



HARRIS PLAN 2026-2030

A 5-year pragmatic vision
and spatial strategy for the
development of the Isle of
Harris



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The Isle of Harris

The Isle of Harris forms the southern part of Lewis and Harris, the largest island in the Outer Hebrides, situated 25 miles northwest of the Isle of Skye and 40 miles west of mainland Scotland.

Most of the land is in community ownership, with North and West Harris community estates responsible for 33,125 hectares of some of the most rugged and scenic landscapes in Europe.

According to the latest 2022 Census statistics 1,831 people reside in Harris and Scalpay in 1222 homes, with 40% being vacant dwellings and 24% second homes. Within the Western Isles the death rate outstrips the birth rate with 173 births and 393 deaths in 2024. The age profile for the Isle of Harris shows that approximately 32% of residents are aged over 65, indicating a significant portion of the population is elderly.



Background on the Harris Forum

The Isle of Harris Local Outcome Agreement 2010-2015 (HLOA) which was authored by Harris Development Limited illustrated the short, medium- and long-term development aspirations for Harris. Our Plan for Harris 2015-2020 further realised these aspirations and detailed 71 projects which were in various phases of development within Harris. A number of these plans have been completed, whilst others are in a range of development phases. It should also be recognised that some projects proved unfeasible and either had to be adapted or removed from the plan.

Early in 2015 a group of representatives from community development organisations, land trusts, community councils and other community representatives across Harris met to consider a new 2020 plan for Harris that would incorporate the priorities of the community owned estates with wider community priorities. In March 2015, recognising that work had already started on a locality plan, the group was approached by the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP) to take part in a pilot “to identify aspirations and priorities, and how the partners can add value, by working in closer partnership with a specific community.”

This led on to the formation of the Harris Forum.



HARRIS | FORUM

*Progress / Partner / Protect
Adhartas / Cairdeas / Dion*

Pursuing development through community connection

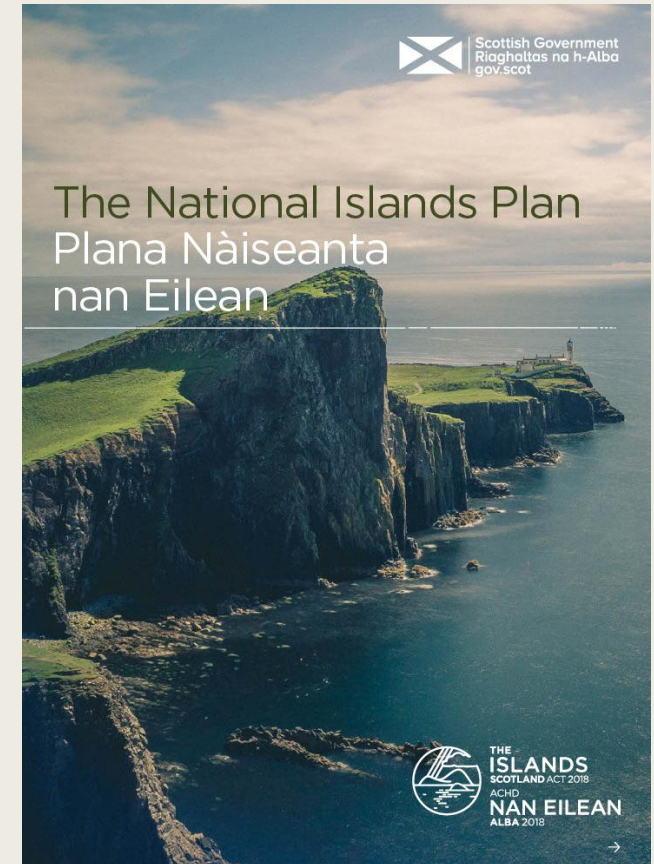
Background on the Islands Plan

The National Islands Plan has been published by the Scottish Government in 2019 and a new draft of the National Islands Plan has been presented to the ministers in 2025 and is expected to be published in 2026.

One of the key reasons for publishing the National Islands Plan was that island communities felt that decisions affecting them were being made by people who lived on the mainland and were completely detached from island life. (National Islands Plan, 2019).

The Harris Forum therefore decided to base the Local Place Plan on the objectives of the National Islands Plan 2019, and using the latter as both a template and a reference document for the Harris Plan.

The Harris Forum also felt it was necessary to frame the strategic objectives that is desired for the Harris community in relation to the National Islands Plan to ensure the goals were relatable and the objectives realistic.



<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-plan-scotlands-islands/>
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-islands-plan-draft/documents/>

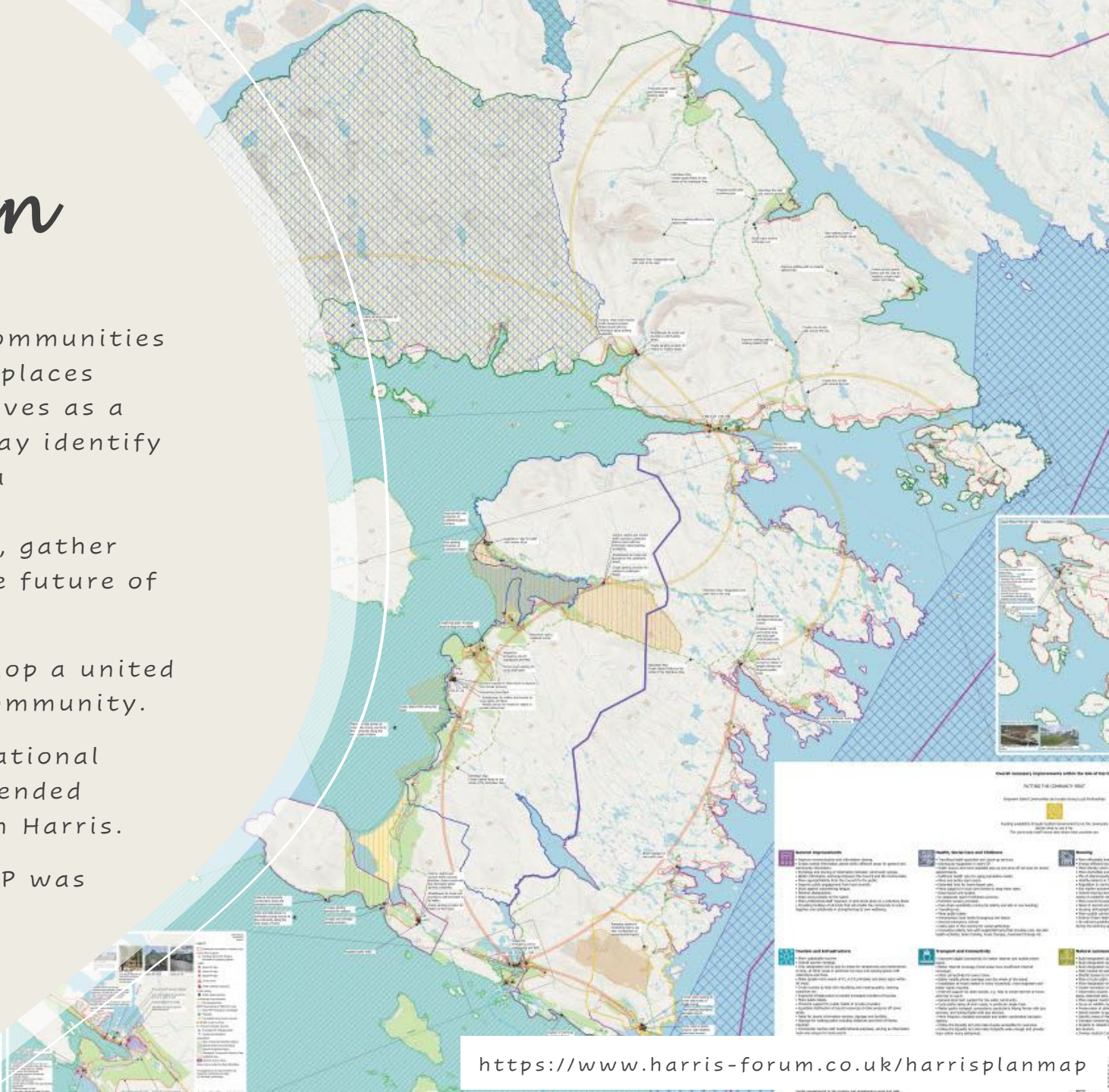
Background on the Local Place Plan

Local Place Plans (LPP) are a new way for local communities to become engaged in planning to help shape the places where they live, work, and play. The Plan also serves as a proposal for the development or use of land. It may identify land and buildings which are important to us as a community and are a key part of the local area. Communities can use the Plan to highlight issues, gather ideas for improvements, and look at needs for the future of their community.

The Harris Forum seized this opportunity to develop a united voice for Harris, with the support of the wider community.

The objectives within the LPP are based on the National Islands Plan 2019 objectives, which have been amended based on the feedback received from the people in Harris.

Thanks to the help of the people in Harris, the LPP was finalised and submitted to the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Local Development Department on 27th August 2025.

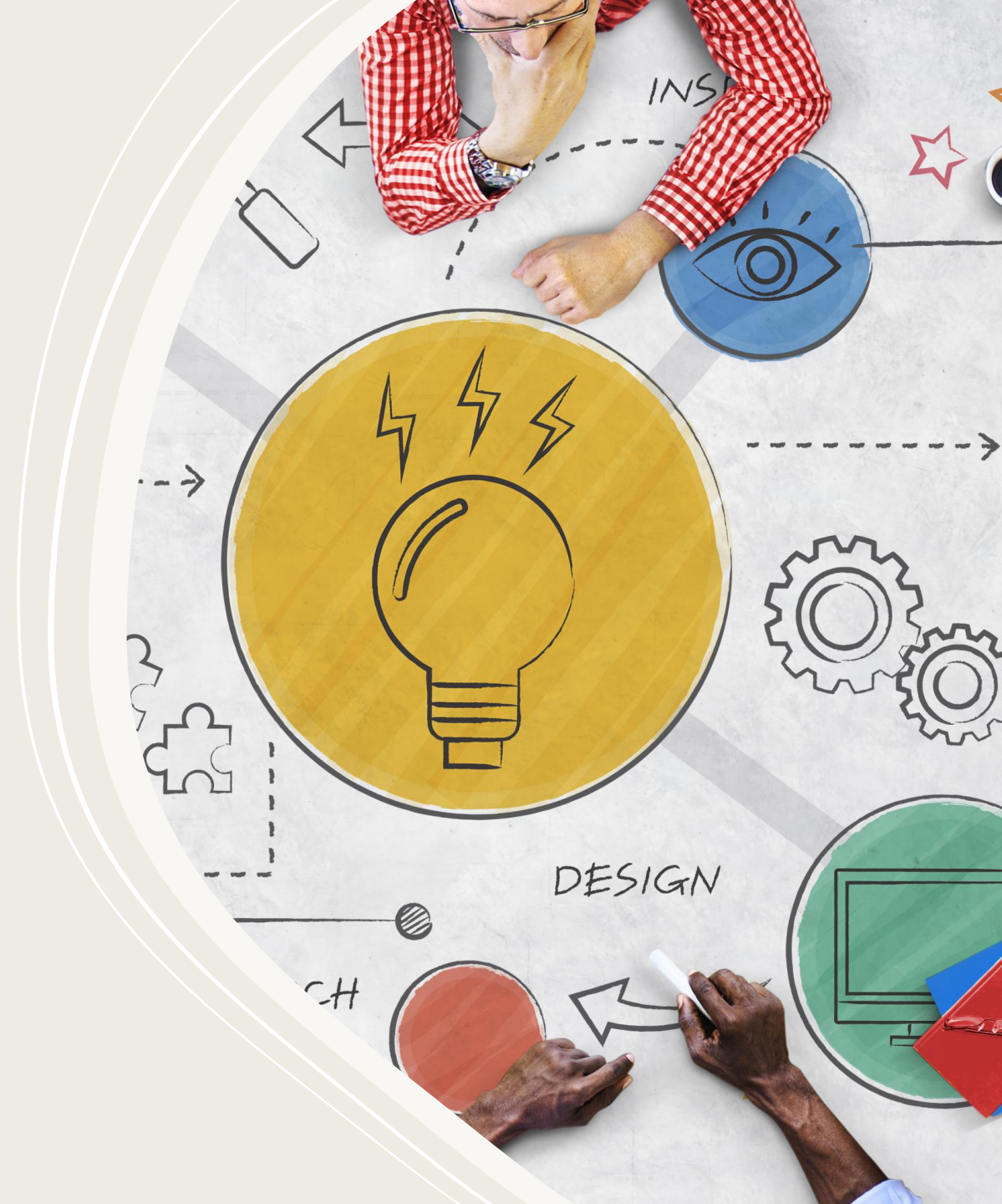


Background on the Harris Plan

The Harris Plan provides an overview of projects in the Isle of Harris that are run and administered by various local organisations. These projects are based on requirements and needs identified by the organisations themselves, in response to issues raised by the community. The Harris Plan projects are included and an important part of the Local Place Plan for Harris.

The Harris Plan 2026-2030 builds upon the Isle of Harris Local Outcome Agreement (HLOA) 2010-2015, Our Plan for Harris 2015-2020, the Harris Plan 2021-2025, and the Local Place Plan 2025.

A key feature of the Harris Plan is that it has always been a constantly updated, fluid document. The Harris Forum intends to maintain and update the content of this plan as regularly as possible to ensure that it remains a live document. A living document is dynamic, purposeful and potentially self-executing. The intention with the Harris Plan is that, as the community landscape, groups and goals change, the Plan will change with them. The Harris Plan should always serve as a reference point for the current socio-economic situation in Harris. It is integral that the Harris Plan belongs to the people of Harris.

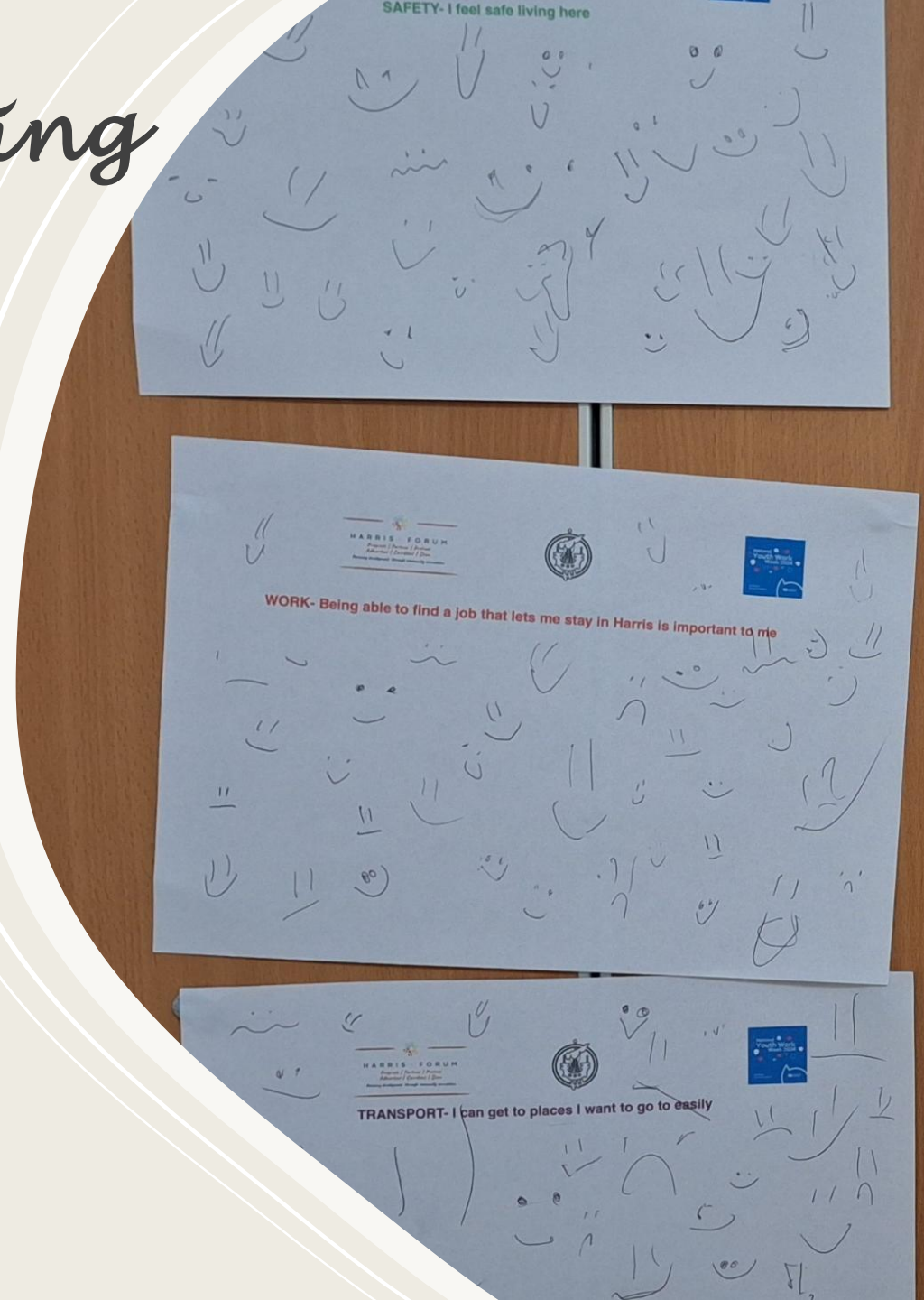


How the LPP can help shaping the new Harris Plan

The Local Place Plan (LPP) for Harris, based on feedback received during intensive community consultations in 2024 and 2025, was published by the Harris Forum in August 2025. The Harris Plan matrix regarding Subcategory Prioritisation has been amended based on the outcome of these consultations to reflect the views of the majority of Harris residents.

The amended matrix shifts the focus and priorities of the Harris Plan according to the outcomes of the consultations. It has been used to identify and rank the most important projects within the Harris Plan.

The LPP does not dictate projects in Harris. Instead, it indicates areas of focus for the whole island and presents an overall strategy and suggestions from the wider community. It remains the responsibility of the various government bodies, the local council and community organisations to address the identified needs and develop related projects.



Agent of the Harris Plan



The Harris Forum has representation from community groups, land trusts and other agencies across the whole of Harris.

The aim of the Forum, since its first meeting on the 3rd of October 2017, is to facilitate an environment where member groups can discuss, share and encourage one another.

At each meeting of the Harris Forum the Harris Plan is updated as it is a live working document.

Purpose of the Harris Plan

The Harris Plan is intended to be the template to enable public sector organisations in Harris to work together, share resources and improve services.

The purpose of the plan is to portray development needs from the following areas:

- Care
- Housing
- Transport
- Employment
- Education
- Communications

Aims of the Harris Plan

The Harris Plan aims to promote the following:

- Community Engagement
- Joint Working
- Rationalisation
- Connection between local and national priorities.



ONGOING PROJECTS

The following are currently ongoing projects within the Harris Plan:



Catalogue Number	Lead Group	Project Description including deliverables	Update
4	West Harris Trust	Restoration of 1km of stone dykes	4th section of wall completed at Talla na Mara Sept 2023. Larger project to repair existing walls on the estate remain
6	West Harris Trust	Develop Archaeology trail to improve knowledge of local area	The architectural sites of interest are on leaflets and advertised within Talla na Mara - more work required to progress the project.
8	West Harris Trust	Additional Electrical hook-ups for tourists	Plans have been drawn up for additional hook-ups at Seilebost but not taken further at the moment.
49	Northton Heritage Trust	Seallam Visitor Centre/Hiort na Hearadh - Refurbishment and new development.	Land under Seallam!, Old Schoolhouse, and land owned by Bays of Harris Estate was purchased in March 2022 with assistance from the Scottish Land Fund. The refurbishment and new development is trying to secure more funding to start into the construction phase.
51	Harris Development Ltd.	Develop a Bluefin Tuna fishery in the Western Isles	Socio-economic feasibility study completed. Next step to move from scientific project to a fully commercial project.
53	Harris Development Ltd.	Harris Accommodation Solutions Project - meet demand for ensuite rooms with shared facilities for workers in modular blocks to free up housing stock for families.	The sale of suitable land in Tarbert could not be finalised. A new search for suitable sites is ongoing.

Catalogue Number	Lead Group	Project Description including deliverables	Update
54	South Harris Community Council	Enhancement of the roadside area surrounding the “Mill Pool” and adjacent areas of Leverburgh.	Annual work to improve and enhance the landscape - funding is required annually for work to be undertaken
57	Leverburgh Moorings Association	Redevelop and refurbish the pier area at Leverburgh and look at the possibility of a new marina.	Awaiting response from seabed survey to direct feasibility study brief.
58	Bays of Harris Steering Group	Community purchase of estate	Interim Board in place. The community-led company has reached an agreement in principle with the current landowner for the purchase of the Bays of Harris Estate.
60	Harris Football Club / Sport Harris	Creation of a multi sports hub including an all-weather facility	Funding has been secured to undertake a feasibility study. Work on the feasibility study has started in 2025.
69	Scalpay Community Association	Redevelopment of CC to maritime Heritage Centre with boatbuilding school and restored curing station	Work has started on site in November 2025 with an expected completion date of June/July '26.
72	North Harris Trust	Additional Parking Provision	Parking provision at Chliostair Dam track has planning permission but is awaiting sufficient funding to proceed. The feasibility of other sites is being explored.

Catalogue Number	Lead Group	Project Description including deliverables	Update
74	South Harris Community Council	Carpark adjacent to Church in Rodel	Project is at the very early stages and awaiting further detail to understand its viability.
79	West Harris Trust	Develop a further 10 houses of mixed tenure available for pemanent residents	TIQ has been appointed to look at suitable sites and work on a planning permission when site is identified.
80	West Harris Trust	An exploration and feasibility study of the Trust buying housing which comes onto the market, and then converting this for affordable rental	10 houses - TIQ acting as consultant to drive project forward
81	West Harris Trust	An exploration of the provision by others of childcare services for under 3s	10 houses - TIQ acting as consultant to drive project forward
82	West Harris Trust	An investigation of the provision of new business premises	10 houses - TIQ acting as consultant to drive project forward
85	West Harris Trust	Improving the access to the estate - beach access	Planning application for siting of storage container to be submitted.

Catalogue Number	Lead Group	Project Description including deliverables	Update
86	West Harris Trust	More proactive visitor management, through the provision of visitor wardens through the summer season, improving both the visitor and resident experience.	CLOH have employed 2 Wardens in the past, responsible for 8 community owned areas between Lewis and Harris. New Wardens would be desirable.
88	Tarbert in Bloom	Improve public environment in the village	Ongoing work to improve the community areas within Tarbert.
91	Harris Development Ltd.	Purchase of Scalpay School to create affordable housing and a retail unit.	Purchase has been finalised. Next steps to produce outline planning permission.
93	Northton Heritage Trust	Redesign of Hebrides People website alongside the modernisation of its archive database.	Modernisation of its archive database – still ongoing in 2025.
96	West Harris Trust	Improve access to Niseaboist beach	Plans drawn up but haven't applied for funding.
97	South Harris Community Council	Bringing Leverburgh Playpark into community ownership and carrying out refurbishment.	Awaiting creation of new group to take forward project.

Catalogue Number	Lead Group	Project Description including deliverables	Update
100	Bays of Harris Charitable Trust	Refurbishment of Bays Community Centre.	First step is to find a consultant to review the current heating system and provide options appraisal for upgrade as well as general building report.
101	Isle of Harris Golf Club	New Clubhouse development offering destination service, restaurant and merchandising for visitors and members.	Feasibility Study is completed. Looking to progress towards funding of RIBA Stages 3-4.
102	West Harris Trust	Improvements to Talla na Mara	The Trust recently had a greenhouse gas emissions audit which identified a range of improvements including a thermal buffer at the entrance to Talla na Mara, swapping the electric boiler for an air source heat pump, swap the wet batter storage (Emma system) for standard battery storage and installation of solar PV.
105	Leverburgh Village Hall	Refurbishment	Refurbishment project in progress. Went out for tender at end of 2025, expecting to start and complete works in 2026.
106	Harris Voluntary Service	Youth Club, Youth Hub	Proposal drawn up and looking to start a trial period in Tarbert Community Centre first.
107	Harris Voluntary Service	Uist Beò	Working on funding applications to introduce a “Uist Beò” to Harris

Catalogue Number	Lead Group	Project Description including deliverables	Update
107	Harris Voluntary Service	Uist Beò	Working on funding applications to introduce a “Uist Beò” to Harris
109	Leverburgh Community Hub Ltd.	Hub Manager	Funding has been received, and the job advert went out on the 18th November 2025 with a 2-year fixed term contract with possibility of extension. Submission deadline was 3rd December 2025.
110	Rionnagan Òga	Improvements to Soft Play Building	Business Energy Scotland Report has been done with advice on improvements to the building. Next step would be to engage with contractors for quotes.
113	North Harris Community Council	Improvements to Helipad and access road to it	The Council is talking with the landowner to come to a written agreement before engaging with the involved parties like the NHS and the coast guards.

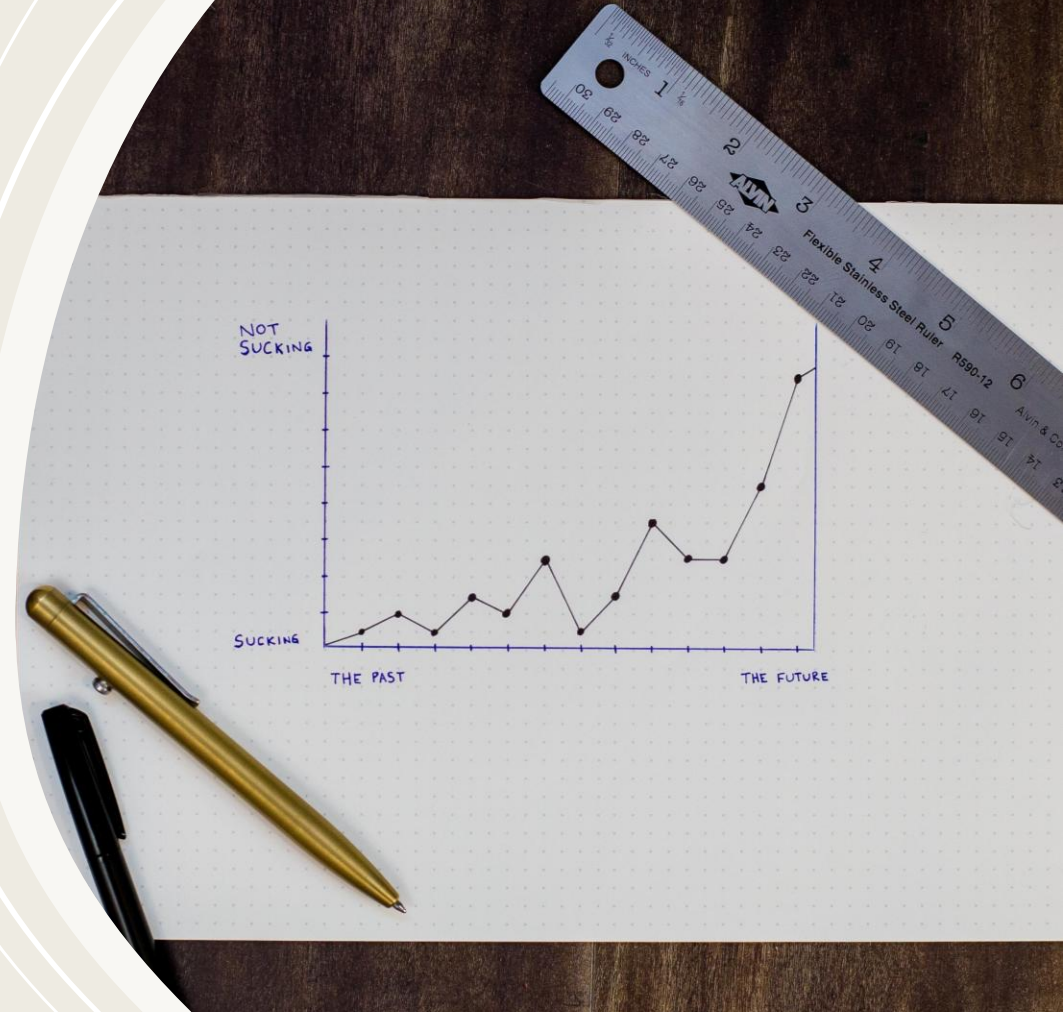
Prioritisation Matrix

To help prioritise ongoing projects within Harris, the Harris Forum has created a matrix.

The options under each subject were chosen by the Harris Forum based on their long-term experience. The Prioritisation Matrix of the Harris Plan 2026-2030 has been amended based on the outcome of the community consultations on the Local Place Plan for Harris and its objectives.

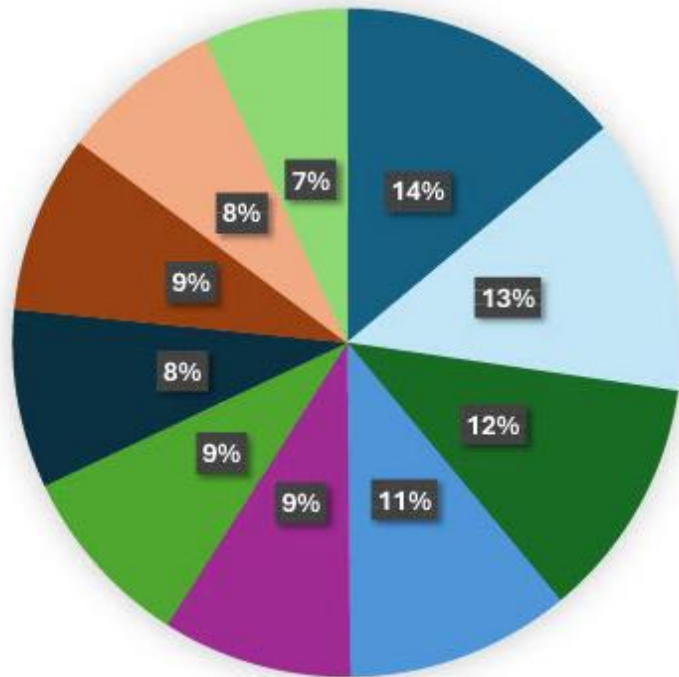
Each option is given a score reflecting the Forum's and the wider community's current priorities. This is why the project theme sub-category prioritisation in the Harris Plan 2026-2030 matrix differs from that in the Harris Plan 2021-2025 matrix.

The Forum will approve the matrix scoring every six months to decide whether priorities have changed.

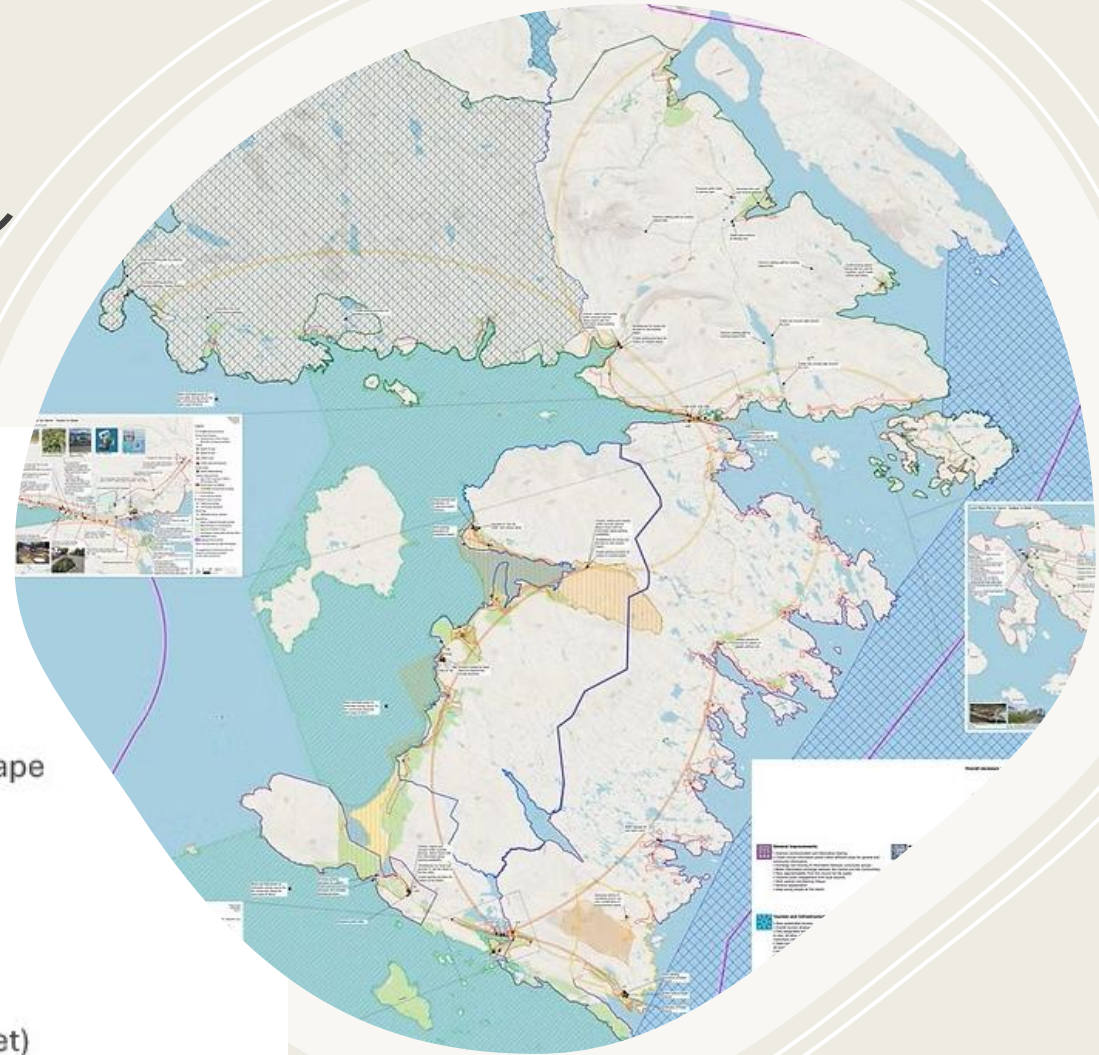


Outcomes of the community consultations

Local Place Plan for Harris 2025



- Health, Social Care and Childcare
- Housing
- Sustainable economic development
- Natural surroundings and our landscape
- Arts and Culture, Gaelic Language
- Education
- Digital Connectivity (access to internet)
- Fuel Poverty (having enough money to heat your home)
- Transport
- Climate Change and renewable energy



Changes to Subcategory Prioritisation compared

Harris Plan 2021-2025

SUBJECT	OPTIONS	SCORING
Project Theme Sub-Category	Affordable Housing	10
	Employment	9
	Commercial Development	8
	Infrastructure and Assets	7
	Childcare	6
	Equipment and Resources	5
	Technology	4
	Health and Wellbeing	3
	Social Inclusion	2
	Nature	1

Harris Plan 2026-2030

SUBJECT	OPTIONS	SCORING
Project Theme Sub-Category	Health, Social Care and Childcare	10
	Affordable Housing	9
	Sustainable economic development	8
	Natural surroundings and our landscape	7
	Arts and Culture, Gaelic Language	6
	Education	5
	Digital Connectivity	4
	Fuel Poverty	3
	Transport	2
	Climate Change and renewable energy	1

SUBJECT	OPTIONS	SCORING
Project Theme	Economy	10
	People	7.5
	Capital Resources	5
	Quality of Life	4
Project Theme Sub-Category	Health, Social Care and Childcare	10
	Affordable Housing	9
	Sustainable economic development	8
	Natural surroundings and our landscape	7
	Arts and Culture, Gaelic Language	6
	Education	5
	Digital Connectivity	4
	Fuel Poverty	3
	Transport	2
	Climate Change and renewable energy	1
	Population Stability & Growth	10
Project Outcome	Greater Economic Prosperity	8
	Enhanced Quality of Life	6
	Improved Transport Infrastructure & Resources	4
	Sustainable Use of Resources	2

SUBJECT	OPTIONS	SCORING
Project Length	6 months or less	10
	1 year	8
	2 years	6
	3 years	4
	4 years or more	2
Required Start Date	Immediate	10
	Within 6 months	8
	Within 1 year	6
	Between 1-2 years	4
	After 2 years	2

The current matrix system.



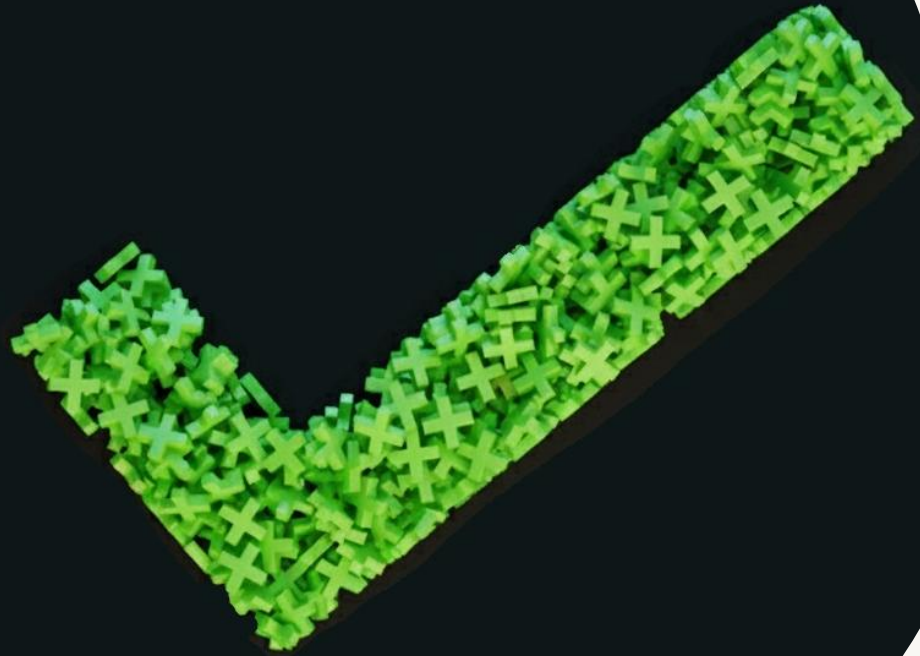
Prioritised Projects

After putting all the projects through the matrix scoring system the following projects were calculated as the highest priority.

Number	Lead Group	Project Description including deliverables	Total Matrix Score
53	Harris Development Ltd.	Harris Accommodation Solutions Project - meet demand for ensuite rooms with shared facilities for workers in modular blocks to free up housing stock for families.	47
81	West Harris Trust	An exploration of the provision by others of childcare services for under 3s	44
79	West Harris Trust	Develop a further 10 houses of mixed tenure available for permanent residents	43
80	West Harris Trust	An exploration and feasibility study of the Trust buying housing which comes onto the market, and then converting this for affordable rental	43
91	Harris Development Ltd.	Purchase of Scalpay School to create affordable housing and a retail unit.	41
82	West Harris Trust	An investigation of the provision of new business premises	40
93	Northton Heritage Trust	Redesign of Hebrides People website alongside the modernisation of its archive database	39.5
57	Leverburgh Moorings Association	Redevelop and refurbish the pier area at Leverburgh and look at the possibility of a new marina.	38
69	Scalpay Community Association	Redevelopment of CC to maritime Heritage Centre with boatbuilding school and restored curing station	38
97	South Harris Community Council	Bringing Leverburgh Playpark into community ownership and carrying out refurbishment.	38
101	Isle of Harris Golf Club	New Clubhouse development offering destination services Restaurant and merchandising for visitors and members.	38

Number	Lead Group	Project Description including deliverables	Total Matrix Score
49	Northton Heritage Trust	Seallam Visitor Centre/Hiort na Hearadh - Refurbishment and new development.	37.5
107	Harris Voluntary Service	Uist Beò	37.5
54	South Harris Community Council	Enhancement of the roadside area surrounding the "Mill Pool" and adjacent areas of Leverburgh.	37
110	Rionnagan Òga	Improvements to Soft Play Building	37
85	West Harris Trust	Improving the access to the estate, torage container for beach wheelchair	36
106	Harris Voluntary Service	Youth Club, Youth Hub	36
109	Leverburgh Community Hub Ltd.	Hub Manager	36
113	North Harris Community Council	Improvements to Helipad and access road to it	36
60	Harris Football Club	Creation of a multi sports hub including an all-weather facility	35.5
105	Leverburgh Village Hall Committee	Repairs and maintenance to the Leverburgh village hall	35
51	Harris Development Ltd.	Develop a Bluefin Tuna fishery in the Western Isles	34

Number	Lead Group	Project Description including deliverables	Total Matrix Score
88	Tarbert in Bloom	Improve public environment in the village	33
102	West Harris Trust	Improvements to Talla na Mara	33
8	West Harris Trust	Additional Electrical hook-ups for tourists	32
100	Bays of Harris Charitable Trust	Upgrade of Bays Community Centre heating system.	31
86	West Harris Trust	More proactive visitor management, possibly through the provision of visitor wardens through the summer season, improving both the visitor and resident experience.	30
58	Bays of Harris Steering Group	Community purchase of estate	29.5
96	West Harris Trust	Improve access to Niseaboist beach	29
6	West Harris Trust	Develop Archaeology trail to improve knowledge of local area	28
74	South Harris Community Council	Carpark next to Rodel Church	28
4	West Harris Trust	Larger project to repair existing walls on the estate remain	26
72	North Harris Trust	Parking Provision - Approximately 40 parking spaces throughout North Harris. Reduction in issues at key areas of traffic pressure.	24



Completed Projects

Achievements to date stem from a resilient, forward looking and determined Harris community, coupled with robust public/private partnerships resulting in significant private sector investment and targeted public sector spending by a wide range of organisations.

Completed projects serve as an encouragement to the Forum members and a stimulus to further progress.

The following shows just a few examples of completed projects over the years.



RIONNAGAN ÒGA - TAKE ON OWNERSHIP OF THE SOFTPLAY BUILDING

Rionnagan Òga became the new owner of the softplay building in Tarbert. The formal handover from North Harris Trust took place on Thursday 3 July 2025.

This will provide the group with an opportunity to further develop the space to better suit community needs. The softplay building is used daily by local families as well as those travelling from Lewis, Uist, and tourists visiting the Island. It has played a vital role in the community, providing a space for parents and families to meet and socialise together.



SOUTH HARRIS COMMUNITY COUNCIL - 12 NEW HOMES

Within Leverburgh 12 new affordable homes for rent have been built to support the local community with affordable housing. The first homes were handed over in May 2025, and the project was completed in November of that year.

The project aimed to address the lack of housing provision in Harris by creating new homes for local people.



NORTH HARRIS TRUST - AFFORDABLE HOMES

Two affordable rental properties have been built in Miabhag nam Beann and will be ready for occupation at the beginning of 2026.

The project aimed to address the lack of housing in Harris by providing new rental properties.

Additionally, the North Harris Trust is developing two serviced plots in Ardvourlie, which will also be offered for sale at the start of 2026.

NORTH HARRIS COMMUNITY COUNCIL - FOODBANK FOR TARBERT

A community food bank opened in Tarbert at the end of November, providing essential items for people in need. Located in the bus waiting area on Pier Road, next to Essence of Harris, it will stock a variety of long-life food and toiletries.

The project aims to provide anonymous access to support for those in need, and to address the cost-of-living crisis in Harris.





SCALPAY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION - ASTROTURF AREA

The all-weather Astroturf amenity area in Scalpay was opened in May 2025.

Located in the centre of Scalpay, close to the renovated playground, it provides residents with an additional recreational space.

The project aimed to provide an additional outdoor recreation area for people of all ages to enjoy games on an all-weather surface made from upcycled materials.



NORTH HARRIS TRUST - SEASONAL PUBLIC TOILETS

Shortly before Easter in 2025, the North Harris Trust opened the new Kinloch Loo. This toilet is completely off-grid, with no connection to water, electricity or the sewage system.

It is located in the upper car park, which has been extended and upgraded.

The project aimed to provide sanitary facilities and protect the natural surroundings from 'wild toileting'.

HARRIS CHARITY SHOP - NEW BUILDING

The official opening of the new Harris Charity Shop on Pier Road in Tarbert took place on Wednesday, 4th June 2025.

Following the purchase of the site in March 2024, the committee began replacing the portacabin, as the existing one had reached the end of its useful life.

