

NHT Community Consultation 2023 - Action Points 2024



Context

Feedback from the NHT November 2023 community consultation process was presented to the NHT board of directors at the December 2023 and January 2024 board meetings. Topics were identified and workable actions agreed, the timescale for their delivery is over the next 6 to 12 months. These actions are in addition to other NHT activities and projects already planned for 2024 and are a direct result of the community consultation process. This document will be made publicly available via our website, and highlighted on social media and in local print media.

Housing Provision

It is well established that improved housing availability is required in the area, particularly in Tarbert but also in other townships throughout the estate. It was thought that NHT should take a multi-faceted approach to housing provision. Part of this is developing our own properties, but it is also important to work with other parties wherever possible to increase overall provision. The recent Harris Forum publication of a Joint Housing Strategy for the whole of Harris has been a key step forward in this regard.

Actions: Begin construction of two NHT-owned housing units at Miabhaig nam Beann. Support HHP to increase local social housing provision. Support HDL to progress the key-worker accommodation project. Support any other companies/individuals/other groups to develop housing in our position as community landlord. Publicise progress on housing projects more widely.

Supporting Local Business

The multiplying effect which NHT expenditure can provide to local businesses was highlighted. Community owned facilities and equipment should be made available, and their use encouraged wherever possible.

Actions: As a matter of policy, use a range of local contractors and businesses as part of our work. Highlight the availability of community resources, such as the Tigh an Urrais boardroom, which are available at affordable rates to local businesses.

Estate Maintenance

Various maintenance points were raised, these will be addressed over the course of the year.

Actions: Carry out the necessary work on Huisinis Beach access, Gleann Miabhaig track gates and the possibility of track improvement at Bealach na h-Uamha.

Community Engagement

There was some praise for the improvement in NHT communications over the past year, particularly on social media and with the publication of the updated website. However, it is recognised that more can be done to communicate our work. It was repeatedly highlighted that NHT struggles to engage with local young people. This was accepted and it was agreed that youth activities should be a priority wherever possible.

Actions: Maintain weekly activity on social media, submit a piece to every issue of the local newsletter, maintain and update our website monthly. Directors and staff will continue to make themselves available to discuss NHT matters within the community, in person at our offices, by phone, or by email. Provide regular updates to the community on any project progress. Support outdoor activities such as the John Muir Award in collaboration with SES, RO, or other organisations working with children and young people. Mark the NHT 21st anniversary.

Tourism

Some concerns were raised over campervan numbers in a few locations on the estate. The perception that NHT is encouraging campervans was raised. We clarify that we do not seek to encourage campervan numbers, but rather seek to do our part to manage their effects once they are already here. We seek to reduce the potential for conflict between tourists and the community, as well as generate an income to contribute to the cost of tourism on wider estate infrastructure if possible. Parking was raised as an issue, and is a complicated matter to solve appropriately, as parking provision can have a significant effect on visitor behaviour. It was agreed that parking areas can have a negative impact on road pressure if not sited or managed correctly. The issues of inappropriate toileting and the lack of facilities at key locations was highlighted, particularly around Ardvourlie, and Gleann Miabhaig.

Actions: Provide a statement on expected campervan behaviour once the Urgha AIRE is complete. Improve car park provision in appropriate location(s) in Scalpay, ensuring that longer vehicles can be accommodated. Improve roadside signage in coordination with CnES in Scalpay village and at Ceann an Ora. Highlight and recommend public transport in NHT communication for the tourist audience. Solutions to provide public amenities shall be investigated.