problem with service buses getting access to the bus stop as vans park everywhere.</li> <li>• Castle Hotel &amp; Courthouse have issues with guests getting access when these large vehicles park without consideration.</li> </ul>
Any other issues?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do motorhome users spend money in Dornoch? Some shop owners report that they don't spend significant amounts of money, but motorhome hire companies have said that the kitchens don't appear used, therefore their customers must be eating out.</li> <li>• Motorhome users cause litter &amp; grey waste issues.</li> <li>• Local businesses are concerned about their commercial viability if parking restrictions discourage visitors.</li> </ul>
What do you think are the solutions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seasonal traffic regulations – e.g. parking for one hour, no return within three hours or pay &amp; display.</li> <li>• Create dedicated motorhome parking in the council owned retail car park opposite the Nisa/Spar (parking for 8 motorhomes by extending the length of the space, currently built for cars).</li> <li>• The caravan park will now allow campervans not staying in their park to empty grey waste, and they've put signs up to let people know (there is a small charge for this). The caravan park is planning to extend its capacity but is currently discussing rent with the Highland Council. The Caravan &amp; Camping Park has 200 spaces but 75 of them are for permanent static caravans. Of the 125 available they can be used for either caravans or motorhomes. They often have some 'seasonal' users who park up for the whole summer and come and go as they please. Currently have one station (one van) to dispose of grey and top up with fresh. Second station being built this year.</li> <li>• There is also grey waste disposal at The Lochans (only for residents). Grey waste plus fresh water.</li> </ul>
Issues / risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That parking restrictions put motorhomes &amp; caravans off from visiting or stopping in Dornoch.</li> <li>• That Dornoch's retail shops and businesses lose business as a consequence of implementing parking restrictions.</li> <li>• Grey waste disposal is reliant on private businesses continuing to offer this service.</li> </ul>



Deliverability	<p><u>Parking restrictions:</u> Highland Council have said they will work with Dornoch's community to implement agreed parking restrictions and charges in identified locations.</p> <p><u>Dedicated motorhome/campervan parking in the Retail Park:</u> Costs are being attained for the ground works necessary to deliver this for the 2021 season (liaising with Highland Council to establish what is required. There is hard core to the depth of motorhomes although grass is coming through the surface).</p> <p><u>Litter &amp; grey waste disposal at The Caravan Park / The Lochans:</u> The Caravan Park carried out this service last year (and plans to introduce a 2<sup>nd</sup> bay in 2021) and discussions are underway with The Lochans.</p>
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## 2. Visitor car parking in the town centre

Where are the problem areas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic management around the Co-op.</li> <li>• Motorhomes and coaches in the Square.</li> <li>• The side streets off Castle Street cause a problem with deliveries and 'there is an accident waiting to happen'.</li> <li>• Parking alongside the Eagle Hotel (rather than in layby opposite).</li> <li>• Speeding vehicles on Castle Street.</li> </ul>
Any other issues?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A positive reflection was that Meadows Car park is being better used (electric charging points are considered an attraction).</li> <li>• There was an issue with a fire engine not being able to access Eaglefield Road without mounting the pavement last year due to visitors parking in inappropriate spots.</li> <li>• Lack of signage mean that motorhomes park in the Square.</li> <li>• Visitors come from many local towns to shop in Dornoch, so there needs to be a good turnover of cars outside shops, for example 'one hour only / no return within three hours', to avoid staff parking.</li> <li>• The attending Principal Traffic Officer from Highland Council commented that the Highlands has been 'free' for too long. They have pay and display widely throughout Skye and the community benefits from the income, they get 50% of the net income. BUT locals cannot be treated differently if restrictions are brought in eg Inverness residents have to pay to park.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is, therefore, a FINE BALANCE! Can be beneficial and the income from motorists pay for the service. Also, there are community gains to be made from this income eg. income from on-street P&amp;D is non-VAT, money used to fund the service and any surplus can be re-invested for further traffic interventions.</li> <li>• If P&amp;D is used for on-street parking it could, for example give the first hour free then £1 for 2 hours?</li> <li>• Off-street P&amp;D gives 50% of any income to the area committee.</li> <li>• On street parking charges/income go to Highland Council who spend them on road repairs and further traffic programmes.</li> </ul>
What do you think are the solutions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic management around the Co-op: the attending Principal Traffic Officer from Highland Council explained the possible 'basket of measures' available to Dornoch if the community want to go down this route. These include, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Restricting use/better definition of where the Dornoch community want people to park.</li> <li>○ On street – allowing people to load – but not restricting business.</li> <li>○ Off street – having restrictions/parking bays that are a certain size ie. if a motor home parks in the wrong size bays, they'll be fined.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Yellow lines immediately outside the Eagle Hotel.</li> <li>• Use signage to discourage motorhomes/campervans/large vehicles from parking in the Square and encourage them to use other available options.</li> <li>• Pay &amp; display around the Main Square and along Court House / Castle – motorhomes encouraged to park in the Retail Park or only in the deep bays in front of the Jail towards Shore Street. Some spaces are suitable for motorhomes, but spaces need to be re-marked out. Deeper parking spaces are at the east end.</li> <li>• Use the airfield car park for motorhomes? How would the people of Dornoch feel with motorhomes going there? It could be used only for overnight/short-term stays and is a potential revenue earner.</li> <li>• One-way options (e.g. St Gilbert Street from the Eagle to the Coop).</li> <li>• Flashing speed sign to encourage slower cars and/or traffic calming at the West Church Hall.</li> </ul>
Issues / risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community/local businesses do not want Dornoch to become unattractive to visitors. The attending Principal Traffic Officer from Highland Council explained that visitors generally follow parking rules and they don't put visitors off.</li> <li>• But would it put local shoppers off? Visitors come from many local towns to shop in Dornoch.</li> </ul>
Deliverability	<p><u>Parking restrictions:</u> Highland Council have said they will work with Dornoch's community to implement agreed parking restrictions.</p> <p><u>Signage:</u> Highland Council have said they will work with Dornoch's community to implement signage.</p> <p><u>Flashing speed sign:</u> Some communities have paid for this themselves. Work with Highland Council to investigate further.</p> <p><u>One-way options:</u></p>

	<p>Work with Highland Council to investigate further.</p> <p><u>Retail Park</u></p> <p>Use the Retail Park for motorhomes opposite the Spar.</p> <p><u>Use the airfield car park</u></p> <p>This should be explored further (on Common Good Land) How would the people of Dornoch feel with motorhomes going there? It could be used only for overnight/short-term stays and is a potential revenue earner. Work with the Caravan Park on this.</p>
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### 3. Visitor impact on the town centre - other issues...

Issues from influx of visitors to Dornoch town centre?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough parking.</li> <li>• There is an issue with speeding vehicles coming into the town.</li> <li>• Have to set up a monitoring system and the average has to be 24 mph before the Council will install it. An electronic smiley face sign is the best solution. 80% of people lower their speed when they see a smiley face sign.</li> <li>• Pay &amp; display – many of the streets also contain residents parking around Cathedral &amp; Square (who would be losing 'their' spots or have to pay for them).</li> <li>• Road safety – speed around the school should be brought into discussion.</li> <li>• Speed limit – where (main arteries into Dornoch)? Speeding is a community concern. The output of this workshop should highlight to road officers that they need to identify speed problems/record actual speeds to help them analyse where they can technically control limits.</li> <li>• The current no-waiting zone in Castle St between Deans Lane and Castle Close only, so not the whole of Castle Street.</li> <li>• Rubbish /litter /sewage is much worse with increasing levels of tourism – should be discussed.</li> <li>• The Central Garage MOT centre – how can they park their vehicles without being too heavily punished, but move their cars away from the Square and Church Street junction?</li> <li>• Other businesses too – Dornoch has a fragile High Street that should be preserved.</li> </ul>
What do you think are the solutions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary motorhome parking near the Retail Park?</li> <li>• Creating signage i.e. happy face/sad face electronic signs instead of 20mph limit – communities have bought them for themselves with the council supporting e.g. at the West Church Hall. The community would own the sign and they can move it, it doesn't have to be at the same location all the time.</li> <li>• P&amp;D around cathedral and square – residents' exemptions?</li> <li>• Bay parking have one hour max to encourage turnover outside the shops.</li> <li>• Voluntary groups to deal with rubbish etc?</li> <li>• It was suggested there should be another session with the community to flag business concerns.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Principal Traffic Officer suggested that on-street parking restrictions could be used as a traffic management tool to maximise footfall turnover in local businesses (1<sup>st</sup> hour free?). Short stays of 15/30 mins/1 hour limits were recently introduced in Broadford which has helped businesses increase visitor turnover to their shops, NOT to negatively impact on trade. A shop front is prime real estate. Don't use parking restrictions on side roads, perhaps a phased approach e.g. around the Square? An alternative is using restrictions in the bays e.g. limiting parking to 1 hour and no return within 3.</li> <li>• Needs to be consensus from residents on the street for restricted parking. Standard set of terms has to be within council policy. £40 per annum for residents / £100 per annum for business in Broadford. The Principal Traffic Officer said he will consider pro-rata rates on the £40 if the car park is only open for a limited time per year (ie during the summer).</li> <li>• Local parking season ticket can be offered eg Fort William/Skye = £10 per month unlimited parking, P&amp;D £3-£5 per day.</li> <li>• Focus on safety issues on loading areas and achieving turnover. Maximise how many customers use them but do not allow abandon vehicles/long-term/all day parking.</li> <li>• Also look at low-cost car parks eg Dornoch South will be pay &amp; display – flat rate for motor homes (£5 per day?). Can't be used for overnight parking by motorhomes.</li> </ul>
Issues / risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One shop owner commented: "There are a large number of businesses to think about here and getting a balance is key. I understand that there is experience with the Highland Council across all different areas, but it's fragile – and not just because of Covid-19 – its fragile, the fact we have a High Street, and a vibrant community is fragile."</li> </ul>
Deliverability	<p><u>Parking restrictions:</u> Highland Council have said they will work with Dornoch's community to implement agreed parking restrictions.</p> <p><u>Signage:</u> Highland Council have said they will work with Dornoch's community to implement signage.</p> <p><u>Flashing speed sign:</u> Some communities have paid for this themselves. Work with Highland Council to investigate further.</p> <p><u>Voluntary community litter pick-up:</u> This should be investigated.</p> <p><u>Traffic officer spending more time in Dornoch</u> The greater the need for a traffic officer in Dornoch, the better the chance of getting one. Community driven Visitor Management plan ties in with Council tourism committee with onus on delivering council wide solution. Has to accommodate local needs. Dornoch is ahead of the game by starting to look at tourism management</p>

## 8. Proposed Solutions



### 8.1 Online Communication.

We know that many people research their trips online before they visit. Dornoch can help visitors plan their trip by adding prominent information online about where cars and motorhomes should park in Dornoch.

It would be helpful to include **“tips for motorhomes”** – best places to park, where to get rid of waste, where to go for overnight stays, campsite contact details, alternatives if the campsite is full. And a polite list of what you can do to “respect the local community and environment”. E.g. dispose of rubbish appropriately, not parking in car bays.

### 8.2 Signage

Current welcome signage is in place on the A949 at the school, and at Poles Road (north entry). It is suggested that signage should be added on the road from Embo, to mark the boundary and encourage traffic to reduce their speed. The new Springfield development is the suggested location.

#### **Town:**

The DACIC have mapped out a suggested change to signage. The aim is to direct motorhomes and visitors to park in the most suitable areas. Importantly, motorhomes will be directed away from the central square to park in the Retail Park or Meadows Car Park.

See Appendix 4 for more information.

#### **Beach and Golf Road:**

- Single Track Road signs
- Passing Place signs (particularly at the two new proposed passing places).
- 20 mph zone sign (Roads Dept will install the relevant speed test equipment as a first step; a Road Traffic Order is required to implement).
- No Through Road sign at junction between Golf Road and Beach Road
- Unsuitable for long vehicles sign at Golf/Beach Road junction.

Top Car Park has signs outlining the restrictions including no sleeping in vehicles overnight.

Enforcement of the rules is needed.

See Appendix 4 for more information

### **Blue Flag Beach Status**

To retain the beach status, a new information board is needed in the Top Car Park. This board must show safety information (including hazards), useful contacts (beach operator, medical/emergency services), beach code of conduct, map of the beach showing location of facilities and water quality information

A grant has been awarded for this signage by the Common Good Fund. For 2021 the existing Town Map will be reskinned to include this information.

### **8.3 Passing Places**

Golf Road and Beach Road are both single track roads that lead to the top beach car park. It is proposed that signage warns drivers that the road is narrow and single track, passing places are created and yellow lines drawn. The roads are managed and maintained by The Highland Council who are responsible for this work.

A new passing place by the ESRA shed is proposed.

### **8.4 Beach Car Parks**

#### **Top Car Park**

This is managed and maintained by the Highland Council. New disabled places and signage were added in 2020.

**Pay and Display** - It is suggested that this carpark becomes pay and display from 1 March to 31 October. Communities can decide on some aspects e.g., first hour free, £1/hour thereafter, charges apply 10-5.

**Resident permits** - would be available, THC fee structure suggests a £40 per year cost to residents.

**Access** – Posts on the north side of the entrance are causing parking issues.

Suggested changes:

- Remove the posts to allow cars to park on the grass (this area is currently leased by RDGC, but any new lease would NOT include this area)
- Move the posts back 2m to provide more parking space
- Paint yellow lines/box junction to try and prevent parking which blocks the entrance.

#### **Overflow Car Park & Playpark Car Park**

These are situated on Dornoch Common Good (DCG) Land. There is potential to add Pay and Display to these car parks, as with the Top car park.

The Highland Council could run the P&D scheme and the profit would be used on community projects. This would need to be the subject of a Common Good consultation. Non made-up areas (e.g. overflow) would need to be maintained by DCG.



The Playpark Car Park would benefit from levelling and resurfacing the area between the road and the parking bays with scalplings. Signage to restrict over-night parking and pay and display charges should also be investigated.

Full public consultation would be needed on the implementation of Pay and Display parking at the beach.

### **Airfield Carpark**

This carpark is 1km for the Caravan Park and has access to the beach. It is on Common Good Land and under the control of the managers of the Dornoch Common Good Fund.

This is a potential site for overflow from the Caravan Park and for motorhomes that have been displaced from wild camping at the beach car parks. The car park could be redesignated for use as an overnight parking place for motorhomes.

- Roughly 8 spaces could be created on the northern edge, allowing space for other vehicles to also use the car park.
- Regulations could limit duration of stay (suggest 2 nights) and other related issues such as picnic tables and awnings.



One suggestion is to allow the Caravan Park to charge a reduced fee (suggest £10) for the overflow parking in exchange for them servicing the area. It would be one way for the Caravan Park to test the market for potential expansion of their site.

Initial consultation with THC and the Caravan Park has ruled out this option at this time. The Caravan Park do not want to run this site and THC were concerned about its proximity to the airfield.

## **8.5 Town Car Parks**

### **Meadows Car Park**

This was used by motorhomes in the summer (2020) and the school buses park there during the day. It has been mentioned as a potential area for motorhomes to stay overnight when the campsite is full, restricted to self-contained motorhomes with a maximum night stay.

### **Retail Park**

The retail carpark (opposite the Spar Supermarket) has been suggested as a temporary daytime car park for motorhomes whilst Dornoch South is developed.

There is hard standing in place, however, grass is coming through. A short-term solution is to trim the grass and mark out motor home bays, with no charging. Signage would be needed to direct motorhomes here.

If this area was needed for motorhomes longer term, additional hardstanding and signage may be required.

As this is a Highland Council carpark, it would require a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) at £1k, with hard standing & signage potentially £5-10k. The TRO procedure takes 3 months; 14 days statutory consultees, 21 days for the general public, then 1 month to follow up and try to resolve any issues raised. These costs could be offset against year one income

### **Dornoch South**

This is a 33,950 sq. m. (blue outline below) plot of land that is on the site of an old abattoir. It is 40 meters from the main town square and accessible from the current road network. It has all standard utilities.

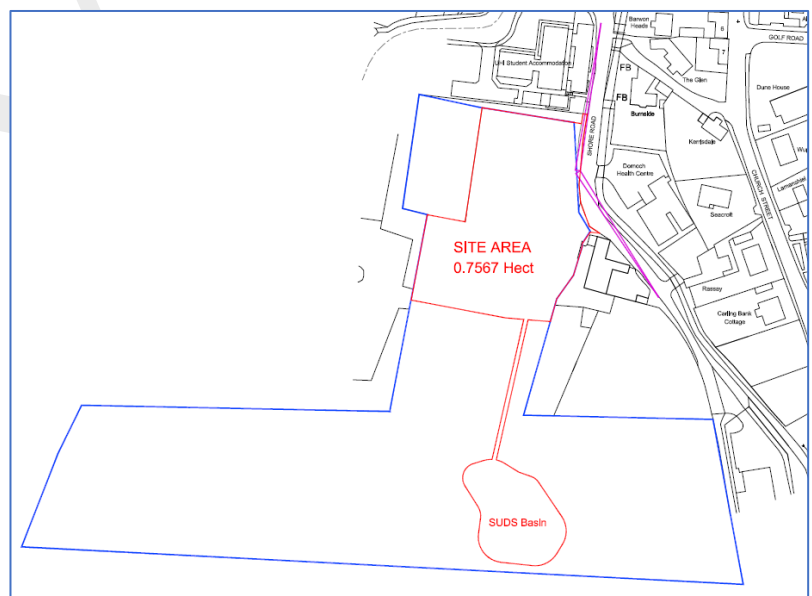
DACIC has been working on plans to develop a car park on this site since 2017. A detailed feasibility study and business plan was conducted in 2019, which set out the phases of development:

- Phase 1 - Vehicle Park (Red area in the north of the site, 4500 sqm)
- Phase 2 - Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)
- Phase 3 - Curling Rink and Community Building (working in partnership with North Highland Curling Trust and the Dornoch & District Community Association).

The vehicle park will cater for coaches, motorhomes and cars. There is also provision for disabled and parent & child parking spaces. Pay and Display charges will be implemented. There will be no provision for overnight parking of motorhomes.

Full details can be found in the “Planning application 20/03765/FUL - Design & Access Statement” document.

In 2020 an SLF grant was awarded to purchase the land from the current owners. The project was not awarded Rural Tourism Infrastructure Funds in Jan 2021, but it is on the waiting list.



Whilst funds are secured for the full project, the DACIC are researching the possibility of funding hardstanding to allow for part of the area to be used for car parking during the 2021 tourist season. The council will put in P&D machines.

## 8.6 Speed Restrictions.

Excessive speeds have been mentioned as a problem on both the beach roads and the road entering into town.

Beach Road – Speed monitors can be erected by the Council. 20mph can only be introduced if average speed is currently 24mph or less. This process would need to be carried out in peak season.

Town - As the average speed is over 24mph a 20mph cannot be introduced. An option available is to install a 'watch your speed' device e.g., at the Sutherland Road/Struie Road junction with Castle Street (£3k) which would need to be funded by the community.



Speed Indicator Devices (SPIDS) are electronic signs which display your speed along with a smiley or frowning face. These have been recommended as an effective way of slowing traffic by THC. They can be purchased the Community Council and managed by THC. It is possible to move the signs periodically.

The other option in town are changes to the road layout to slow traffic. These are major changes.

## 8.7 Road Changes and Pedestrianisation.

### Road Changes

One suggestion to combat traffic congestion was to implement a One-way system in St Gilbert Street.

Traffic flow around the Town Square could be improved in the short term by simplifying the road layout with improved road markings and signage; for example, giving clear passage for the main traffic going to Embo.

On Dean's Lane a small hammer head is required for deliveries to Dornoch Stores and the Hospice Shop.

### Pedestrianisation

There is a need to create a distinction between vehicles and pedestrian spaces in the town square. Any 'fixtures' to mark these areas need to allow for coaches turning space and regular pedestrian events, such as pipe band parades, Hogmanay street party, bonfire night and games day parades.

Use of alternative materials to demarcate pedestrian zones could be effective. These longer-term plans would need detailed community consultation to develop a shared 'Vision for the Square' as previous proposed changes over the years have met with opposition.

## 8.8 Pay and Display

Suggested areas for P&D:



Beach car parks, particularly the Top Car Park  
Dornoch South  
Town Centre - Main Square and along Court House / Castle Street

The town square currently has parking restrictions - one hour, no return in three.

The Highland Council can prohibit or restrict parking at identified risk areas (e.g. Shore Road) if there is provision elsewhere at Pay and Display sites.

Business Permits - THC run P&D also have an option for businesses to purchase permits at £100 for a year. Local resident permits are currently £40 a year.

Profits from P&D can be used to fund parking officers.

## 8.9 Enforcement

Income from the Pay and Display machines would fund traffic enforcement officers, these parking wardens must be uniformed Highland Council wardens.

Officers work 07:30 to 22:00 and have educational role, so may visit at 8pm and warn motorhomes not to park overnight. It is possible that volunteers or town officers could be trained in the education role.

The displacement associated with car park charges needs to be considered. For example, charging at the beach may lead to 'unwanted' parking in the Golf Club car park. THC report that 80% of visitors are happy to comply with parking charges and actively look for the appropriate places to park.

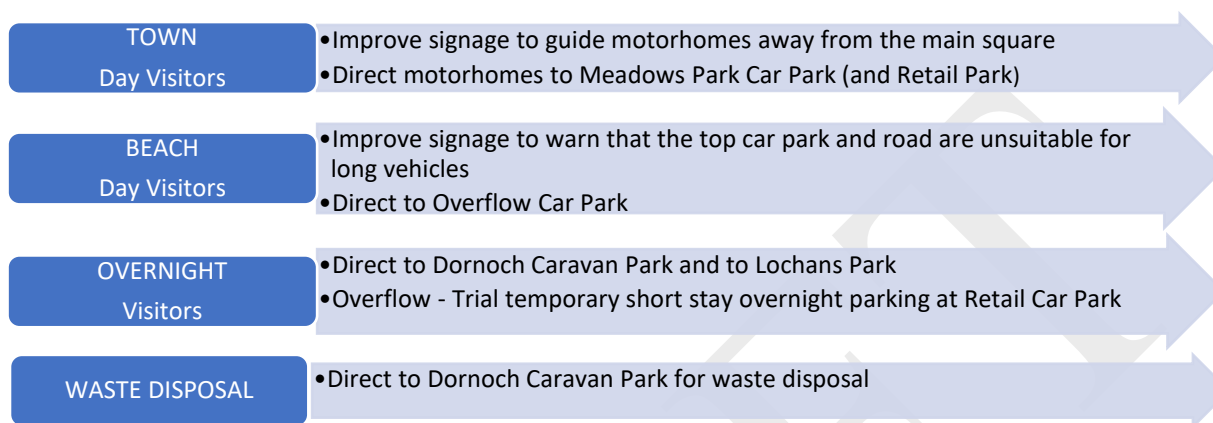
## 8.10 Litter

After initial problems with excess litter from visitors at the beach, the issue was solved with increased collections. A blue bin for recycling has been requested for the beach area.

In town, there were reports of visitors using commercial bins to dump their waste and leaving bin bags beside these bins.

### 8.11 Motorhome Strategy

The aim is to encourage motorhomes to park/stay in suitable areas by improving information and signage. The first priority is to make sure motorhomes use the campsite facilities for overnight stays and waste disposal.



We suggest Dornoch trials temporary overnight parking for “over-flow” motorhomes at the Retail Park. This would give extra capacity during peak season in 2021/22 and allow for the market to readjust post- Covid-19 restrictions.

Concerns were raised by The Highland Council over the proximity of the Airfield Car Park to the airfield and the Dornoch Caravan Park do not currently want to manage this site. The Airfield Car Park is therefore not currently an option unless these viewpoints change.

The Dornoch Caravan Park reports on a normal year, they are only full when there is an annual event on; in 2020 they were full for 6 weeks of the summer. With considerable investment, they could expand their facilities, however, they are not convinced there will be the demand long term.

## 9. Project Phases

Phase 1 below identifies projects which are possible to action in 2021 and do not require extensive public consultation (see communication strategy, 10)

PHASE 1				
Area	Projects	Delivered By	Funding	Timescales
<b>Online Communications</b>	Add parking, waste disposal and other visitor info to Visitdornoch.com & Discover Dornoch App Social Media – repeat posts regularly	DACIC & DACC	DACIC & DACC	Early 2021
<b>Information Signage</b>	<b>Town and Beach</b> Strategy produced by DACIC for town and beach Direct traffic to the most suitable areas.	Designed and installed by The Highland Council	The Highland Council	Ready for tourist season 2021
<b>Information Signage</b>	<b>Beach and Golf Road</b> Single Track Road Passing Places x 2 No Through Road (junction between Golf & Beach Road) Unsuitable for long vehicles (at Golf/Beach Road Junction)	The Highland Council	The Highland Council	2021
<b>Information Signage</b>	<b>Beach Overflow &amp; Play Park Car Park</b> Overnight Parking Restrictions	DACC	DACC Funds	2021
<b>Information Signage</b>	<b>Beach Top Car Park</b> Blue Flag Information Board	DACC	DACC Funds	2021. In progress.
<b>Traffic Signage</b>	<b>Castle Street</b> Smiley face speed sign on Castle Street	The Highland Council	Common good fund	2021
<b>Works</b>	<b>Top Beach Car Park</b> Repositioning of entrance posts	DACC	Common good fund	2021
<b>Works</b>	<b>Beach Play Park Car Park</b> Levelling and re-grading	DACC	Common good fund	2021
<b>Works</b>	<b>Beach Overflow Car Park.</b>	DACC	DACC Funds	2021



*Dornoch Visitor Management Plan*

	Entrance remodelled			
<b>Works</b>	<b>Dornoch South Plan B</b> Hardstanding for cars only.	DACIC Local contractor quoting	£50k est Common good fund and Town Centre Fund	Aim for tourist season 2021.
<b>Works</b>	<b>Retail Car Park</b> Overnight parking for motorhomes. Liaise with THC to establish what is required. Possible grass strimming and bay markings needed	The Highland Council (own carpark) & DACIC	Common good fund	2021
<b>Works</b>	<b>Town Centre</b> Parking bay markings	The Highland Council	The Highland Council	
<b>Litter</b>	<b>Beach Top Car Park</b> Beach Car Park Blue Bin	Recycling bin to be installed by THC	The Highland Council	Confirmed for 2021
<b>Litter</b>	Keep Dornoch Tidy. Community clean up days	DACIC Business Group	n/a	2021
<b>Other</b>	<b>Parking Restrictions</b> Castle Street layby from St Gilbert Street to Deans Close.	The Highland Council	The Highland Council	2021
<b>Other</b>	<b>Beach &amp; Golf Road</b> Speed tests for 20mph signs	Roads Dept - speed test Road Traffic Order		2021

PHASE 2				
Area	Projects	Delivered By	Funding	Timescales
<b>Works</b>	<b>Dornoch South Plan A</b> Parking for campervans, coaches.	DACIC appointed consulting engineer	Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund & Highland Coastal Communities Fund	Dependent on funding
<b>Works</b>	<b>Parking Markings</b> Town centre bay marking in town square and surrounds. For buses, motorhomes and cars.	The Highland Council	The Highland Council	Public consultation Late 2021
<b>Works</b>	<b>Town Square Toilets</b> Upgrade facilities	DACC and The Highland Council	Common Good Fund	2021-22
<b>P&amp;D</b>	<b>Town Centre</b> Main Square and along Court House / Castle	The Highland Council	The Highland Council	Public consultation Late 2021
<b>P&amp;D</b>	<b>Dornoch South Plan B</b> P&D machines (seasonal)	The Highland Council	The Highland Council	Public consultation Aim for tourist season 2021.
<b>P&amp;D</b>	<b>Beach Top Car Park</b> P&D machines (seasonal)	Highland council	From P&D machines	Aim for tourist season 2021. Community consultation needed.
<b>Enforcement</b>	<b>Enforcement</b> Would P&D machines pay for traffic warden	Highland Council	From P&D machines	Aim for 2021. More P&D income may be needed – 2022.
<b>Road Markings</b>	<b>Road Markings</b> Yellow lines along Golf Road and Beach Road Outside Eagle Hotel. At Church Street/Castle Street junction.	The Highland Council	The Highland Council?	Public consultation late 2021.

PHASE 3				
Area	Projects	Delivered By	Funding	Timescales
<b>Works</b>	<b>Dornoch South Plan A</b> Building work	DACIC	unknown	2023
<b>Works</b>	<b>Retail Car Park</b> Hardstanding for campervans	The Highland Council (own carpark)	Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) at £1k Hard standing & signage est £5-10k. Offset costs against income?	TRO – 3 month timescale + 1 month follow up + works 2023
<b>Street Scaping</b>	<b>Town</b> Making areas more pedestrian friendly	DACC & The Highland Council	Common Good Fund	2023
<b>Traffic Management</b>	<b>Town</b> Review one-way street options for St Gilberts Street	The Highland Council	The Highland Council	2023
<b>Traffic Markings</b>	<b>Beach Road and Golf Road</b> Yellow lines	The Highland Council	The Highland Council	2022

## 10. Communication with the Local Community & Visitors

Key messages from the Visitor Management Plan should be effectively and clearly communicated with both the local community and visitors to enable its smooth and successful implementation.

### Communication with the Local Community

It is important that Dornoch's residents, businesses and community groups work together to action the Visitor Management Plan if its success is to be maximised. By fostering ownership and understanding of the benefits it will bring and how it can make living in Dornoch a more positive experience it is more likely to be smoothly implemented. Residents and local business owners should also be encouraged to communicate key messages from the Plan to visitors so that they have as positive an experience when visiting the town as possible.

- **Community Survey**

It may be useful to undertake a community survey, which engages with residents and all those stakeholders who have not been involved in the Workshop, interviews etc. Further information can be garnered from this to help inform the Visitor Management Plan, and it will also ensure that all parts of the community feel as if their opinions have been listened to and taken account of. A survey can be carried out on Survey Monkey and responses quickly collected and analysed.

- **Collaborative News Network**

A Collaborative News Network that is flexible and can adapt but allows all stakeholders to be involved and take ownership of the plans should be created from the outset. It is important that local businesses and residents buy-into the Visitor Management Plan to help its smooth roll-out.

A Collaborative News Network can be initiated through meetings (remote or actual) when the plan should be shared and action points undertaken. Digital communication such as WhatsApp groups can be used to communicate progress, which could develop to become a private area of the Dornoch.org & Visit Dornoch websites, newsletter, blog, social media etc.

- **Websites**

[The Dornoch website](#) is live and should be updated with information/key messages for the local community in particular.

### For Visitors/Tourists

Good communication and promoting key messages from the Visitor Management Plan will allow visitors to plan their trip before they arrive and understand where the best parking is for their needs and avoid those areas their vehicles cannot access or may face restrictions.

- **Websites**

[The Visit Dornoch website](#) is live and should be updated information/key messages which targets visitors/tourists.



A relevant blog discussing the different car parks could be written, added to the website and shared on social media.

- **App**

The Discover Dornoch app should have all visitor management messaging on it, to enable visitors to access key information before and during their trip.

- **Printed materials**

Items such as a leaflet with key messages/information/maps could be produced that can be given out by local businesses. This can also be uploaded to the Visit Dornoch website, shared on social media etc.

In addition, a postcard collecting and/or pointing people to the website (where a 'suggestions' page could be added) may be worthwhile, particularly for those visitors who do not use digital technology.

- **Social media**

Visit Dornoch has active Twitter and Facebook accounts. Key messages from the Visitor Management Plan should be shared and 'pinned' on them, particularly during busy times.



### Messaging for visitors/tourists

The aim is to provide visitors with a consistently good experience to encourage them to return and recommend the area to others. We need to ensure their experience is excellent at every touch point.

*Dornoch is a unique, beautiful place enjoyed by visitors and tourists all year round, whom we welcome with open arms. We work hard in order to make your experience as enjoyable as possible, particularly during busy times of the year. Please follow these guidelines to make the most of your time in Dornoch.*

- Signage – *“Please follow our new signs and traffic routes and take note of the type of vehicle you are in before driving down narrow/restricted access areas, to prevent roads becoming blocked.”*
- Parking – *“Please follow the signs to the parking places and park considerately. Please be aware that those with disabilities, older people and those with young children may not be able to walk short distances.”*

- Caravans, campervans & motorhomes – *“if you are staying overnight, we would encourage you to use one of the Caravan Parks close to Dornoch, which have all the services you require to make your stay as comfortable as possible.*
  - <http://dornochcaravans.co.uk/>
  - <https://www.parkdeanresorts.co.uk/location/scotland/grannies-heilan-hame/>
  - <https://dornochholidaypark.co.uk/>
  - <https://dornochfirth.co.uk/>

*There is also temporary short-stay overnight parking in the Retail Park if the Caravan Parks are full.*

*Please avoid staying overnight in Dornoch in locations that are not designated for this purpose.*

*If you are visiting Dornoch during the day, there is parking designed specifically for your motorhomes/campervans/caravans. Please follow the signs to Meadows Park Car Park (and the Retail Park. (Please note the road to the beach and top car park near the beach is unsuitable for long vehicles).”*

- Waste disposal – *“is available at Dornoch Caravan Park and The Lochans for non-residents for a small fee.”*

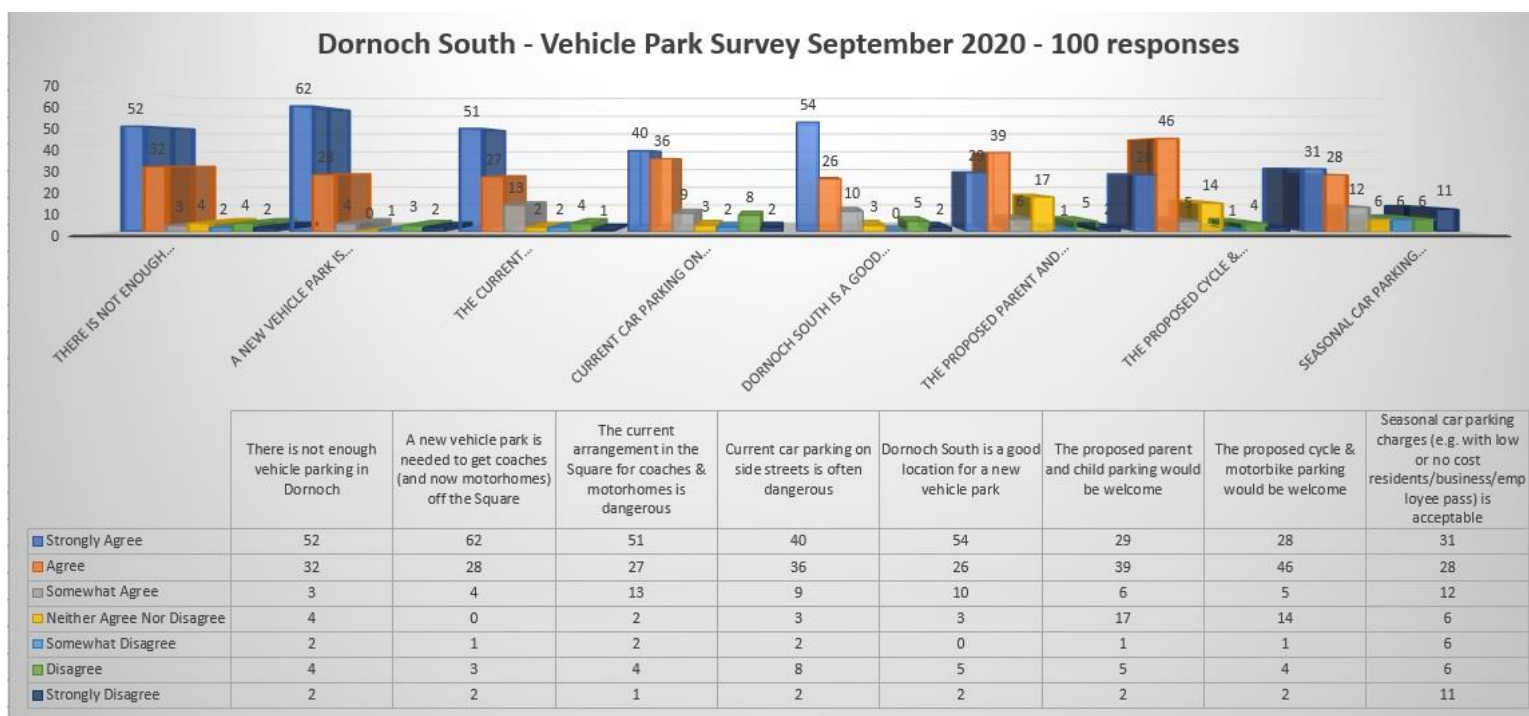
## **11. Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Car Park Survey September 2020
- Appendix 2: Virtual Workshop Notes and Slides
- Appendix 3: Stakeholder Interviews 2021
- Appendix 4: Signage suggestions DACIC



## Dornoch Visitor Management Plan: Appendix 1

Car Park Survey, September 2020.



### Comments:

- The only way I can see to encourage people to park away from the main areas is to make it FREE . [Good advertising + electric charging points for future ] Definitely no overnight stays and although camper vans are contentious is there enough space in the present plan, they do seem to be increasing annually. If lining the car park for cars make sure there is the correct width for modern vehicles + charging points mention above again to encourage long stay, although less numbers, and not the result that occurs in places like Eastgate centre Inverness many areas are not available to SUV's 4 x4 , which are very common in this area , rightly because of the rural nature [ they are not "Chelsea tractors"].
- I'm sure there will be highly visible signage throughout the town which will naturally channel all the vehicles to this parking area.
- Yellow parking lines around the CO-OP please. Too many people parking on the pavements which is not good for people with disabilities. The parking at the beach has become a nightmare. Stop the camper vans clogging up golf road and make them use the area next to the play park. We must start charging for parking in the town and use this money for our benefit.
- Shore road would need to be widened somewhat
- This is a vital addition to the town but we must be extremely careful to ensure locals (not just dornoch residents but the wider area) can still park for free on the streets. Our strong local retail economy relies heavily on short term but street parking. As we know our population skews over 60 and this ability to park locally keeps everyone safe and the town thriving.
- It is a good idea to move the campervans out of the square but I think the proposed new carpark site is too far away from the Cathedral for the coach tours. Unless of course the intention is to discourage them from visiting Dornoch.

- I definitely think we need to get cars off the main roads & side streets in Dornoch and especially large vehicles as they block views for other motorists and also block pedestrians' views when crossing the roads which in turn means motorists may not see pedestrians crossing the roads. Sometimes I shake my heads where and how people park their cars, especially very close to junctions which is very dangerous as Dornoch becomes busier I feel alternative parking is essential but it also needs to be well signposted for motorists and we need to encourage them with easy signage to head straight away to the Dornoch proposed vehicle parking. It is only a short walk to the center and should not be a problem for anyway. I think though, particularly for residents that there should be some kind of short time parking eg. 10mins by the coop or chemist etc. for quick access as expecting residents to park in Dornoch South just to go into the coop for a pint of milk is not fair, perhaps a couple of 'permit holder' spaces for 10mins in those areas would be a good plan and make sure that holders are aware that this is strictly limited to 10mins :-)
- Access down Shore Road is very narrow and dangerous with pedestrians accessing the toilets and local buses. Access would be safer along Castle Close. Or Shore Road between the meadows and the Square made one way.
- I personally think that parking charges should not be applied period. I think it has a detrimental and negative effect on the town.
- Great idea however if there are charges it won't be used as camper Van's golf buses don't want to pay.
- If there are to be parking charges they need to apply to the whole town otherwise if they only apply to the proposed new parking visitors will continue to park wherever it is free. Pleased to see porous surface to be used in some areas as this helps reduce surface runoff and possible flooding in heavy rainfall.
- Excellent plans. Does this games area replace the potential games barn which never got off the ground? Also tennis court would be good.
- Happy for car parking charges for non residents, but NOT for residents or business
- Local residents should not have to pay for parking at any time. There is sufficient parking for most of the year. When local people come into town, it is for the medical centre, a short shopping trip and for coffee or lunch. It is a shame to charge mostly pensioners and those who find it difficult to walk for parking. I agree that motor homes should pay for parking, but the charge should not put people off returning to Dornoch. Shops and hospitality need the business. The plan for the building is good, if the money can be found.
- long overdue development
- We hope that there are measures in place to prevent overnight parking of motorhomes in your proposed car park. You may also look at how the garage in the square uses these parking places to put up to 12 of the vehicles he is working on. These vehicles create a bottleneck at the junction at the square and church Street. Are you looking at restricting on street parking in order to force vehicles away from the streets in the town centre and into the car park?
- Much needed initiative - hope it goes ahead
- If parking charges are introduced I would suggest these should be applicable only in the tourist season (e.g. April - October and Christmas / New Year). Also, there should be free parking permits for all people resident in Dornoch, paid for by the Common Good Fund if necessary.
- We need more Motorhome overnight parking with electric hook up, water and chemical toilet disposal
- The challenge I would see is if you were to charge for parking people would be inclined to go back to side streets, beach carpark and the square to park.

- It would be desirable to find an area within the overall plan for modern, clean public toilets and get rid of the old toilet block and widen the access road to the new site from the square.
- This would be a very sensible and useful use of this area especially if the other developments take place. In the summer the roads in Dornoch are very overcrowded and easily accessed parking would be immensely helpful.
- This sounds good if you can bring it off
- An unnecessary development predicated on future visitor numbers/traffic for which there is no evidence that I have seen. Another eyesore that detracts from the essence of what makes Dornoch attractive. Ill conceived.
- Another hair brained scheme backed with no funding - no chance.
- Could the area set aside for car parking be reconfigured? Doesn't seem to be many car parking spaces for the size of the area.
- paying for parking is always an issue as people will just seek places that they do not need to pay for and cause narrow roadways to be clogged up and peoples access drives blocked. The issue of overnight campervans parking and waste disposal still needs to be addressed enforcement needs to be sorted out.
- We actively want visitors to use this car park so I sometimes think charging might discourage them from using it.
- More parking encourages more vehicles. We should be encouraging walkers, cyclists and active travel. Any new car parking should be on A9 side of town. Park and ride if necessary.
- I would suggest that the turning into Shore Rd and the width of the road would make it unsuitable for coach parking, more provision would be required for litter and dog waste as I could foresee contamination of the Dornoch burn with litter worse, than it already is. Attention would be required to the deplorable state of the public toilets which are a disgrace to Dornoch
- Only one thing missing Provision of Toilets but that is an issue for Highland Council which will be unlikely to happen .
- Sounds good
- You need to control the volume and timing of Coaches. Charge them a fee to come in and give out time slots they can enter. This allows you to control rather than Coaches controlling the Town .
- Has any thought been given to the shortage of parking for disabled drivers? They don't seem to be very well catered for at present.
- A waste disposal facility might be useful for people passing through
- Would like to see the tennis courts upgraded as they current one is run down and unsightly. Tennis courts would be great for community and tourism, there are no other facilities for outdoor aerobic sport in Dornoch. Tain and Coylumbridge has great courts, the latter one has covered all weather
- As an owner of a house on the square who has to periodically "fight" for a parking place in front of my house I would welcome a new car park to meet the demands of visitors. However, I believe without restrictions on existing street and square parking visitors would still end up dominating those spaces. I would also note the absence of a new and larger public toilet facility that would better accommodate the motor coach load demands.
- No motor homes please
- Dornoch would be ruined by the introduction of yellow lines and parking restrictions.
- Not sure where the parent and child parking provision is. Charging free for residents, are these classed as council tax payers. There is a danger that people rather than pay will park on little

used side streets causing further problems. It is apparent that a lot of motor home drivers are currently not prepared to pay for waste disposal, are they likely to pay a parking charge when they can wild park as they currently do. Great idea to provide more parking but this must be properly thought through

- Any project which would alleviate the traffic burden in the Centre of town, would be most acceptable.
- Are there charging points for electric vehicles?
- There should be a seasonal parking charge to discourage parking on the square. No or low cost permit parking for residents. There is no mention of a public toilet. Having a home on the square, buses will still try to discharge as currently done to drop off passengers to use the toilet. This should be addressed as bud drop off will still create a dangerous situation.
- If possible it should be free for all to park as this is more likely to drive the right behaviours, rather than visitors trying to park in side streets to avoid the charges. More visitors would mean more income to the town and plenty of free parking would help this
- Very few disabled parking spaces which is disappointing plus what is provided are at the back of the parking area making a longer walk into the town for the less able -I can understand they are close to the future social building but for visitors / locals using town facilities not so convenient
- Will there also be parking charges in the meadows car park?
- Extra car parking is required. They next few years will demand more motor home spaces - these are not in the plan. Charging should not be a requirement. It is an investment in the future
- This proposal outlines an excellent use of a dormant central area, within Dornoch, providing enhanced facilities for the benefit of both visitors and the local community.
- We live in Dornoch for most of the summer and when coaches are parked in the square and a service bus comes the area around the bus stop becomes very dangerous with people and coaches in a confined space

## Dornoch Visitor Management Plan: Appendix 2

### Virtual workshop

A virtual workshop with key stakeholders was facilitated by SKS Scotland on Tuesday 26 January using the Zoom platform to discuss the community's needs, the challenges that a large influx of visitors to Dornoch bring and possible solutions that are integral to the route forward, both in the short term (during 2021) and in the longer term.

### Methodology

Invitees included representatives of the Highland Council (a Ward Manager, Elected Member and the Principal Traffic Officer), Dornoch shop owners, restaurant owners, organiser of Events in the Square, Dornoch hotel owners, local B&B owner, the medical centre manager, representatives from Police Scotland and members of DACIC.

See full list of attendees below:

Nicky Hesketh	SKS Consultants	
Claire Whyte	SKS Consultants	
Angela Simpson	HIE	
Phil Tomalin	Highland Council	Ward Manager
Jim McGillivray	Highland Council	Elected Member
Shane Manning	Highland Council	Principal Traffic officer
Paddy Murray	DACC (& DACIC)	
Genevieve Duhigg	DACC (& DACIC)	& Dornoch Stores
Jerry Bishop	DACC	
Joan Bishop	DACIC	
Gordon Sutherland	DACIC	
Eric Devenny	Business	Eagle Hotel
Gareth Dixon	Business	Chemist
Phil Scott	Business	Links House Hotel
Scott Lyon	Dornoch Pipe Band	

Unfortunately, the following invitees could not attend but contact via one to one follow-up calls/interviews were made with those who were contactable. Full details of these interviews are given in **Appendix X**.

Carol McKay	DADCA	Chair
George Munro	Pipe Band	
Jamie Wilson	Police Scotland	
Inspector James Rice	Police Scotland	
Jason Gardiner	Fire Scotland	
Liz Campbell	Medical Centre	
Lillian MacRae	Medical Centre	
Jamie	Business	The Lochans Motorhome accommodation

Colin Thompson	Business	Dornoch Castle Hotel
Lucy Dixon	DACC	

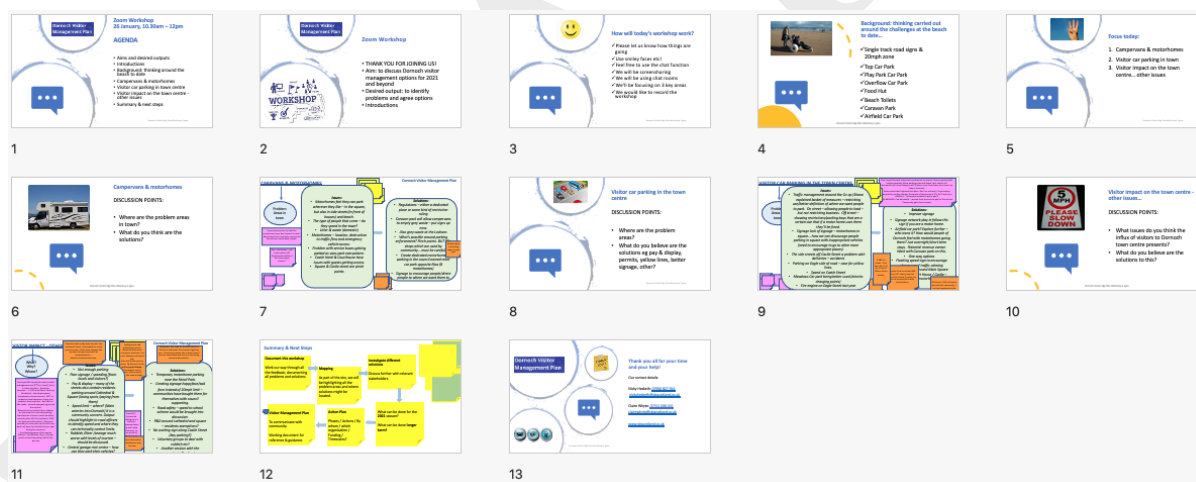
A 'save the date' invitation was emailed to invitees three weeks before the event (see screen shot, right).

A reminder email was sent one week before the workshop, with details and a preview of the slides. In addition, notes from a site undertaken by the Beach Users Group carried out in November circulated to show the significant amount of work and thought previously been carried out regarding Dornoch Beach, the it faces and possible solutions, to avoid duplication.



before the login meeting 2020 were which has challenges

A presentation was created to communicate the issues to be addressed and facilitate the mapping and scoping of potential options or actions to address them. The attendees were divided into three chat rooms of four/five participants for three different short discussions (lasting eight minutes each). After each short discussion the full group was reconvened so that each of the three groups could report back on their findings, and these could be recorded. The following presentation was screen shared (see Appendix Xb for full sized presentation):



## The Workshop

The workshop was successfully carried out with 14 attendees (plus SKS facilitators, Nicky and Claire). It had been agreed during previous discussions between DACIC and SKS that three main areas should be focused on:

4. Campervans & motorhomes
5. Visitor car parking in town
6. Visitor impact on the town centre... other issues

## Workshop Feedback

### Campervans & motorhomes discussion points:



- Where are the problem areas in town?
- What do you think are the solutions?

#### **Issues:**

Discussion feedback from the three groups include the following issues:

- Motorhomes feel they can park wherever they like – in the Square, but also in side streets (in front of houses) and beach.
- Do motorhome users spend money in Dornoch? Some shop owners report that they don't spend significant amounts but motorhome hire companies have said that the kitchens don't appear used, therefore their customers must be eating out.
- Litter & waste (domestic + human)
- The favourite ad-hoc motorhome parking places in Dornoch cause interruptions to traffic flow and emergency vehicle access and pedestrian safety.
- They cause a problem with service buses getting access to the bus stop because the vans park everywhere.
- Castle Hotel & Courthouse have issues with guests getting access.
- The Square & Castle Street are pinch points.
- Will parking restrictions put visitors off? Local businesses are concerned about their commercial viability if this discourages visitors.

#### **Solutions:**

- Bring in traffic regulations – either forcing parking in dedicated locations or traffic restrictions. Restrictions (e.g., might apply outside Dornoch stores is one hour max – encourage the turnover of customers – palatable to people) and Charging (less palatable)
- The caravan park will now allow campervans not staying in their park to empty grey waste, and they've put signs up to let people know (there is a small charge for this). Nb, the caravan park will have double its previous capacity in 2021. Currently have one station at the moment (one van) dispose of grey and top up with fresh. Second station being built this year.
- There is also grey waste disposal at the Lochans.
- Explore what's possible around parking enforcement to help avoid last year's pinch points. BUT Dornoch has 20+ shops which are used by community....must be careful not to impact on their existing business.
- Create dedicated motorhome parking in the council owned retail car park opposite the Nisa/Spar (parking for 8 motorhomes by extending the length of the space, currently built for cars).
- Use signage to encourage people/direct people to where the Dornoch community want them to park.



#### **Visitor car parking in the town centre:**

- Where are the problem areas?
- What do you believe are the solutions e.g., pay & display, permits, yellow lines, better signage, other?

#### **Issues:**

Discussion feedback from the three groups include the following issues:

- Traffic management around the Co-op: the attending Principal Traffic Officer from Highland Council explained the possible 'basket of measures' available to Dornoch if the community want to go down this route. These include,
  - Restricting use/better definition of where the Dornoch community want people to park.
  - On street – allowing people to load – but not restricting business.
  - Off street – having restrictions/parking bays that are a certain size. If a motor home uses these bays, they'll be fined.
- Signage / lack of signage – motorhomes in Square. How can people be discouraged from parking in the Square with inappropriate vehicles? (They need to be encouraged to go to other more appropriate places).
- The side streets off Castle Street cause a problem with deliveries and 'there is an accident waiting to happen'.
- Parking on the Eagle Hotel side of road – case for yellow lines?
- Speed on Castle Street?
- Meadows Car park is being better used (electric charging points are an attraction).
- There was an issue with a fire engine not being able to access Eagle Field last year due to visitors parking in inappropriate spots.

#### **Solutions:**

- Improve signage.
- Use appropriate signage networks i.e., 'follow this sign if you are a motor home'.
- Use the airfield car park? Explore further – who owns it? How would the people of Dornoch feel with motorhomes going there? It could be used only for overnight/short-term stays and is a potential revenue earner. Consult with Caravan park on this.
- One-way options (e.g., St Gilberts Street from the Eagle to the Coop).
- Flashing speed sign to encourage slower cars and/or traffic calming, at the West Church Hall.
- Pay & display around the Main Square and along Castle Street in from of the Court House – better for motorhomes? Some spaces are suitable for motorhomes, but some spaces need to be re marked out. Deeper parking spaces are at the east end.

#### **Other points raised:**

- The community/local businesses do not want Dornoch to become unattractive to visitors. The attending Principal Traffic Officer from Highland Council explained that visitors generally follow parking rules and they don't put visitors off.
- Visitors come from many local towns to shop in Dornoch, so we need to ensure a good turnover of cars outside shops, for example one hour only, no return within three, to avoid staff parking.
- The attending Principal Traffic Officer from Highland Council commented that the Highlands has been 'free' for too long. They have pay and display widely throughout Skye and the community benefits from the income, they get 50% of the net income. BUT locals cannot be treated differently if restrictions are brought in e.g., Inverness residents have to pay to park.
- There is, therefore, a FINE BALANCE! Can be beneficial and the income from motorists pay for the service. Also, there are community gains to be made from this income e.g., income from on-street parking restrictions is non-VAT, money used to fund the service and any surplus can be re-invested for further traffic interventions.

- If parking restrictions are used for on-street parking it could, for example give the first hour free then £1 for 2 hours?
- Off-street parking restrictions including car parks gives 50% of any net income to the area community to be spent locally, they decide on local priorities.
- On street parking charges/income – go to the Highland Council who spend them on road repairs and further traffic programmes.

### Visitor impact on the town centre - other issues...

- What issues do you think the influx of visitors to Dornoch town centre presents?
- What do you believe are the solutions to this?

#### Issues:

Discussion feedback from the three groups include the following issues:

- Not enough parking.
- There is an issue with speeding coming into town.
- Have to set up a monitoring system and the average has to be 24 mph before they will install it – an electronic smiley face is the best way round this.
- 80% of people drop their speed when they see a smiley face sign.
- Parking restrictions – many of the streets also contain residents' parking around Cathedral & Square (who would be losing 'their' spots or have to pay for them).
- Speed limit – where? (main arteries into Dornoch). Speeding is a community concern. The output of this workshop should highlight to road officers that they need to identify speed problems/record actual speeds to help them analyse where they can technically control limits.
- The current no-waiting zone is Castle St between Deans La and Castle Close only, so not whole of Castle street.
- Rubbish /litter /sewage is much worse with increasing levels of tourism – should be discussed.
- The Central Garage MOT centre – how can they park their vehicles without incurring large charges or annoying people? Other businesses too – Dornoch has a fragile High Street that should be preserved.

#### Solutions:

- Temporary motorhome parking near the Retail Park?
- Creating signage i.e. happy face/sad face electronic signs instead of 20mph limit – communities have bought them for themselves with the council supporting e.g. at the West Church Hall. The community would own the sign and they can move it, doesn't have to be at the same place all the time.
- Road safety – speed around the school should be brought into discussion.
- Parking restrictions around cathedral and Square – resident's exemptions?
- Bay parking have one hour max to encourage turnover outside the shops.
- Voluntary groups to deal with rubbish etc?
- It was suggested there should be another session with the community to flag business concerns.

- The Principal Traffic Officer suggested that on-street parking restrictions could be used as traffic management tool (1<sup>st</sup> hour free?) to maximise footfall turnover in local businesses.....15/30 mins/1hour limits e.g., recent parking restriction charges introduced in Broadford help support businesses to force increased visitor turnover to their shops, NOT to negatively impact on trade. It is prime real estate at the shop front. Don't use parking restrictions on side roads – potentially implement a phased approach e.g., around the Square? An alternative is restrictions in the bays e.g., limiting parking to one hour and no return within three.
- Needs to be consensus from residents on the street for restricted parking. Standard set of terms has to be within council policy. £40 per annum for residents / £100 per annum for business in Broadford. The Principal Traffic Officer said he will consider pro-rata rates on the £40 if the car park is only open for a limited time per year (i.e., during the summer).
- Local parking season ticket can be offered e.g., Fort William/Skye = £10 per month unlimited parking, parking restrictions £3-£5 per day.
- Focus on safety issues on loading areas and achieving turnover. Maximise how many customers use them, but can't abandon vehicle all day.
- Also look at low-cost car parks e.g., Dornoch South **will be pay & display** – flat rate for motor homes (£5 per day?). Can't be used over-night.
- The greater the need for a traffic officer in Dornoch, the better the chance of getting one. Community driven ties in with Council tourism committee with onus on delivering council wide solution. Has to accommodate local needs.
- Dornoch is 'ahead of the game starting to look at tourism management'.

Dornoch Visitor  
Management Plan



## Zoom Workshop

- THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!
- Aim: to discuss Dornoch visitor management options for 2021 and beyond
- Desired output: to identify problems and agree options
- Introductions

Dornoch Visitor  
Management Plan

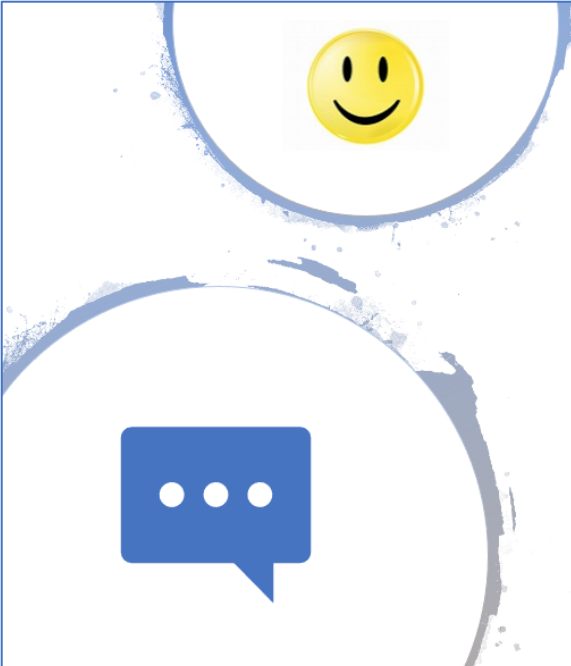


## Zoom Workshop 26 January, 10.30am – 12pm

### AGENDA

- Aims and desired outputs
- Introductions
- Background: thinking around the beach to date
- Campervans & motorhomes
- Visitor car parking in town centre
- Visitor impact on the town centre - other issues
- Summary & next steps



Dornoch Visitor Mgt Plan Workshop 1.pptx.



### How will today's workshop work?

- ✓ Please let us know how things are going
- ✓ Use smiley faces etc!
- ✓ Feel free to use the chat function
- ✓ We will be screensharing
- ✓ We will be using chat rooms
- ✓ We'll be focusing on 3 key areas
- ✓ We would like to record the workshop

Dornoch Visitor Mgt Plan Workshop 1.pptx.



### Background: thinking carried out around the challenges at the beach to date...

- ✓ Single track road signs & 20mph zone
- ✓ Top Car Park
- ✓ Play Park Car Park
- ✓ Overflow Car Park
- ✓ Food Hut
- ✓ Beach Toilets
- ✓ Caravan Park
- ✓ Airfield Car Park

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### Focus today:

1. Campervans & motorhomes
2. Visitor car parking in town
3. Visitor impact on the town centre... other issues



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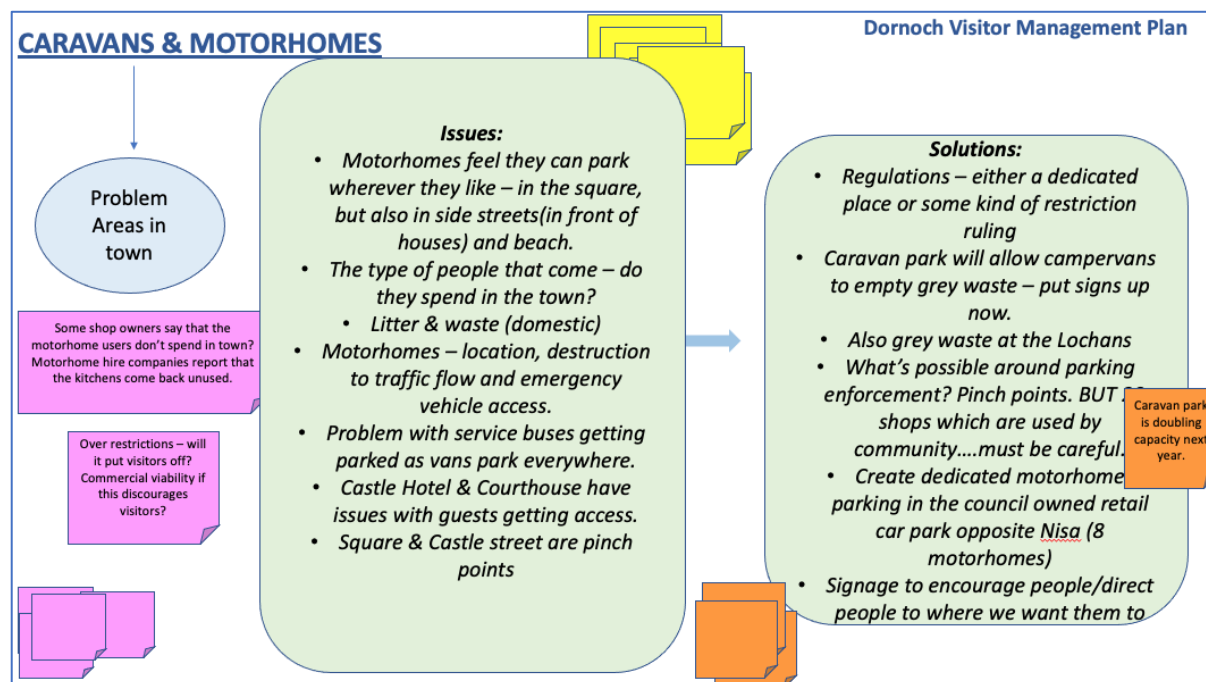
### Campervans & motorhomes

#### DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Where are the problem areas in town?
- What do you think are the solutions?



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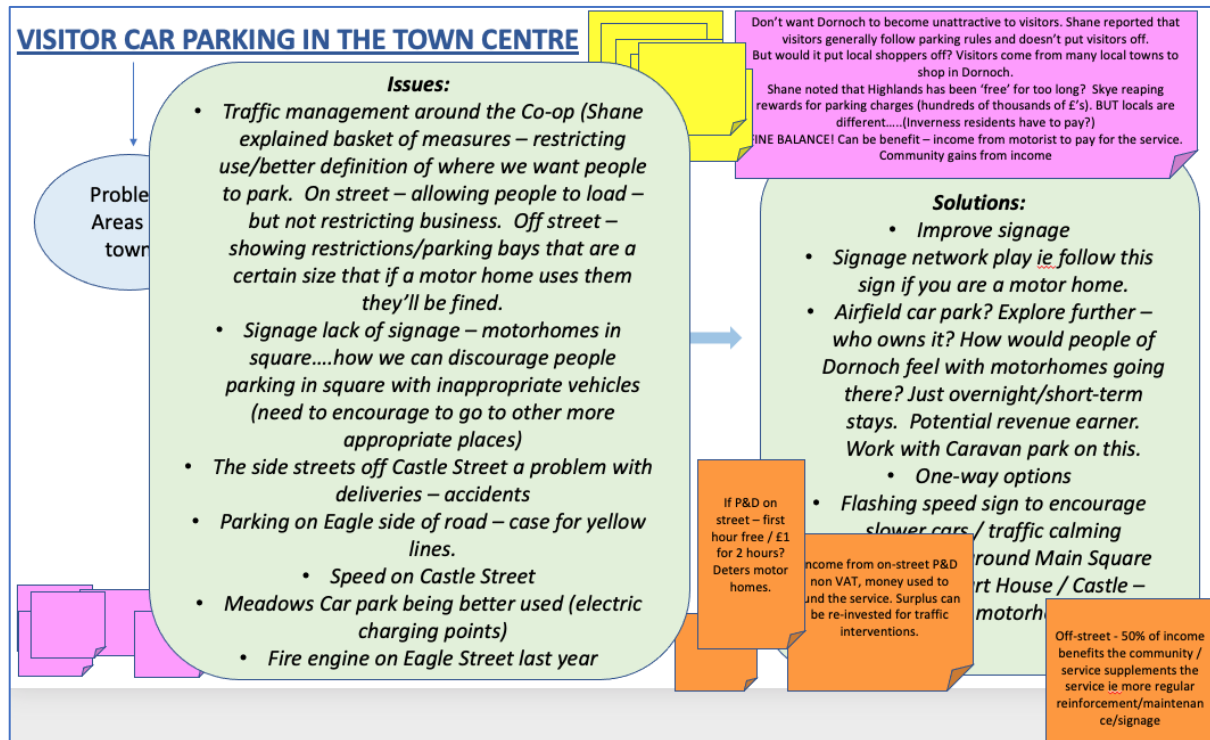


**Visitor car parking in the town centre**

**DISCUSSION POINTS:**

- Where are the problem areas?
- What do you believe are the solutions eg pay & display, permits, yellow lines, better signage, other?

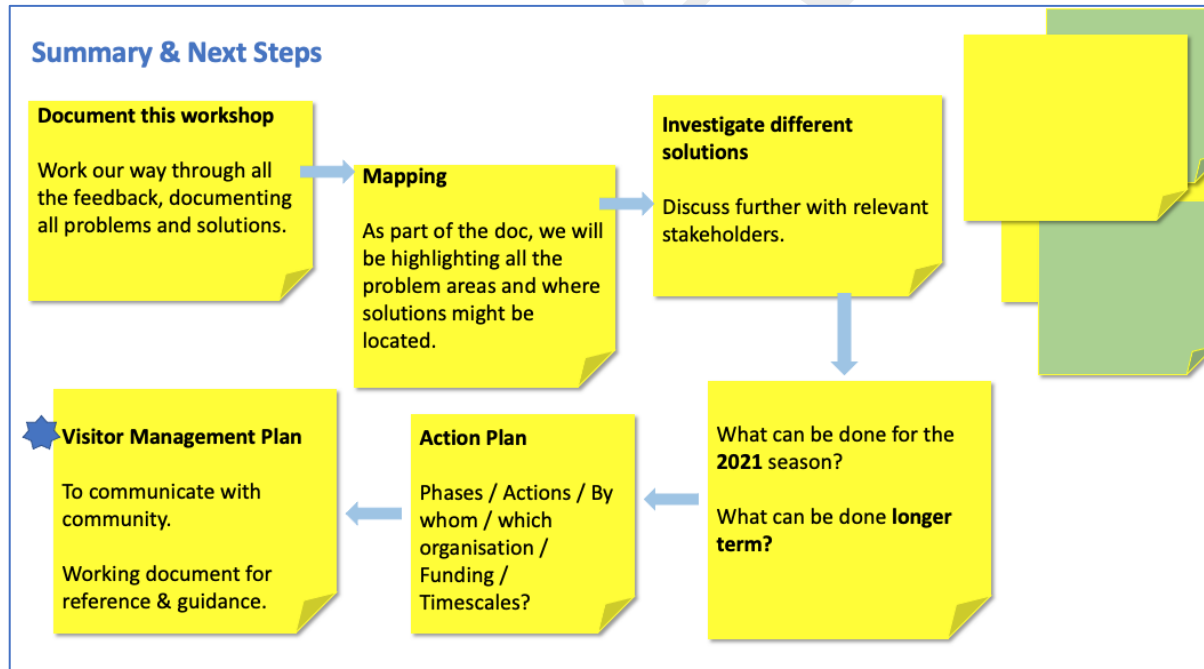
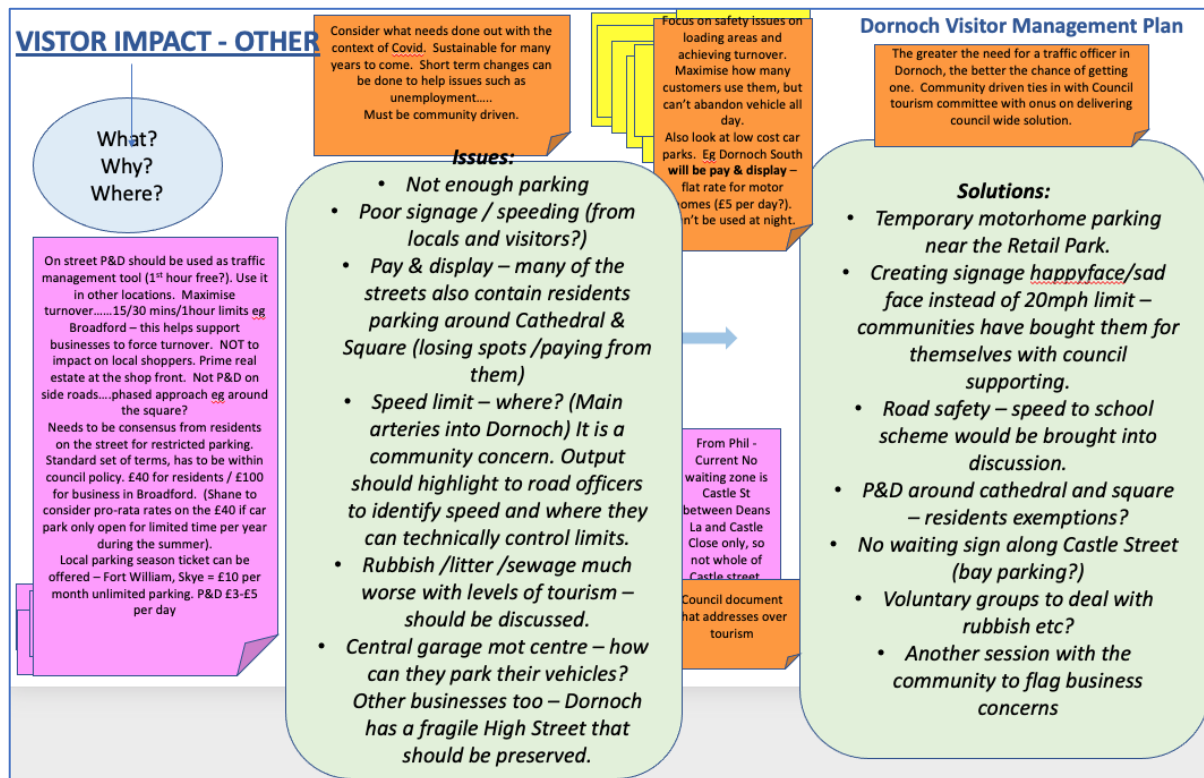
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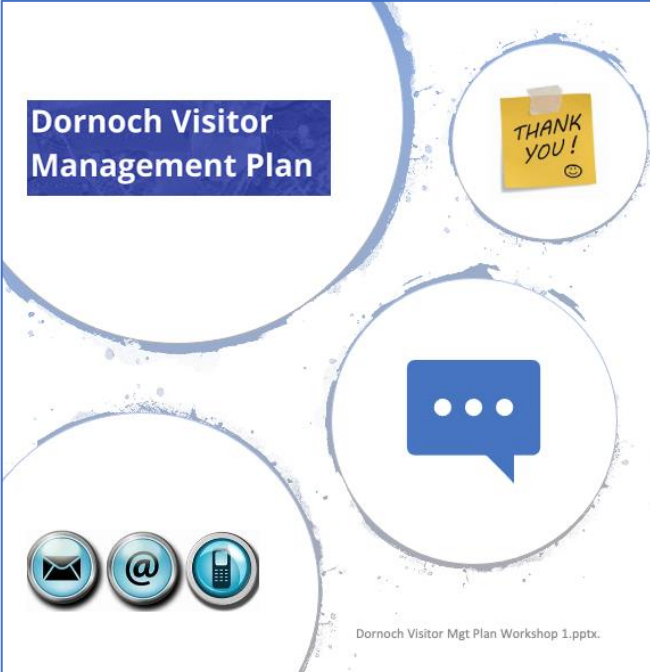


### Visitor impact on the town centre - other issues...

#### DISCUSSION POINTS:

- What issues do you think the influx of visitors to Dornoch town centre presents?
- What do you believe are the solutions to this?





**Dornoch Visitor Management Plan**

THANK YOU! 😊

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## Dornoch Visitor Management Plan: Appendix 3

### Stakeholder Interview Notes

Interviews were carried out with key stakeholders during January/February 2021 to gather more information and community feedback to help inform the Visitor Management Plan.

#### 1. Shane Manning - Principal Officer, Traffic Management & Control

14 Jan 2021. The Highland Council, [shane.manning@highland.gov.uk](mailto:shane.manning@highland.gov.uk), (01463 702217 (Direct) | 07766 785589 (Mobile)

- Shane is supportive of the community's actions to improve traffic management.
- The council are looking to improve the infrastructure (currently no parking restrictions), formalising restrictions and taking into consideration problems of displacement.
- The bigger the level of activity - more income - can afford more enforcement officer. Most visitors play by the rules. Local community bend the rules.
- Funding application for Dornoch South not successful. Plan B is the community get local contractors to lay down hard standing. The Council will run it for the community, out in payment machines. Help with sign posting.
- Need a traffic management plan to locate where we want people to be and where we don't want people to be e.g. signpost motorhomes to one spot.
- Beach parking – notice at top carpark re no motorhomes overnight (8pm to 10am). Want to add yellow lines to beach road to stop them parking there instead.
- Resident parking:
  - **Permits** - purpose of a permit scheme is to exclude unauthorised vehicles. Most suitable when you have to deal with commuter parking in town centres (8am to 6pm restrictions) so that you don't have commuters filling up the local streets. This doesn't fit for Dornoch. £58 residents per year (Inverness). £185 business permit (Inverness). £40 residents permits, £100 business. Doesn't fit well to a small rural community but might fit with local residential streets where you don't want others to park.
  - Local Parking **season ticket** is a better fit.
  - **Self-administered scheme** - the community come up with a permit or registration of vehicles (electronically) everyone who is a resident can park in this car park for free. Council won't administer this for free. They would need to create some kind of registration for locals. How they integrate this - if they are using beach parking the money goes back into the community.
- Beaches - 9am to 5pm parking restrictions - dog walkers and locals go to the beach after work. Can be flexible about the hours of operation.
- Push back - locals won't want to pay - if they want to be on the beach all day and using the amenity, they have to pay.
- Can put a traffic order on any piece of land. Costs are usually about 20% and give the rest back to them.



- P&D - contactless card payments, cashless app, can still take cash. The machines can do everything.
- Jonathan Gun is the local road officer - work with him to get the best fit for the community.
- The council is recreating map-based traffic orders for local communities - regulatory maps and the orders behind them.
- **Traffic regulation orders:**
  - 3 to 9 months to deliver most traffic regulation orders - people can object to this - has to go to committee.
  - Can **do temporary orders** which are quicker, good way to trial things - give you 18 months - only takes 2 weeks - no opportunity for anyone to object. If we have an outcome from the stakeholders - we can formalise this - give notice that it's going to be a temporary order to trial this.
- Speed limits - this is for the roads department. Jonathan is going to get some cameras up to assess the speeds. Interventions on approach roads - speed triggered signs. Community can buy them themselves - can buy it and the council will manage/maintain it for them.
- **Campervans** - stopping them using the car park as a campsite - do this by changing the regs at the beach car park - prohibited between 8pm and 10am. Looking at putting double yellow lines along the beach road to stop people parking along the road if they can't park in the road instead. Also looking to regulate the land further along - same rules would be applied to the new
- Hard standing car park at Dornoch South - community need to do some initial work on the hard standing - council will put signs/payment machines in to help manage it as a car park.
- Signposting - they can get this done for this summer. Need a sign posting strategy and they will help fulfil it. Need key signs. They can get them designed and priced up and manufactured - there might be infrastructure to put the signs on. Need a budget to fund it from. A few thousand pounds.
- Highland Council Visitor Management Plan - being worked on for next year.
- Beach overflow carpark - if they can define the boundaries - they THC can do traffic order and put the parking machine in. Need to make sure there is no planning implications. If it's within the boundary of the road - you're just formalising the road infrastructure for parking vehicles.

## 2. Lillian MacRae - Dornoch Medical Practice Manager

2 Feb 2021. Lillian.Macrae@nhs.scot

- **Pedestrians on the road**

The Practice's main concerns regarding motorhomes parking near the surgery on Shore Road, is visitors wandering in the middle of the road when GPs are called out to an emergency. This has been a problem many times in the past when they stroll off buses in the main square and stop on the road to take photos, etc.

- **Rubbish dumped in surgery wheelie bins**

The other main problem in the past has been visitors dumping their rubbish in the surgery wheelie bins or leaving black bags beside their bins.

### 3. Lynn & Darren Redfern, Dornoch Caravan & Camping Park

4 February, 074103 79236, 01862 810423, [info@dornochcaravans.co.uk](mailto:info@dornochcaravans.co.uk)

- **Capacity**

The Caravan & Camping Park has 200 spaces but 75 of them are for permanent static caravans. The 125 available can be used for either caravans or motorhomes. They often have some 'seasonal' users who park up for the whole summer and come and go as they please.

In a normal year (ie pre-covid) the caravan park would be full 3 nights a year, for the Dornoch Show, Highland Show etc). 2020 was not normal and the park was full, from mid-July until the end of August. September was slightly quieter, but they were fully booked for electric points.

They are looking to extend the park, but it would need a large investment to drain the area they would use which floods easily (estimated at £200,000). This would double their capacity. When they mentioned this to Highland Council 'the first thing they said was that our rent would increase. We are trying to grow our business – which would alleviate the visitor management problems in Dornoch – and yet we'd be penalised by the Council.'

They believe that 2021 will be similar to last year (ie they will be full) but thereafter it will revert back to more or less what it was.

- **Alternative motor home parking**

There was talk of putting Elsan points in the town centre, which they objected to as they saw that as directly 'competing' with and displacing their business. They will not support any initiatives that support overnight camping in Dornoch as that takes money out their pockets. As a result of the NC500, half of their business is single night stays. Why would motorhomes pay to park in the caravan park if they can park in the town for free? 'Caravanning and motorhomes are cheap holidays anyway – do they need to be any cheaper?'

They believe there is a general push from the Council and Community Council to supply overnight parking in Dornoch town, but the current high demand won't last forever and then they'd be left with redundant spaces and facilities.

- **Litter/waste**

"We understand the issues at the beach with litter and waste, so why not encourage visitors to utilise our facilities?"

- **Other issues**

- The garage in the Square currently parks on both sides of the road, which blocks access for motorhomes to drive down to the caravan park. They had stopped doing this quite as much, but it is slowly creeping back again.
- Signs telling people not to park in places is not enough, they will still do it. Parking restrictions need to be enforced.
- Retail staff in Dornoch have a tendency to park right outside the shops. They should be encouraged to park in the car parks slightly out of the town centre.

- 'We only find out about things once they have already been discussed. We would like to be included more and communication improved!'

#### 4. Inspector James Rice, Community Policing, Alness Police Station

4 February, 01349 880277, [james.rice@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:james.rice@scotland.pnn.police.uk)

- Inspector Rice had looked through the draft notes from the Workshop and generally agreed with most of the points. He's been involved in lots of community meetings and is impressed with the way Dornoch Community Council are dealing with things.
- Expectations tend to be unrealistically high around what the Police can do around visitor management.
- Accommodation in Dornoch appeared to be at capacity last year, which leads visitors to wild camp/informal parking of motorhomes.
- He suggests that the key thing areas of improvement in the short term are:
  - Signage – people must know where they are going and be encouraged to take certain routes.
  - On-line communication – most people look at town/area websites before they visit. Tell them where they can park/go to the toilet/where the caravan park is/where litter bins are.
- Inspector Rice has been involved in a Police Scotland strategy group looking at visitor management in Scotland, and the discussion points tend to be around the same points as Dornoch and the Highlands face.
- Could temporary 'over-flow' motor home / camp sites be set up, that the caravan park manages? It happens for big events, such as the Black Isle Show and Belladrum –would this work in Dornoch during 2021?

#### 5. James Shepherd, Dornoch Lochans

11 February, (07397 862538), , [james.100@aol.com](mailto:james.100@aol.com)

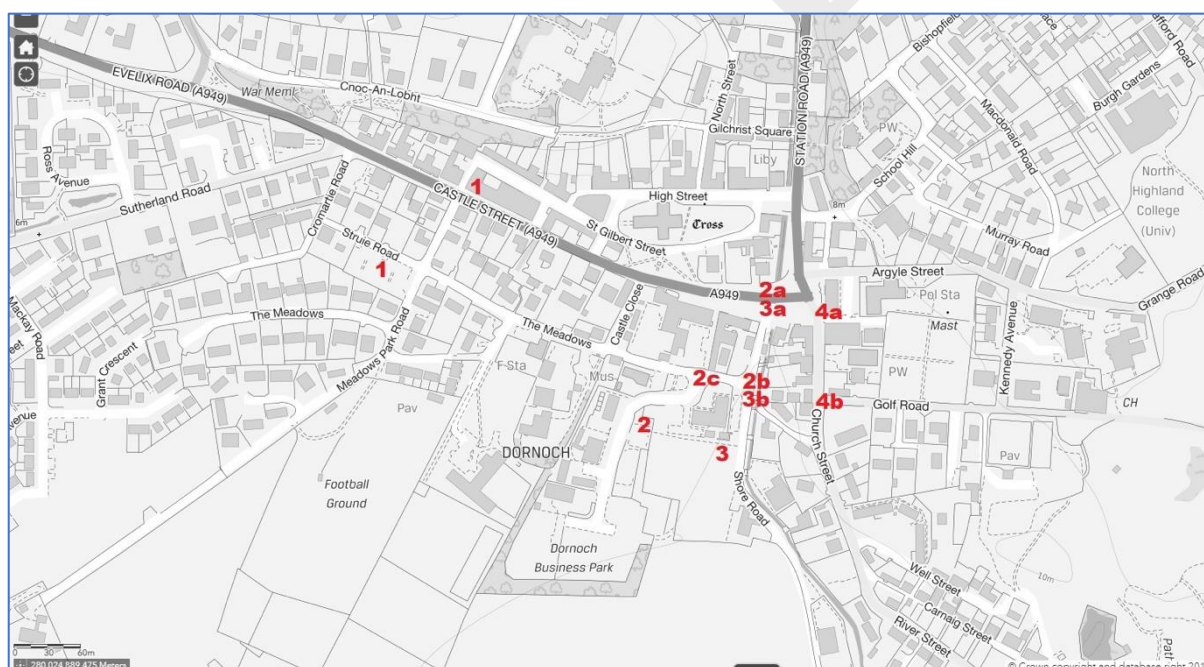
- The Lochans has up to 5 pitches for caravans/campervans, with some overflow space down at the Lochs. This area by the Lochs could be made into an 'official' area for another 5 vehicles (it already has 2 electric hook up points, a tap and toilet down there and regulars do use it sometimes). It is a member of the Caravan & Motorhome Club. It was particularly busy last year.
- Nothing has been decided yet as to whether they will extend, there is possible conflict with the neighbours so that would need to be sorted out before anything else.
- They have a fishing loch (but they've had problems with otters and ospreys taking the fish! Haven't re-stocked yet due to Covid). It is a beautiful area that they don't want spoilt.
- They also have a golf driving range.
- People did use their grey waste disposal and access water last year but they shouldn't have been and wouldn't want to encourage this. To get to these services people have to drive through their site which isn't ideal (even if they were to charge for it).
- As a resident, James sees dirty camping as being the worst problem Dornoch faces from over-tourism, and if The Lochans can help alleviate the problem by utilising all their spaces (and using the pitches down at the Loch) they are happy to do so.

## Dornoch Visitor Management Plan: Appendix 4

### DACIC Signage Suggestions

#### Signage – Town Centre Map

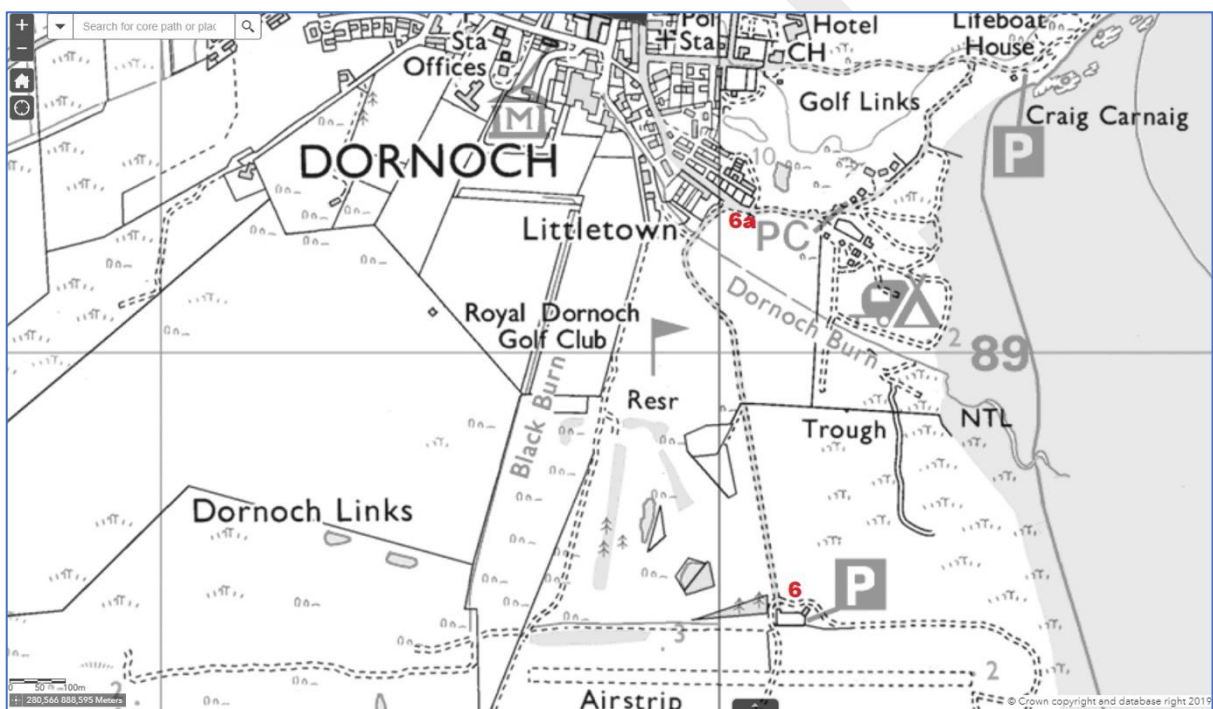
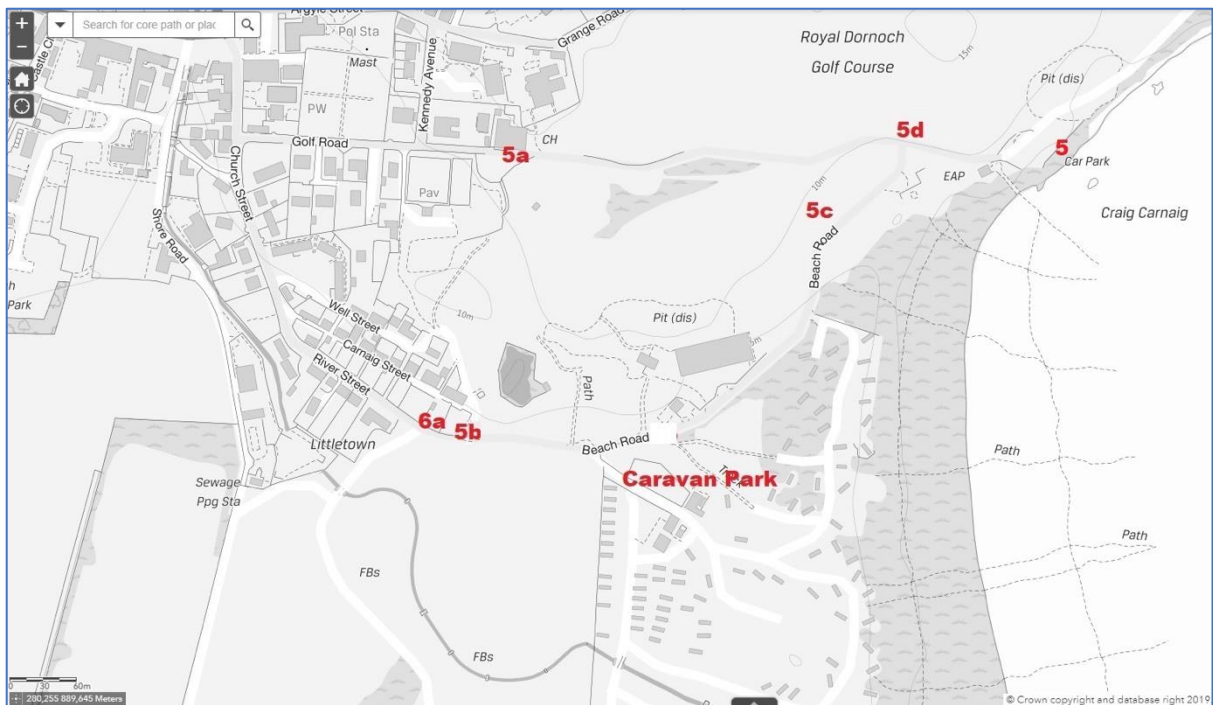
1. To Meadows Car Park: Outside SC Mackintosh at Castle Street-St Gilbert Street junction. Parking for Cars & Motorhomes
2. To Retail Park for Motorhomes: Outside Country Interiors in Castle Street (2a). At Shore Road – The Meadows junction (2b). At entrance Retail Park (2c)
3. To Dornoch South (assume car only for 2021): Outside Country Interiors in Castle Street (3a). At Shore Road – The Meadows junction (3b)
4. To Beach & Caravan Park: 4a in the Square (Cars & Motorhomes), 4b 'Not suitable for motorhomes' at Golf Road.



#### Signage – Shore Road to Beach Map

5. To Beach Car Park: 5a at Golf Clubhouse: Single Track Road (20s plenty), unsuitable for long vehicles beyond this point, 5b at Carnaig Street-Beach Road junction: Single Track Road (20s plenty), parking for cars & motorhomes, 5c Parking for Motorhomes – unsuitable for long vehicles beyond this point, 5d Car park – unsuitable for long vehicles beyond this point
6. To Airfield Car Park – cars & motorhomes. 6a at River Street Junction: Single track road (20s plenty), beware of golfers/golf balls

## Dornoch Visitor Management Plan





## ANNEXE - DORNOCH PARKING

### SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSULTATION AND IMPLEMENTATION AS APPROPRIATE

APRIL 2020

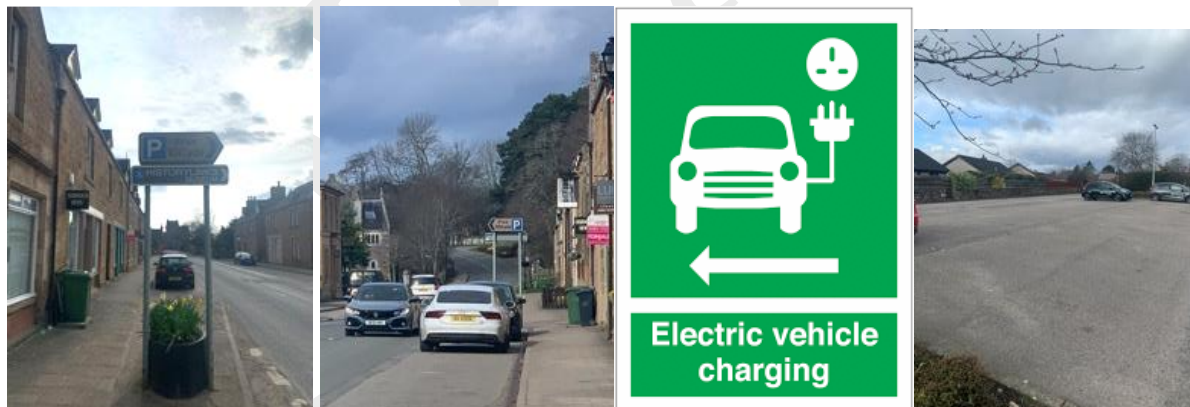
Phase 1. Castle Street ‘Smiley Face’ electronic speed check sign. This has been approved and the location agreed by DACC. JMC HAS PLACED REQUEST WITH THC.



The remainder of the Phase 1. focuses on improved signage. Appendix 4 of the VMP included maps and suggested locations for improved and / or new signage directing drivers to parking locations and managing speed. The following takes each of these suggestions, adds a photo of the location or existing signs and suggested wording. *To avoid confusion the numbers in brackets relate to the numbers used on Appendix 4 maps and the VMP proposal.*

Two single or one double sided sign(s) to be placed on Castle Street / St Gilbert Street Junction.

### **Suggested wording (1) Meadows Car Park, Free Parking, Cars & Motorhomes**



**Recommend that we ALSO add signage to EVP**

**PARKING BAYS IN MEADOWS CAR PARK TO BE REPAINTED – CARS & THREE BAYS FOR MOTORHOMES AS AGREED**

**PARKING BAYS ON CASTLE STREET TO BE REPAINTED – CARS ONLY**

### **Suggested wording (2a) Retail Park, Free Parking, Cars & Motorhomes**



## TREES TO BE CUT BACK

### Overhanging from resident's garden and sign obscured



Leave (b)&(c) as simple P signs.

(2c) additional sign to the Meadows Car Park - arrow sign **FREE PARKING**.

The entrance to the small paved off-street parking area in the retail park that we agreed will also be used for Motorhomes needs an additional sign **FREE PARKING** sign to show this is available.

Additional T&C sign to prevent overnight parking similar to those in the square, beach and Meadows Car Park and / or a simple statement such as this one on Argyle Street.

## PARKING BAYS IN RETAIL PARK TO BE REPAINTED – ON STREET CARS ONLY & OFF-STREET CARS & FIVE BAYS MOTOR HOMES AS AGREED



## SUGGESTED WORDING (4a) Beach and Airfield Car Parks, Free Parking



**Additional Simple P sign to be added to this street furniture**  
**Add 20s plenty lozenge.**



**Suggested wording (5a) Airfield Car Park, Free Parking, Caution Single Track Road - Add 20s plenty lozenge**



The ground past the junction of Carnaig Street and well onto Beach Road has plenty of space for a sign. There is no available street furniture.

**Suggested wording (5b) Beach Car Park, Free Parking, caution unsuitable for long vehicles, single track road - Add 20s plenty lozenge**



**Suggested wording (5c) Beach Car Park, Free Parking, No Overnight Parking**



**Suggested wording (5d) Add a 20s Plenty lozenge to this way finder sign and NO MOTORHOMES OR CARAVANS BEYOND THIS POINT**



Finally, we ask that all car parking bays are repainted on the High Street, Cathedral Close and in The Square

