

## Part 2 – Community Consultation summary

### Bays of Harris, Bays Community Centre (03.02.2025)

Attendees (excluding 2 discussion group leaders): 3

#### Topics:

##### Tourism

- Emphasise interesting (tourist) points; e.g. seal watch point
- Requirement for motorhomes to stay on site
- Designated sites with power for motorhomes + physical signage where they can stay

##### Housing

- More houses, **affordable houses**.
- Cluster of houses
- Using empty houses
- Less holiday homes; maybe scheme where 10% of sale price of holiday homes goes into community = **community tax**
- **Places to go to for all the cruise ships**
- Lack of accommodation for people working here- it's not affordable
- Affordable housing might help attract young families to the area

##### Free time activities

- **Local growing project**; willing to have a community polycrub on their croft (rent out to local charities)
- **Evening classes for adults**, potential location = CC
- **Rotational community club** all over Harris
- More evening classes and events

##### Transport and infrastructure

- Transport for elderly people; **minibus** to pick up older people to bring to the central space e.g. CC for activities or tea & cake
- **Public toilets** are urgently needed
- No toilets on east side from Tarbert to Leverburgh

##### Digital Connectivity (access to internet)

- Phone signal/ connectivity issues

##### Health, Social Care and Childcare

- **Care share**; caring for elderly and for kids
- Not enough **time for carers** to look after elderly; 15 minutes isn't enough

Climate Change and renewable energy

- **Community owned wind turbines** – smaller turbines  
Analog to South Uist scheme

Community Centre (CC)

- **Bays CC** could be used for more; focal point is needed => Revamping community centre
- The Bays Centre could be used more

General improvements:

- **Improving communication**, information of the public

**Scalpay, Scalpay Community Centre (04.02.2025)**

Attendees (excluding 2 discussion group leaders): 6

**Topics:**

Housing:

- More affordable housing
- Housing- lack of communication on what's happening with the school
- Houses for sale are not affordable

Transport and infrastructure:

- Garages for car repairs is needed
- SSEN sites on Harris reused
- More bus services running into town
- Shuttle for walkers
- Shuttle busses for local spaces
- Signs for walkers
- Resurfacing the roads
- White lines on roads
- 30 mph on the whole island
- Lack of parking/ pavements
- Bus service or shuttle service could be used
- Create a central information point
- Water Taxis
- White lines needed on the roads

Health, Social Care and Childcare:

- Travel vet; Animals aren't allowed on the bus; restricted public transport service



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- Travelling doctor (specialist): 1 visit/month
- Ultrasound at doctor in Tarbert
- Playgrounds available on Sundays
- Outdoor gym maybe even in combination with playground area
- Consultant appointments are held locally.
- Visiting vet services

### Natural surroundings and our landscape:

- Improved footpaths, hiking paths -> heritage wall, Hebridean way, clisham
- Create pathways/ trail
- More circular walks
- Fence “issue” within Scalpay needs to be solved
- Scalpay in bloom: plant old ships with flowers

### Tourism:

- More facilities for motorhomes
- Tourist information center
- Lack of tourist information
- Lighthouse café, also good for locals

### Free time activities

- Playpark closed on Sundays
- Could various groups run events on a rotation basis

### Digital Connectivity (access to internet)

- Faster internet
- Cheaper available internet systems

### Sustainable economic development:

- Coffee shops and cafes wanted
- Staffing is an issue- nobody coming in to fill the gaps

### Climate Change and renewable energy:

- Tidal power generation

### Community Centre (CC):

- Multifunctional CC: bus waiting area + tourist information
- With staff member for information, café etc.
- Local space for information
- Friday night events
- Services for the yachts
- Tea and cake events of the local organisations with information sharing
- Used as pub
- Working space with hot desking

- Activities coordinators would make a difference to community buildings
- Heating system needed
- A drop-in centre to tackle social isolation
- Multi-purpose building for pub/café/community shop
- Hot desk / common working space

General improvements:

- Open communication
- One point of information
- Better use could be made of the De tha Dol for sharing information
- Volunteer fatigue is an issue
- Fence needs repaired

**West Harris, Talla na Mara (12.03.2025)**

Attendees (excluding 2 discussion group leaders): 9

**Topics:**

Tourism

- More regulations and by-laws: So when people say they live here, buy and built and then rent it out as holiday homes would be made harder.
- Cruises into Stornoway: only Port Authorities have control
- Problems with cruise ships: use toilets, overrun local facilities, more pressure on the general infrastructure
- Not just expensive tourism, all are welcome
- Lack of forethought in relation to projects such as cruise ships has created issues
- Tourism should be accessible to all – accommodation costs should not be an issue

Housing:

- **Balance between houses and open spaces**
- **Control of second homes and holiday homes**
- Even higher costs where the pretty beaches are (Luskentyre etc.)
- Houses should be built within local traditions = unified design; **design of houses more controlled**
- **Houses demography needs to be balanced**
- Affordable houses
- Statistics for best ratio of second homes within a rural area?
- **Higher density within the existing settlements**
- **Minimise houses on the seaside, so existing houses won't have their view blocked.**
- **Housing next to Talla na Mara as a good example**
- Balance of housing – allowing people to build houses under false pretenses

- There should be restrictions and regulations regarding housing- 50% are holiday homes
- **A local by-law is the only way forward**
- Planning regulations- should be in keeping with the area
- Wales and Cornwall models on 2<sup>nd</sup> homes could be adopted here
- Identified plots are not always suitable – planning/crofting/ TIG etc
- **Need a mix of shared equity, rent to buy and rental accommodation that's affordable**

#### Education and Free time activities:

- Too few pupils in Leverburgh and too many in Tarbert
- Lack of quality in education
- Option of e-learning in combination with Stornoway – problems are mentioned that it's hard and difficult for most
- Secondary subjects are limited- too reliant on e-learning

#### Transport and infrastructure:

- Link up ferries and busses
- Not enough transport- finances restrict the service but the further you are from Stornoway the less you get
- Buses should meet the ferries- will be more important when the new ferries are in service
- Southern Isles connections for travel to Stornoway- NHS costs are high
- Buses aren't suitable for everyone especially the elderly
- **Concern that GP service in South Harris will not continue once the current GP retires**

#### Health, Social Care and Childcare:

- Lot of pensioners move here, cause pressure onto health care
- More childcare necessary
- Doctor is required in the south
- No free activity for the young ones
- No youth club
- The number of elderly people moving here is putting a burden on the health service

#### Climate Change and renewable energy:

- Smaller projects could work e.g. Galston Estate
- Tidal power should be progressed -> Wave power along West Coast
- Wave/ Tidal power could be used
- Galson model of community benefit from turbines could be considered

#### Art, Culture, Music and Gaelic language:

- Would love to see Gaelic grow but trouble to cover jobs
- Gaelic specific application forms can be at the detriment of the language

- More use of venues out with Tarbert

Natural surroundings and our landscape:

- Pressure on environment

Digital connectivity:

- Only with starlink internet connectivity is good
- Fibre connectivity for every home
- No land lines anymore
- Lack of analogue phone lines will be a problem for older people where there is no fiber

Sustainable economic development:

- Local trades needed
- Year-round employment
- Better paid jobs
- Important economy within the area: fishfarms, hospitality, care, tourism
- Hot desks available
- Not enough food outlets for locals and tourists
- Local tradespeople are scarce
- Depopulation has caused issues with staffing
- CERF – the top slicing of funds was wrong
- Lack of places to eat

General improvements:

- Depopulation should be tackled
- Distribution of public money should be tied to the designated aim
- Get the population growing, everything else will come
- Marketing for Harris in general: Harris as the brand, not just the pretty beaches  
“Harris as a special place to visit”
- More openness and more communication
- **Young people are our most valued asset**
- **The Harris brand could be changed to highlight Harris properly- Tweed, Distillery, Environment and the importance of community**

## Tarbert, Old Primary School (25.03.2025)

Attendees (excluding 2 discussion group leaders): 4

### Topics:

#### Tourism

- More buses during season
- Connectivity of buses and ferries
- Tourist information is required
- Toilets, eating places and buses are required
- Organised tourism: access and rubbish is a problem
- Conflict at Luskentyre in regard to parking and cemetery
- Resources need to be distributed in other areas of the island to accommodate visitors
- Cruise ship visitors have limited time to visit an area
- Luskentyre isn't the only tourist attraction- we should promote more

#### Housing

- More increase within little villages
- More houses needed e.g. Bunah, flats in Tarbert
- **More density within existing areas**
- Affordable houses
- Housing- spread through different areas to help keep small villages viable
- Pressure on services once houses are built
- Key worker accommodation needed- especially seasonal workers as well as others

#### Education and Free time activities

- Youth hub
- School in Tarbert a little tight
- Leverburgh school only a few -> improvements required
- Football pitch needs to be improved
- Parking next to playground
- Running Track
- **Use of community facilities to bring young people together in a warm space**
- Youth Centre
- school numbers are very tight- pupils are well catered for
- For older people there are activities available if you wish to do them
- All weather facilities would be good
- Subjects are prohibitive for pupils -choices aren't always available
- Rally park- equity with other pitches regarding maintenance

#### Transport and infrastructure

- Speeding is an issue: speed limit of 40 mph Ardhasaig to Tarbert and Sunnyhill
- Sleeping policeman
- Bus services = adequate for locals



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- More frequent emptying of the public bins
- Better signage for bins
- Speeding issues – how can limits be enforced
- No police presence means enforcing limits is impossible
- Potential traffic calming measures coming into the village from Urgha and West Tarbert
- Footpaths – overgrown verges
- Buses- potentially an increased service in the season- lack of connection with the late ferry
- Lack of infrastructure in tourist hot spots – tour buses visiting and inadequate toilet provision available
- Bin collections- should be more frequent
- bus services which connect with the spread housing sites.

### Health, Social Care and Childcare

- Running tracks
- Safety of children
- Leverburgh home needs to stay open
- Carer for older and children are necessary
- More time for carers at home
- Double use of facilities (provided flats, houses, spaces): during day elderly, evening youth
- Nursery staff role isn't filled because of Gaelic
- Care is an issue- time allocated is so short. Higher age demographic leads to more care being needed
- Childcare- paperwork is a barrier

### Natural surroundings and our landscape

- More maintenance of the general areas

### Digital connectivity:

- Internet is an issue e.g. Hussinish Road, Direcleit
- Removal of landline all over the area: worries
- there are areas without fiber optic that have poor connectivity

### Sustainable economic development:

- Equity from the council for all areas- lack of strategy
- HR needs to look at Gaelic essential on application forms

### General improvements:

- Required paperwork is an issue

### **Husinis, Husinis Gateway (26.02.2025)**

Attendees (excluding 2 discussion group leaders): 1

#### **Topics:**

Transport and infrastructure:

- More parking required
- Buses come down regularly
- Even big busses come in with tourists
- Better road! SSEN repair of roads
- Maybe shuttle buses to the beach
- Road in poor state from Govig road end to Husinish
- Bus service means that people can visit the beach for the day on Tuesdays and Fridays
- SSEN works – could they reinstate the roads if they are bringing heavy vehicles down to upgrade the power lines.

Digital connectivity:

- Internet is good
- Good internet connection from EE mast

### **Leverburgh, Leverhulme Hub (04.03.2025)**

Attendees (excluding 2 discussion group leaders): 7

#### **Topics:**

Housing

- Housing strategy:  
If hhp shouldn't happen within Harris, funding should stay available in Harris
- HHP housing system is not obvious
- House for homeless doesn't exist and if costs £55 / night
- Housing- if key worker accommodation is not happening in Tarbert could the secured funding be ringfenced for Harris ?

Education and Free time activities

- Play area for the kids
- Opportunities for young people: sport etc. interlinked with the islanders
- More creative subjects at school
- More teachers needed
- Gaelic at school is suffering under the lack of music
- Play area- needs upgraded



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- School access is restricted- parent council have to book the school for events
- Lack of ceilidhs- sharing dates is important
- Tying in with tour groups to run ceilidh nights
- Harris FC looking to buy a minibus that can be used by the community as well
- Harris FC to be commended for all they have achieved in developing the youth teams
- Music provision- there is space in the hall that could be used for music tuition

### Transport and infrastructure

- Issue with smart meter, they need signal which isn't there; no engineers to install them
- Organisations (energy companies etc.) are controlled and don't listen
- Emergency officer for connections
- Footpaths along the roads so kids, elderly are safe
- Access to school to do free time activities
- Council buildings should be accessible to and for the community -> at the moment they have to book and pay
- No bank service
- Minibus in Tarbert and Leverburgh
- Use of hall by the running club- ideal central venue for those traveling from Uist and Lewis for events
- No bank presence – Bank of Scotland service being withdrawn

### Art, Culture, Music and Gaelic language

- Lack of ceilidhs, more required especially family friendly ones; touring company to engage
- Lack of music facilities
- No access to music
- Music tuition room for kids
- Practice room for music in Leverburgh Hall

### Digital connectivity

- Rodel is working on fibreoptic connectivity
- Leverburgh, no fibre, some areas without internet
- Bad mobile phone signal in big areas
- Potentially ramp up the power of the tower in Skye to cover area with signal
- Good internet connection in Leverburgh, Northton and Strond. Rodel and the East side needs improving
- Rodel residents have applied for a grant from the Government to allow fibre connections to houses. This model will be used for other areas that have cable already laid
- The mast from Skye could be used to provide a signal to houses on the East side
- Smart meters – lack of engineers qualified to install them: and no internet connection to work them in most areas

## Sustainable economic development

- Pier:
  - Leverburgh pier has the potential to be developed by the community
  - Marina development?
  - Fishing boats landing at the pier could take on fresh water and ice for example
  - Local fish market?
  - Outboard engineer/ marine repairs?
  - enhancement, core element of economic development
  - serviced area for boats
  - service station for boats (apprenticeship for 2)
  - sound of Harris as needle ear for fishing industry
  - training academy of RNLI
  - Sales of local fish (fresh fish and shellfish)

## General improvements:

- Better acknowledgement and exchange of information
- Sharing of information: exchange of experience and knowledge
- Council more approachable for general public
- Community information: one unified board
- Information exchange between councils and community
- Sharing communication is key
- Meeting with other community groups
- Further from Stornoway means a lack of interest in local issues
- Dedicated information board
- Link the forum calendar to local accommodation providers
- Fresh fish and shellfish- contact details of suppliers are shared for direct purchasing