

Community Led Tourism

NHI “PRESS PAUSE” PROGRAMME



PLOCKTON

Report and Recommendations

Aug 2024

BE LOCAL

SCOTO
Scottish Community Tourism



COMMUNITY LED TOURISM PLOCKTON

SCOTO visited PLOCKTON and facilitated a Press Pause Community Led Tourism workshop on 30 April 2024. We met with various local interests – business and community. Time was taken to experience the village and explore local sites and features of interest.

This report provides context and sets out the key findings, and then offers a number of recommendations for the short and longer term.

CONTENTS:

NHI & SCOTO	1
What is Community Led Tourism?	5
Why Press Pause?	8
PRESS PAUSE PLOCKTON	13-75
Our Community	13
Press Pause Conversations	30
1. Defining the Destination	33
2. What is and isn't working?	34
3. Competitors and Comparators	36
4. Visitor Profile – Past, Present & Future	38
5. Destination Competency	40
6. Community Led Place Branding	49
7. Reflections	64
8. Recommendations	67
9. Recalibrating Tourism	73
10. Closing Thoughts	75

APPENDIX – Summary of key findings and recommendations





*North Highland Initiative (**NHI**) is a non-profit organisation established in 2005 as a direct result of His Majesty King Charles III's commitment to support the people and businesses of the north Highlands of Scotland.*

Today NHI's goals remain the same with a focus on supporting and funding community building, food and farming, education, conservation and tourism, seeking to foster innovation, create employment and enhance quality of life for the people living in this unique and beautiful part of Scotland.

NHI provides grants to support projects across three key sectors; community, food and farming, and tourism. In 2020 NHI set up their Community Infrastructure Support programme for community led initiatives.

www.northhighlandinitiative.co.uk



***SCOTO** (Scotland's Community Tourism Network) was established in 2022 as a forum for individuals and enterprises across Scotland involved with or interested in developing community led tourism.*

SCOTO's energy is focused on peer-to-peer support and learning, providing online resources, sharing best practice and supporting the growth and development of community led tourism across Scotland.

SCOTO's ambition is for every community in Scotland to embrace community led tourism as a force for good which enables their community to be an even better place to live, work and visit. SCOTO is seeking to recalibrate tourism in Scotland to deliver for Scotland's communities and environment first

www.scoto.co.uk

www.belocal.scot

NHI & SCOTO

PRESS PAUSE PROGRAMME 2023-24



In 2023 NHI approached SCOTO to scope out a more community focused approach to tourism development, management and promotion in the North Highlands.

SCOTO devised Press Pause as a workshop based programme to deliver in individual communities across the area. NHI agreed to fund a Press Pause Pilot and then a Programme - and also to provide an additional grant to participating communities to support early actions and quick wins.

In the North Highlands, even prior to Covid, various marketing initiatives and the social media explosion had attracted significant numbers to the area and while many businesses were benefitting and new businesses emerging some communities were feeling overwhelmed by the sheer numbers and others were feeling they were missing out as traffic passed through.

Post covid there has been a major focus on recovery – but by getting off the hamster wheel and collectively exploring what is actually happening and what could be different individual communities can determine a new and better future for themselves where tourism doesn't just happen to them – tourism actually helps tackle priority issues within their community. Tourism can be a force for good and make a significance difference.





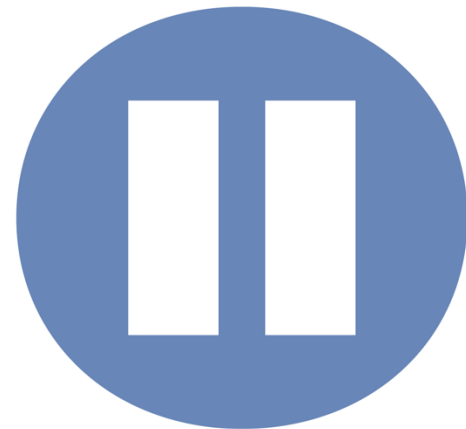
Press Pause Initiative

The Press Pause Initiative has been designed to support geographic communities in taking time to review their current situation and reflect on what could be done differently or better with the community's overall interests to the fore.

Press Pause takes place in destination and facilitates reflective conversations with individuals at a half day workshop. Key business and community interests are invited and various topics are explored which consider tourism over time and appraising the current situation. Topics include the changing visitor profile, comparators and competitors, destination competence and sense of place and branding.

Each workshop generates key findings and SCOTO then analyse and develop these outputs to provide a series of different recommendations on next steps and opportunities for community led tourism services and experiences.

In the North Highlands Thurso and Lochcarron were pilot communities and a Programme approach has now been instigated with Brora, Plockton, Wick and Durness and Tongue engaged.



PRESS PAUSE

*A place-based
approach to
destination
development,
management and
promotion ...*

*... with business and
community interests
at the same table.*

scoto 
PRESS PAUSE

What is Community Led Tourism?



Historically many communities have felt that tourism happens to them - rather than with them. It was traditionally promoted by tourist boards, larger attractions and businesses - and more recently through numerous digital touch points – TV, film, social media, Online Travel Agents, bloggers, travel trade, VS and DMOs.

But as more and more communities across Scotland form local development trusts, take ownership of assets, and are providing visitor facing services and experiences.... there is a growing sense of tourism being not just something that can happen with the community but also something that can deliver many positive benefits and can help address priority issues such as social isolation, retaining young people, showcasing local producers and crafters and preserving artefacts and assets.

For SCOTO & NHI community tourism is where a geographic community is directly involved in managing the tourism offer in their area and ensuring tourism derives tangible benefits at a local level.

SCOTO has defined two types of community tourism in Scotland.

- *Community Led Visitor Services and Experiences*
- *Community Led Destination Development and Promotion*



What is Community Led Tourism?



A: Community Led Visitor Services and Experiences

B: Community Led Destination Development & Promotion

WHAT Travel, events and visitor services and experiences that are owned, managed and/or delivered by the local community

A geographic community makes a conscious choice to come together to manage their tourism offer and how their area is promoted

WHY Ensure tourism as a means to an end – wider benefits are realised for the community addressing local priorities

To avoid tourism just happening – tourism becomes a force for good. Business and community interests work together

WHO Social Enterprises – Cooperative, CIC, SCIO, Charitable Trust with trading arm

Community Development Trusts, Community Associations, Cooperatives, village/Village/Area DMOs

HOW Asset transfers, service level agreements, partnerships, change of use, added value

Community led destination competency appraisals and action plan
Community led place branding and visitor proposition



What is Community Led Tourism?



A: Community Led Visitor Services & Experiences

This is typically where the community has set up a social enterprise which delivers a visitor facing service or experience which derives important benefits back into the community as well as servicing the needs of visitors. The service may not be totally visitor facing and equally tourism may not be seen as the primary driver. But the interface with visitors brings in much needed spend and other social benefits and helps the community deliver against priority issues and opportunities.

B: Community Led Destination Development & Promotion

This is where a geographic community – a village, an island, a village, a city neighbourhood or a glen, for example – come together to consider and then manage their tourism offer and how their area is promoted. This involves local business and community interests collaborating to better understand how the area presents itself as a destination and jointly agree what could be done better or differently that can make the place an even better place to live, work and visit



Why Press Pause?

A New Era



- Tourism and travel is changing – it already was and this has rapidly accelerated with the pandemic
- Everyone is much more conscious of their wellbeing
- We are increasingly aware of the climate emergency and the need for individual action
- Technology is revolutionising travel and tourism
- Our inspiration for travel is coming from multiple often digital sources
- And visitors are seeking to slow down, meet local people, have authentic experiences

Meanwhile ...

- Scotland is focusing on Community Wealth Building [NSET – National Strategy for Economic Transformation]
- Scotland is seeking a 'wellbeing' economy [NSET]
- Scotland is seeking 'responsible tourism for a sustainable future' [Scotland Outlook 2030]
- Scottish Communities are being empowered to do more for themselves - to own assets and strengthen their voice



Why Press Pause?

Global Context



In 2015 all United Nations Member States adopted the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. This provided a shared blue print for peace and prosperity for people and planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** which are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand in hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth – all while **tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests**.

#SDG11 is the most relevant to Community Led Tourism – Sustainable Cities and Communities. **#SDG11 is all about making cities and human settlements**

- **Inclusive**
- **Safe**
- **Resilient**
- **Sustainable**

Press Pause seeks to review and address how tourism is actively contributing to the achievement of all SDGs and specifically #SDG11.





Why Press Pause?

National Context

The National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) has a vision *“to create a wellbeing economy: a society that is thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions, and that delivers prosperity for all Scotland's people and places. We aim to achieve this while respecting environmental limits, embodied by our climate and nature targets.”*

Scotland Outlook 2030 – the national tourism strategy – is seeking *“responsible tourism for a sustainable future”*. Responsible tourism considers four themes – reducing carbon, inclusion, biodiversity and communities.

The strategy focuses on four priorities –

- **Our passionate people**
- **Our thriving places**
- **Our diverse businesses**
- **Our memorable experiences**

Scotland has provided the strategic context for a new way of delivering tourism with communities' interests to the fore. By engaging in Press Pause individual communities can review how tourism is currently impacting their community and consider how this can be improved.



Why Press Pause?

Local Context



In Scotland communities have been undertaking **Community Action Planning** for many years. Community Action Planning seeks to identify **the priorities that the community feel are important to them** and set out **how they wish to pursue their goals and aspirations**. This process is ensuring that **local people have a real voice** and can **influence the decisions** which **impact on their communities**.

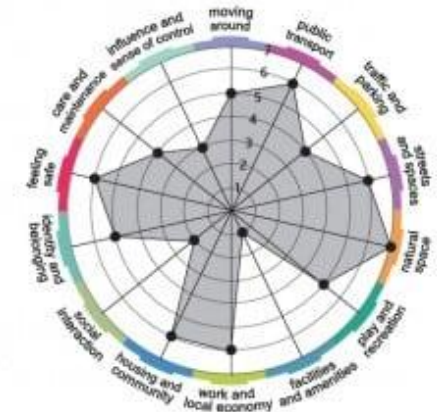
More recently **Place Planning** has been introduced by the **Planning (Scotland) Act 2019**, which contains a new right for communities to produce their own plans as part of the new Scottish planning system. Local Place Plans contain the **community's proposals for the development and use of land**, and provide a new opportunity for communities to feed into the planning system with ideas and proposals.

Many communities who have undertaken community action or place planning at either an individual community level or an area level do identify tourism as a theme requiring action either to better manage pressures or optimize opportunities.

Press Pause enables an individual community to properly understand what tourism is delivering at present – good and bad – and to collectively explore what could be done differently or better in the interests of the community.



Place Standard –
How good is Our Place?



Why Press Pause?

Key considerations



The Press Pause Initiative facilitates conversations on

- What is the Destination in the eyes of locals as well as visitors
- What's working, what's not working, and what could be done differently/better
- Competitors and Comparators
- Visitor Profile – Past, Present and Future
- Community Led Destination Competency Appraisal
- Community Led Place Branding – USPs, POPs and PODs
- A Community Led Visitor Proposition
- Reflections ... and Actions



PLOCKTON 'PRESS PAUSE' REPORT

AUGUST 2024

PLOCKTON, LOCHALSH





PLOCKTON

Scene Setting

SCOTO was commissioned by the North Highland Initiative to undertake a pilot community led tourism initiative. Press Pause was formulated by SCOTO and the communities of Lochcarron and Thurso agreed to be pilot communities and workshops took place in June 2023. The pilots were well received in each community and NHI agreed to fund a second phase of Press Pause with Plockton being selected, along with Brora, Wick, Tongue and Durness.

Plockton is a highland village on the west coast of Scotland approximately 6 miles from Kyle of Lochalsh. SCOTO was initially introduced to Plockton & District Community Trust SCIO in Winter 2023/24 by Wester Ross Biosphere linked to their place planning activity and the potential relevance of a Press Pause workshop in helping consider current visitor and traffic management issues and wider tourism matters. Following a scoping meeting early in 2024 a date for the Plockton Press Pause workshop was set for 30 May 2024. Plockton & District Community Trust set up an invite list of local business and community interests and issued invites to the Press Pause workshop. A public invite was also extended to others with an interest in tourism. The workshop took place in Plockton Village Hall.

This Press Pause Report sets out the key findings and lists a number of recommendations for the community to consider as part of their journey in community led tourism.



PLOCKTON

An Overview



- Plockton is located in Lochalsh in the North West Highlands of Scotland and on the west coast on the south shore of Loch Carron
- Plockton was established as a fishing and crofting village and this heritage remains active today with some visitor services
- Plockton had a population of c468 in the village in 2020
- Plockton has rail access – on the Kyle Line
- Plockton is approximately 75 miles from both Fortwilliam and from Inverness – with the village accessed by single track road from the A87 or A890
- Plockton has a recently established community development trust
- Much of the land in and around the village and wider district is owned by National Trust for Scotland as part of the Balmacara Estate





PLOCKTON

Community Structures

Plockton has an active Community Council – Plockton and District.

Plockton and District Community Trust / *Urras Coimhearsnachd Sgìre a'Phluic* was established in 2020 as a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation). It is a two tier SCIO which means it is a membership organisation, and there are three membership categories, for residents young people and people not living in the community. It has up to 9 trustees who are elected from the ordinary members (locals over 16 years of age). There is also scope to co-opt up to three trustees. All trustees are unpaid, voluntary positions. (SC050272).

Plockton & District Community Trust cover the same area as the Community Council and works closely with other local organisations such as Plockton Harbour CIC, The Plockton Hall Committee and Kyle & Lochalsh Community Trust.

Current projects being pursued by the Trust are

- Acquiring the **Old Post Office** in the heart of the village for community use including the current 'knitters' and 'papers' and with forward plans to provide toilet and kitchen facilities to the rear..
- **Seeking Control Area status for Short Term Lets** in recognition of the need to stem the loss of dwellings to commercial holiday lets and seek to strengthen the community by growing the number of year-round residents.

A **local phone book** has recently been completed which has landlines and mobile numbers and is searchable by village/street and surname. It also includes a handy list of local services, hotels, food outlets, leisure facilities etc



PLOCKTON

Tourism Structures

Plockton traditionally sat within the destination formerly known as Skye and Lochalsh. Skye Connect CIC is the current DMO – Destination Management Organisation - which has recently re-focused its energy on the island itself and does not now formally include Lochalsh. This also links with the recent ward boundary changes where Lochalsh became part of Ward 5: Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh. Skye Connect represents businesses and individuals with interests in tourism and seeks to support local livelihoods and promote a robust sustainable tourism industry on Skye. Their visitor facing web presence is www.myskyetime.com which does refer to Lochalsh but is primarily focused on the island and Raasay.

Plockton is included in the area covered by Visit Wester Ross. Please note that although Plockton is one of the villages profiled on their website, engagement has been historically limited due to many sources showing Plockton as being within the separate Skye and Lochalsh area until comparatively recently. www.visitwester-ross.com.

Plockton and Lochalsh are close to but not included in the NC500.



PLOCKTON

Tourism Structures



Plockton is within the Wester Ross Biosphere which launched a Destination Management Plan for the Biosphere area in 2020 which focuses on a partnership approach to destination management and a culture of welcoming visitors.

LADBA – Lochcarron and District Business Association cover the villages of Lochcarron, Kishorn, Applecross, Shieldaig and Torridon and the surrounding landscape and their website www.lochcarron.org.uk refers to Plockton and Lochalsh as an adjacent area.

Visit Plockton is the local tourism association managed by a group of local businesses, and it operates a successful website and social media channels which currently focus on the village. www.visitplockton.com. Consideration is already being given to extending the area to include the wider district and Balmacara. This is a good approach to be taking and to be encouraged. It is important that visitors have a good sense of what the wider area offers which can encourage longer stays and also collaboration between communities and businesses to disperse visitors.





PLOCKTON

Tourism Structures

Plockton (and Lochalsh) is referred to on regional destination websites but in many ways it is both peripheral to both the Skye and Wester Ross destinations and also lies between Skye and the NC500 which are two of Scotland's most popular destinations. Lochalsh connects them both and this exciting juxtaposition could be further developed in partnership with both areas and with a clear community led place brand and visitor proposition for Lochalsh (and Plockton) as a discrete and intriguing destination connecting these areas. The Lochalsh Collaborates group provides a mechanism for exploring and developing this.



PLOCKTON



Initial Observations



- Plockton is a traditional west coast village accessed by single track road
- It is characterised online with images of the terraced houses overlooking the bay and palm trees
- It is known as the location for the 1990s TV series Hamish MacBeth
- It is a popular base for boat trips to see seals, and for kayaking and paddle boarding in the bay
- Plockton is a well known safe anchorage for sailors
- Plockton is a 'sought out' destination – it is not on a trunk road – visitors make a conscious decision to visit Plockton
- For first time visitors it is not immediately clear what is on offer which can result in visitors exploring by car before parking
- Traffic management is a key issue in the village and has been a growing problem
- The number of B&Bs has dwindled in recent years
- Second home ownership in Plockton is now significant

PLOCKTON

THE VILLAGE



PLOCKTON

PLOCKTON VILLAGE HALL



THE OLD POST
OFFICE/PLOCKTON KNITTERS



PLOCKTON

PLOCKTON MAIN PIER PONTON



**PLOCKTON CAR PARK
PONTON**



PLOCKTON

PLOCKTON INN



PLOCKTON HOTEL



PLOCKTON

CALUM'S SEAL TRIPS FROM PLOCKTON



PLOCKTON

KAYAKING AND PADDLEBOARDING IN PLOCKTON BAY



PLOCKTON

DUNCRAIG CASTLE NEAR PLOCKTON



PLOCKTON

DUIRINISH NEAR PLOCKTON



Press Pause Conversations



Engagement at Workshop

18 people were present representing

- Plockton & District Community Trust
- Plockton & District Community Council
- Plockton & District Tourist Association
- Plockton Historical Society
- National Trust for Scotland
- Wester Ross Biosphere
- Visit Wester Ross
- Plockton Grazings Committee
- Lochalsh Craft Group
- Plockton Harbour CIC (also own and operate public toilets)
- Plockton Village Hall
- Kyle and Lochalsh Community Trust
- Self Catering Operator
- Gift Shop Operator
- Boat Trip Operator
- Paddle Boarding Operator
- New holiday accommodation business
- Former holiday chalet business/local resident

Topics Explored

1. Defining the PLOCKTON Destination as a visitor and as a local
2. What's working, what's not working, and what could be done differently/better in PLOCKTON
3. PLOCKTON'S Competitors and Comparators
4. PLOCKTON'S Visitor Profile – Past Present and Future
5. PLOCKTON'S Destination Competency Appraisal
6. PLOCKTON'S Place Branding – USPs, POPs and PODs
7. Reflections ...
8. CLT Recommendations for PLOCKTON





PLOCKTON

Background and Context

Information from previous meetings about a tourism place plan for Plockton provided perspectives on the area and questions on the value/opportunity tourism offers and issues that need addressed:.

- How can motorhome/campervan visitors be better managed? Does making provision simply attract even more?
- How can inappropriate parking be better managed?
- Should any parking and campervan facilities be private, council or community owned/run?
- What is the impact of the 'invitation to pay' parking now – and will it become mandatory?
- Should visitors pay for facilities rather than parking – are toilet donations reduced when people have already paid for parking?
- How can gridlock and traffic congestion be addressed?
- Toilets need investment and then could be charged for
- Major issues with watersports people/groups using the toilets for changing – leave a mess
- Keen to see longer stays and slow tourism – do have some loyal returning visitors for multiple days
- Walks with waymarked routes would be welcomed
- Lack of places to eat, limited provisions available - both have knock on effect on accommodation providers
- Marketing, interpretation and signage - what is needed?
- Far fewer B&Bs – only 3 left in the village – limited options for budget friendly overnight stays



PLOCKTON

Introductory Remarks



The Community Trust and the Community Council have been discussing traffic management, second home ownership, holiday lets and tourism for some time. The NHI/SCOTO Press Pause workshop is a great opportunity to have open discussions on the specifics of the issues from a business and community perspective and seek to explore community led tourism driven solutions – ie that benefit and do not hamper the community's day to day life.

There are strong contrasts with nearby Kyle of Lochalsh which has trunk road access. Most visitors are passing through on the way to Skye and not everyone stops. Those that do tend to only stop for refreshments and fuel. In contrast people choose to visit Plockton – given the road infrastructure it is not a drive past/through destination. Plockton attracts a lot of day visitors and longer stays. Plockton isn't on either the NC500 or the road to Skye but feels like it attracts visitors doing both.

Plockton is the 'destination' for many visitors but their travel to the village does impact others parts of the district with access being by single track road. The car park at the harbour has issues with congestion yet the back area is often not full

Visit Plockton currently focus on the village but plan to cover the wider area.

NTS are currently looking at an engagement plan for Balmacara Estate and are keen to engage with locals and visitors to hear views, and to work in partnership. The plan is to use the whole estate as a visitor journey and tell the crofting landscape story with Plockton part of that story.





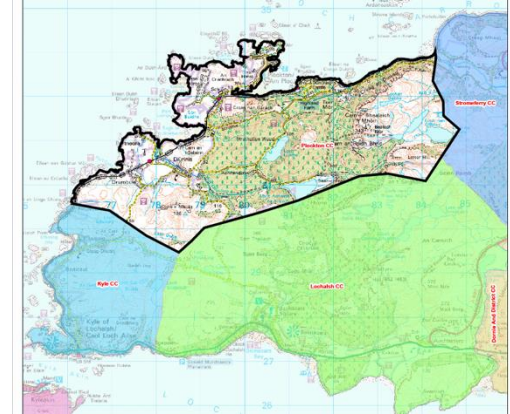
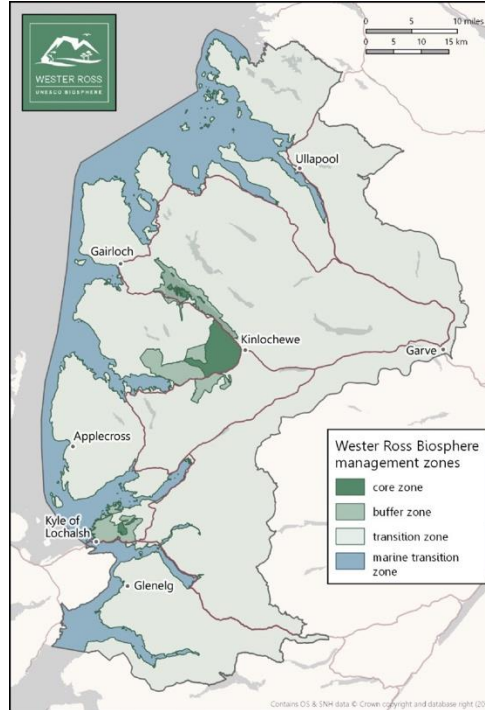
1. Defining the Destination

Plockton sits within the wider area known as Lochalsh and is within the Wester Ross Biosphere.

The Plockton and District Community Trust/Community Council area was agreed as a good basis for community led tourism and destination development, management and promotion. This includes the village and also the settlements/crofting townships of Duirinish and Drumbuie, Craig, Duncraig, Port an Eorna and Achnandarach. The current Tourist Association currently focuses on Plockton but has acknowledged covering a bigger area makes sense and should include all of Balmacara Estate.

Further discussion is recommended on the merit of the area of interest being Lochalsh peninsula – and working with adjacent communities in Balmacara and Kyle of Lochalsh and their community council areas.

The area sits between Skye and the NC500 and although a well known place name is not necessarily well understood as a discrete destination that is more than Kyle of Lochalsh. This does link with the Lochalsh Collaborates activity, although it covers a larger area. It does offer a potential mechanism for further exploration. Equally NTS have an interest over the three community council areas and could support initial discussions and tie this in with their current estate engagement plans.



2. What's working/not working

Comments shared at the workshop by individuals:

- People are coming to Plockton
- A lot of repeat visitors
- It has been very well known for 100+ years as a visitor destination
- Social media marketing has raised awareness (not always good!)
- Good facilities for water based visitors - sailors, kayakers and boarders
- Popular with sailors and many sailors return
- Good local walks
- Good eateries
- Best fish and chip award
- Wild swimming – a good range of safe beaches
- Have seen recent financial investment (eg £1.5m in Plockton Inn) and more planned in the area
- Campervan numbers
- Still feels authentic
- Only independent businesses
- Cows loved by visitors
- Traffic order and keep clear areas have helped (need enforced)

- Lost a lot of short term lets (covid and recent regulations)
- Very limited provisions - shop has limited hours and stock
- Many operators are older and will soon retire
- Prices have gone up and lost some of the repeat business
- Very limited reasonably priced accommodation now
- Campervan numbers and irresponsible parking
- Lack of campervan/motorhome facilities
- Less B&Bs
- Lack of facilities for sailors – eg showers (hotel used to offer a room but no longer)
- Severe shortage of working age staff (not just hospitality)
- Lack of affordable housing (can't attract staff)
- Lack of tradespeople so maintenance is an issue
- Less families and reducing school role – impact on High School
- Food offer is restricted – eg limited at lunchtime, not open 7 days, need to book for evening
- Continual traffic jams at the car park entrance
- 'no overnight parking signs have displaced the issue onto the street
- Far end of car park doesn't get used (not visible?)
- Coral Beach Motorhome waste issues
- Campervan/motorhome wild camping issues – church of verges and waste disposal (NB not all)
- Ranger been cut by Highland Council – did help enforce traffic order but not now
- Large motorhomes are major issue in the village – no room to manoeuvre
- Seeing a lot more smaller vans and roof tents - no waste facilities
- Toilet donations and Highland Council grant don't cover costs water is metered and very costly





2. What could be done better

Initial ideas

- Traffic management plan with Highland Council
 - Address poor use of back area of car park
 - Discourage some traffic from entering the main village (dead end)
 - Have village wide approach to car park charging and no overnight parking signs
 - Provide adequate turning facilities
- Helpful info for motorhomes/campervans so they know what is acceptable
- Shower and waste facilities
- Extend the car park with more facilities (plans have been produced)
- Possible campsite/motorhome area like Broadford (makes money) – Airstrip area ?
- Learning exchange to see what has been done elsewhere esp traffic management – eg Luss, Hawkshead
- Community shop
- Agree tipping point thresholds



3. Competitors & Comparators

A useful exercise is to think of similar communities that are either local competitors and can be attracting the visitors you would like to see or comparators which are communities that are similar but located elsewhere and have achieved success and therefore could have valuable insights to share. Learning exchanges can be very worthwhile.

COMPETITORS

SKYE – major draw for first time visitors to Scotland who pass nearby but don't visit

NC500 – route is close by but doesn't include Plockton

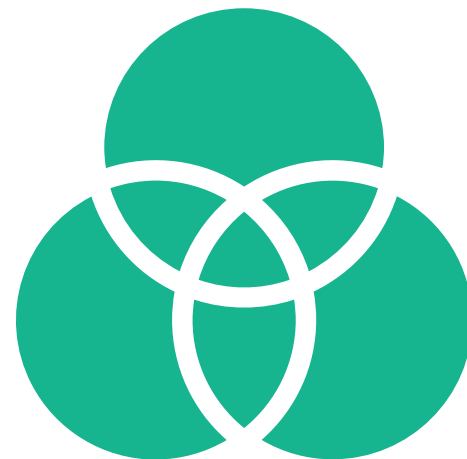
COMPARATORS

LUSS – busy conservation village on Loch Lomond with traffic issues

ST IVES – traditional coastal town in Cornwall with traffic management challenges

TOBERMORY – coastal community with harbour and visitor facilities

GAIRLOCH – coastal community with overnight parking issues



3. Competitors & Comparators

So What?



SKYE – many of Skye visitors are doing quick visits and are not necessarily the type of visitors Plockton would welcome (tick box tourists)

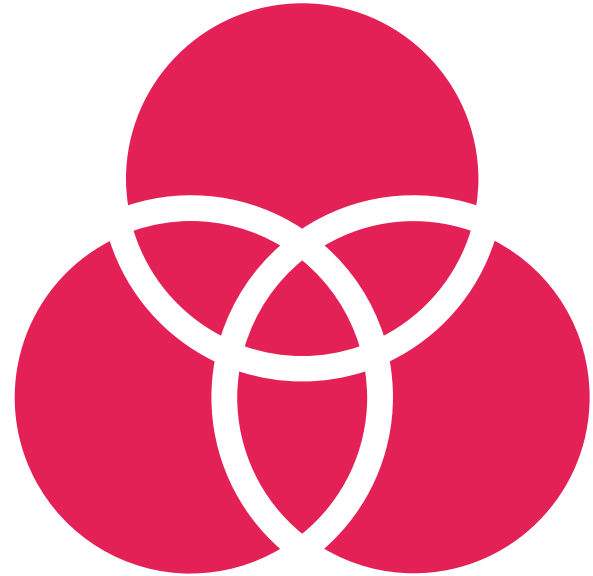
NC500 – many communities have been overwhelmed by the traffic numbers and lack of infrastructure. Plockton would struggle to accommodate the one night stay touring market that uses the NC500.

LUSS – busy conservation village on Loch Lomond which has a large car park adjacent to the village and clear walking routes to explore on foot. Permit holders and resident only (and delivery) access in the village.

ST IVES – traditional coastal town in Cornwall with a very large car park outside the town and regular low cost bus service into the town. Residents have permits and any parking by visitors in the town is costly. 7-day permits can be purchased in advance for self catering users.

TOBERMORY – new car park and high-quality visitor facilities provided at the harbour – showers and toilets - with new pontoons. Business spaces.

GAIRLOCH – overnight parking issues have been addressed with community signage directing visitors to where is acceptable. Waste provision for motorhomes provided at the harbour.





4. Visitor Profile

Past, Present & Future

PAST

Long tradition of 2 week family holidays
Come back each year



PRESENT

Now 1 week family holidays – some families return year on year
More 2-3 night stop overs/short breaks
Much more campervans and motorhomes
Notable increase in second home owners
Notable change in accommodation offer – less B&Bs
Tour groups (arrive late and leave early)



FUTURE

Two nights plus
Families and young couples/groups of friends
Active and outdoor
Cultural and creative



5. Destination Competence

An Introduction



Being a successful destination is a function of many factors and how they interplay.

SCOTO has devised a competency appraisal for geographic communities to undertake as part of the Press Pause conversations.

Through conversation and discussion at the workshop the community are asked to describe their current offer under each of 16 criteria and then rate it in terms of

Red – things are really not working/don't exist

Amber – things do need improved

Green – things are functioning well.



This rating is generated by all present and helps facilitate collective thinking and also trigger ideas for improvement





5. Destination Competence Appraisal – 16 Criteria

1. Tourism Traditions and Timelines
2. Sense of place and Visitor Proposition
3. Features and attractions
4. Accommodation
5. Activities and Experiences
6. Food, Drink and Refreshments
7. Events and Festivals
8. Makers and Producers
9. Travel and Connectivity
10. Amenities and Infrastructure
11. Visitor Management, Signage and Interpretation
12. Digital Presence and Marketing
13. Biodiversity and Net Zero
14. Community Assets
15. People and Players
16. Destination Collaboration



5. Destination Competence



NO	CRITERIA	CURRENT APPRAISAL	RAG	COMMUNITY LED TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES
1	TOURISM TRADITIONS. TIMELINES & SEASONALITY	Strong tradition – west coast destination which has been very popular for family holidays (1-2 weeks) – largely seasonal NB the market is changing		To help adapt to the changing marketplace and interests (touring and outdoor) – provide bunkhouse / hostel /pods /Motorhome/Campervan aire stop over and waste management services
2	SENSE OF PLACE	Well known with older generations and linked to Hamish Macbeth Previously known as a food destination with sailors and travellers Not well known by younger people		Develop the place brand for Plockton (& Balmacara) and develop a visitor proposition for a younger slow tourism audience
3	FEATURES & ATTRACTIONS	The village itself is the attraction Harbour Rail heritage and Kyle Line Duncraig Castle is visible Micro brewery Open air church (overgrown) and war memorial		Scope to provide experiences for visitors linked to village life – eg the knitters who sell their products but also welcome visitors and chat – knitter natters Coffee mornings, art sales, sale of work Croft experiences
4	ACCOMMO-DATION	Limited B&Bs – many closed due to retirement and new regulations – only 3 remain Hotel rates have increased a lot A lot of second homes – often empty Bunkhouse at the station – 4 dorms and sleeps 20 No campsite and no motorhome or campervan provision Agreed could be described as amber but is definitely heading towards red - serious issue in terms of range Campervans and motorhomes – need some resolution		Formal campervan aire/camp site – need land – the airstrip is a possibility and the car park adjacent is already used informally. Could start small and grow Scope to include pods or bunkhouse/Hostel for budget and single night stays – good demand from cyclists/water sports plus tourers

5. Destination Competence



NO	CRITERIA	CURRENT APPRAISAL	RAG	COMMUNITY LED TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES
5	ACTIVITIES	Seal trips and boat trips Kayaking (guided no hire only) Paddleboarding (guided no hire only) (NB open sea restricts hire only options) Wild swimming Sailing Cycling Walking		Walking routes – develop map of trails and circular routes from the village for walkers and cyclists with view points and access to more remote beaches Potential bike and e-bike hire enterprise for exploring the wider district
6	FOOD & DRINK	Had a strong reputation – recent consistency issues with mixed reports and feedback reviews Poor capacity for the numbers visiting the village What there is is now much more expensive Quality can be variable Not reliable Need to pre-book – and to know to Limited breakfast options Lunch is very difficult 2 takeaways (fish and chip)		Have eating out info (times, types, booking info) on an info board at the car park and as a pdf or QR code link to issue with accommodation bookings (needs to be kept up to date) Consider pop up options at the village hall Develop a Be Local Plockton FaceBook page for businesses to promote offers and opening times for locals and visitors
7	EVENTS & FESTIVALS	Regatta event Horticultural show Beer Festival and Gin Festival used to take place – resurrect ? Music nights Craft fair each month Plans for a new seafood and music festival Fireworks on 5 th Novemeber		Scope for more festival activity – eg seafood related Crofting related festival/events Need to address accommodation demand for any events/festivals

5. Destination Competence



NO	CRITERIA	CURRENT APPRAISAL	RAG	COMMUNITY LED TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES
8	MAKERS & PRODUCERS	Knitters at Old Post office Craft fairs every month Art exhibitions Microbrewery Farmgate shop with eggs and jams Fish van Creel fishermen – can buy their seafood		Scope for more activity if there is capacity Links well with the village being the reason people come and then able to visit the village hall for produce and crafts, art exhibitions etc (build on existing activity)
9	TRAVEL	Rail link – 4 per day (recently reduced to 2 with the driver shortage) – people do visit by train Community bus to Lochalsh twice a week No public bus Kyle taxi - no local service Airstrip – used occasionally by private aircraft		Explore Community Rail Partnership possibilities for the Kyle Line. Scope to differentiate each station and stop in terms of what to see and do. Provide satellite parking with attractive walks into the village
10	AMENITIES & INFRA-STRUCTURE	Public toilets (run by Harbour CIC – need refurbished) No fuel Basic shop (very limited opening hours – tied into lease) – issues for self caterers on arrival seeking provisions No supermarket (nearest is Kyle of Lochalsh) No ATM No post office or bank No EV charging Limited parking within the village (car park and roadside)		Important to better manage expectations prior to arrival. Can be on websites and also via booking confirmations, Also advance signage either at Kyle on services available or at junctions on the trunk roads (can be costly). Consider offering 'Plockton hampers' with basic provisions for arrival in self-catering. Consider basic provisions



5. Destination Competence

NO	CRITERIA	CURRENT APPRAISAL	RAG	COMMUNITY LED TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES
11	VISITOR INFO & SIGNAGE	Signage is very poor – very limited amount and congestion can block signs from view. Particular issues at the car park entrance New campervan/motorhome signs are working VIC is currently closed due to roof damage which NTS are keen to sort – 19k footfall in previous years so is used by visitors. Popular in wet weather. NTS signs – some need repaired/replaced Interpretation in the VIC is dated – over 10 years old – NTS are looking to redo it Exploring joint working between NTS and Historic Society. Visit Plockton are looking at maps with QR codes at key sites A footpath signage scheme for different trails around the village would help		Acknowledgement of issues and need to address. Signage strategy identifying key points to signpost and decision points. Rationalise existing signage and highlight out of date/redundant signs seeking the council and others remove them Consider the future of the VIC and possible redevelopment of toilets, VIC and parking – ref plans previously drawn up Interp strategy for the village – key stories and where to tell them. BeLocal SCOTO branded tear off map for Plockton and District
12	DIGITAL PRESENCE & MARKETING	The tourist association operate www.visitplockton.com - ranks well on google under a search for Plockton An important point for Plockton is there isn't a strong need to market the area as people are coming. Traffic management is the issue. Better promote as a hub to explore wider area Motorhome user sites promote coral beach for stopovers		Extend visitplockton.com to cover the wider area Review Plockton content on partner sites (eg VS and Visit Wester Ross etc) and agree place branding and visitor proposition plus content to share with them
13	BIO-DIVERSITY & NET ZERO	More could be done Crofts do good biodiversity activity and NTS have gold green tourism accreditation. No EV charging		Develop a Plockton and district NetZero activity plan – collate what is happening and identify quick wins

5. Destination Competence



NO	CRITERIA	CURRENT APPRAISAL	RAG	COMMUNITY LED TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES
14	COMMUNITY ASSETS	Village Hall Toilets (via Harbour CIC) Old Post Office is being purchased Bowling Green Sheds and pontoons at harbour (Pier is the council) Aware these assets need a lot of work NTS own the info point and other assets – willing to discuss joint projects Council have advised the airfield could be an asset transfer (will still require to retain some land for the ongoing airfield use and existing business)		Undertake a review of assets and future refurbishment needs - consider opportunities for integrating new visitor facilities. Undertake a feasibility study for the airfield and potential for a viable campsite/motorhome site with facilities and also car parking with links to the village – learning exchange to existing community run camp and motorhome sites Consider scope for an asset transfer of the car park and toilets with a masterplan redevelopment and revenue generation hub linked to the harbour with showers
15	PEOPLE & PLAYERS	Considered to be a very motivated community – but age concerns Experiencing some burn out and no young people are engaging at this stage More working from home so potential to engage more volunteers – need to promote		Community social event to share findings of Press Pause and highlighting opportunities/capacity challenges/ volunteer opportunities. Explore ideas with the school - high school is a strength. Engage with second homeowners
16	DESTINATION COLLABORATION	Visit Plockton do work with Skye Connect and LADBA, les so Visit Wester Ross No relationship with VisitScotland Very aware fall between areas – but have cracked on and in many ways are now a special case which people seek out		Develop the Visit Plockton website and content to cover the wider area Develop the place brand and visitor proposition and ensure others use the content

5. CLT Opportunities

Ideas to Explore in Plockton



CRITERIA	COMMUNITY LED TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES WORTH EARLY EXPLORATION
Sense of place	Plockton has a good sense of place and strong sense of community – merit in better positioning the wider Lochalsh area and Plockton within it - and as a hub for exploring Skye/Wester Ross
Features and Attractions	Consolidate the principle of the village itself as the key attraction – Plockton Conservation Village - better articulate this and develop hand drawn style map of key features, walks, viewpoints and services
Accommodation	An immediate opportunity is to consider a campsite and motorhome stop over at the airfield to alleviate congestion in the village/encourage responsible behaviours. Motorhomes are prevalent.
Events & Festivals	Scope out additional small scale regular activity that reinforces the sense of community, culture and crofting heritage. Develop the seafood and music idea. Consider accommodation options.
Amenities & Infrastructure	Toilets need upgraded in longer term. Introduce digital donation system with good signage explaining the need for donations. Signage to explain how the new parking charge supports the community.
Visitor Information & Signage	Major priority – repair the VIC roof and update the information and interpretation available. Local map of services and nearest alternatives plus walking routes. Signage needs close working with council.
Community Assets	Strategic review of all existing assets and invite ideas from within the community. All assets in need of refurbishment – trading opportunities - potential capacity issues to progress – need prioritised
People & Players	Scope to appoint a community tourism development officer and consider themed working groups – eg events, signage, camping and motorhomes, digital. Open day/social events to attract new players

5. Community Led Tourism Inspiration from Elsewhere



Findhorn Campervan Aire

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/fsqnta50/scoto_findhorn-case-study.pdf

Tweedsmuir The Crook Inn Plus

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/bznbggxxg/scoto_tweedsmuir-case-study.pdf

Callander Youth Project/Callander Hostel

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/f3oerevm/scoto_callander-hostel-case-study.pdf

Isle of Eigg Camping Pods

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/zy4lzkgt/scoto_eigg-camping-pods_case-study.pdf

Loch Ness Hub & Travel, Drumnadrochit

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/ylepaaos/scoto_loch-ness-hub_case-study.pdf

Lewis Point & Sandwich Trail

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/31khsd2p/scoto_point-sandwich-case-study.pdf

Wild Skies Shetland

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/xgzchqln/scoto_wild-skies-case-study.pdf

Strontian Oakwood Tourism & Crafts

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/yppgkurp/scoto_oakwood-case-study.pdf

Wick River Campsite

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/yxup0zo_c/wick-river-campsite-case-studies-2024.pdf

Moray Walking and Outdoor Festival

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/341kukao/scoto_moray-walking-festival-case-study.pdf



5. Managing Expectations

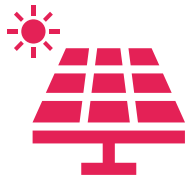
A key consideration for any destination is managing visitor expectations.

Visitors don't always do their research and can arrive in a community with preconceived ideas of what to expect – especially overseas travelers.

This can be anything from getting a mobile signal to finding toilets, being able to use credit cards and not need cash, get an Uber, order a takeaway for delivery or having a sit-down meal in the evening.

To avoid disappointment and frustration communities can do a lot to manage expectations in general but also if there is a specific and short-term issue affecting a service.

A valuable resource is an open access 'what's on' group page on FaceBook where information can be posted (and pinned) and also visitors can ask questions. Local business should be encouraged to join and post regularly and also invite questions. Many communities have these pages. A key pointer is to reserve this for local information posts and not use it to complain about public services and visitor behaviour



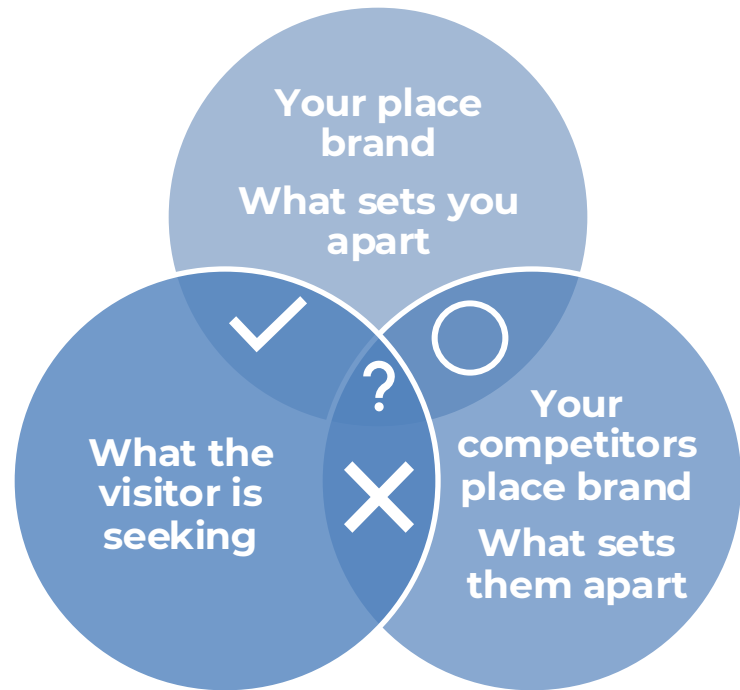
PLOCKTON

- Collate a comprehensive list of the services that are available locally and which are available in the village and where the nearest alternative is – fuel. ATM, EV charging, provisions, garage services, waste disposal, showers etc and include on an 'all you need to know page on Visit Plockton website
- Provide a QR code link to the all you need to know for local businesses to share and add to booking confirmations for accommodation, moorings and activities
- Develop a tear off map for the village and wider area showing key features and attractions plus facilities - make available at the info centre (once re-opened) hotels, shops and at events – include a QR code so people can easily find current opening times, booking info on the website
- Provide A3 window info posters key locations within the village with the mapped information– eg at pier, harbour office, toilets and village hall plus shops and foyers
- Develop and existing or create a new BeLocal Plockton' Facebook page for all enterprises to post updates, special offers and features for locals and visitors and pin a post on the eatery opening times/booking. Encourage all local businesses and organisations to post updates on any changes in opening times and to promptly respond to visitor enquiries and local queries
- Move the 'getting here' section on Visit Plockton to the main menu



6. Place Branding

- Place branding is the idea that **a place, a village, a city, or a region can be branded** – given an identity with a value proposition for a target market and have branding techniques and marketing strategies applied to drive a marketing campaign. Much in the same way a product, service or business can.
- In essence, place branding is "**a strategy for projecting images and managing perceptions – and expectations - about places**". **Authenticity.**
- Place branding seeks to form **a meaningful relationship between person (locals and visitors) and place.**



6. Place Branding Community Led

- We now live in a rapidly developing digital world
- Visitors are influenced by multiple sources of inspiration before, during and after travel – Visitor Touch Points
- Much of this content lacks a proper sense of place and rarely is the host community's voice asserted
- To ensure authenticity and integrity, host communities need to assert themselves – scope out and own their place brand – differentiate their community and then influence other visitor touch points to use the place brand and help target appropriate visitors
- Host communities can readily develop products and experiences to bring their place brand to life



6. Place Branding Hierarchy



Plockton is in the fortunate and also unfortunate position of falling between regions/DMOS although it has carved out a strong and independent presence of its own and doesn't need intensive marketing..





6. Place Branding

“To see ourselves as others see us”

PLOCKTON

Towns & Villages

No trip to the north west Highlands would be complete without a visit to the idyllic village of Plockton.

Located on a beautiful little bay and just seven miles from the bridge over to the Isle of Skye it is the perfect location for you to settle down for a few days and use it as your base for viewing Skye, Torridon and the Cairngorms.

The village is set around the curve of a bay with the old original cottages facing the sea. At high tide the sea comes right up to the sea wall and you can sit on benches, under the palm trees, sipping your coffee or beer and soaking up the tranquillity of this timeless village. Across the bay you look onto wooded crags and Duncraig Castle the light at sunrise can set them aglow.

Walk to the far end of the village and look west towards the Isle of Skye and you get breath-taking sunsets – and if you are lucky, the Northern Lights. This is a wonderful village for photographers and artists.

In the summer, Plockton attracts yachts who moor in the bay and come ashore to take advantage of our great little restaurants and bars. You can go out on seal trips, learn how to kayak and paddleboard or just wander down Harbour Street to view the colour filled little gardens next to the sea. There are craft shops to browse through, traditional music in the pubs and lots of wonderful walks for all levels of enthusiasm.

Visit Plockton, you will not regret it.



6. Place Branding



“To see ourselves as others see us”

PLOCKTON

The picturesque village of Plockton sits on a sheltered bay with stunning views overlooking Loch Carron. Plockton is a Highland village that really offers everything: breathtaking scenery and landscapes, secluded bays, coral beaches, islands, panoramic views and the possibility of seeing an array of marine life at close quarters.

Because of its spectacular setting and traditional Highland atmosphere, Plockton has appeared in numerous film and television productions, the most well known being the BBC's 'Hamish Macbeth' series. This peaceful Highland community in the Gaelic heartland now draws visitors from all over the world to enjoy its beautiful setting.



[For more information on Plockton, visit the Plockton website](#)

6. Place Branding



“To see ourselves as others see us”



DISCOVER PLOCKTON – “THE JEWEL OF THE HIGHLANDS”

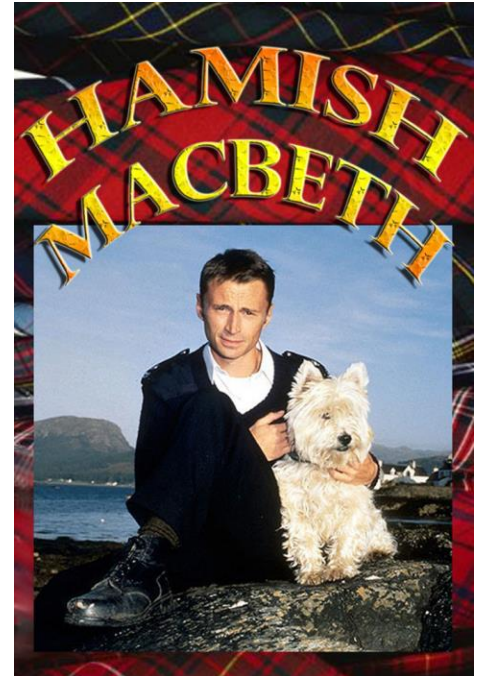
Plockton has something for everyone. Whether you'd like to be on the water, explore the countryside or investigate all that the village has to offer – you will be spoilt for choice. There's an excellent range of outdoor activities, local attractions and shops.



6. Place Branding

Plockton

- Plockton enjoys good awareness and sense of place – marketing is therefore not as major a requirement compared to other communities
- The village character is intact and is not commercialised – it is generally well maintained and has a sense of village pride
- Arguably Plockton has a strong identity and sense of place with older generations – questionable if it as well known with younger generations
- The links with Hamish MacBeth, the BBC TV series in the 1990s and other film and TV coverage contribute to this
- The descriptions used by VisitScotland and others are accurate and convey what the village offers
- Plockton has a fascinating crofting heritage which is not immediately apparent and could be further interpreted for visitors
- Plockton is the focal point of the district and more could be done to disperse visitors and encourage them to explore the locality on foot and by bike on land and by water.
- A place brand proposition that better contextualises the village and experience available is recommended





6. Place Branding

Using USPs, POPs & PODs



USPS

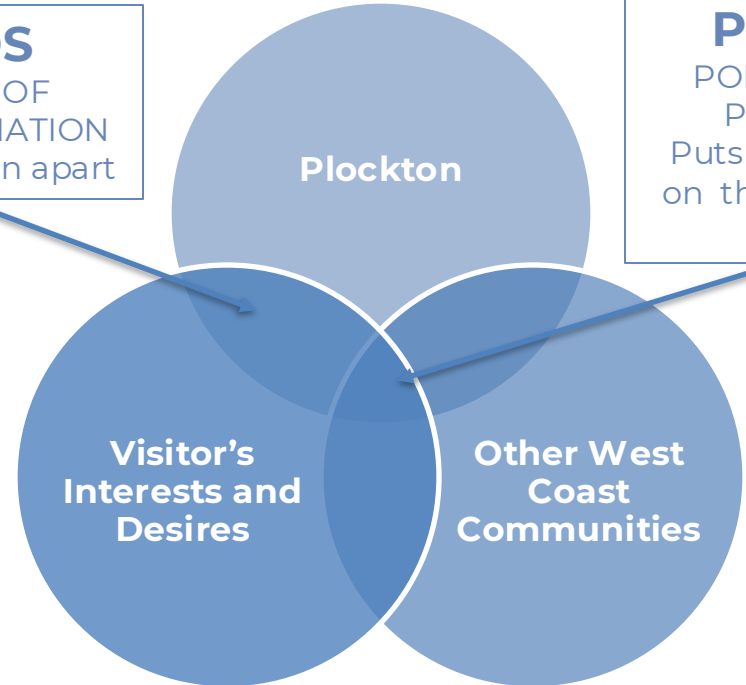
UNIQUE SELLING POINTS
What is unique about Plockton
that no other destination can
claim

PODS

POINTS OF
DIFFERENTIATION
Sets Plockton apart

POPS

POINTS OF
PARITY
Puts Plockton
on the playing
field





6. Place Branding

Plockton's USPs, POPs & PODs

USPs – what would the world miss if PLOCKTON didn't exist?

POPs – what gives PLOCKTON a right to be considered by visitors to the north west coast?

PODs – what sets PLOCKTON apart from other north west coast destinations?



6. Place Branding

Plockton's USPs, POPs & PODs

USPs – what would the world miss without Plockton?	POPs – what makes Plockton a viable destination?	PODs – what sets Plockton apart?
• Setting for BBC TV series in 1990s – Hamish Macbeth with Robert Carlyle • The start of the Wickerman was filmed at Plockton – Edward Woodward • Largest flame shell bed in the world (Loch Carron) • Sorley Maclean (gaelic poet) was a head teacher at the school • Cows roaming the village • The Kyle Line is one of the 10 greatest railway journeys in the world • Planned village from highland clearances in 1801 • Local clinker boats – unique to the area	• Beaches and coastline • Harbour • Kayaking and paddleboarding • Seal trips • Pubs and restaurants	• East facing harbour on the west coast – very sheltered for moorings and great place for novice kayakers and paddle boarders • Calum's Seal Trips – free if don't spot any seals • Coral beach • Cows roaming the village • Palm trees - North Atlantic Drift gives it a mild climate and allows palm trees to grow (check actual species) • Gardens along the front – separated from the house by the road



6. Place Branding

Plockton's USPs, POPs & PODs

USPs – what would the world miss without Plockton?	POPs – what makes Plockton a viable destination?	PODs – what sets Plockton apart?
• Sabbatarian Riot of Stromeferry in 1883 • One of Telford's Parliamentary Churches is in Plockton • Plockton airfield – used by private light aircraft and helicopters • National Centre for Excellence in Traditional Music (at the school) • One of the highest incidence of gaelic speaking on the mainland		• “Every house in Plockton has a painting of the view” • Sense of community and authenticity • More midgets than anywhere else ! • music school of excellence • Often featured in promotional content for Scotland – with Glenfinnan viaduct and Eilean Donan Castle • Has a secondary school covering the wider area

6. Plockton Place Branding Points of Inspiration



DISCOVER PLOCKTON – “THE JEWEL OF THE HIGHLANDS”

Plockton has something for everyone. Whether you'd like to be on the water, explore the countryside or investigate all that the village has to offer – you will be spoilt for choice. There's an excellent range of outdoor activities, local attractions and shops.

Visit Plockton

The current positioning of Plockton on the Visit Plockton website is as “The Jewel of the Highlands”. This conveys it is special. However the narrative does not readily differentiate the Plockton experience from other villages and substantiate the claim that is the ‘best’ / the jewel.

A simple rephrasing to suggest ‘A Jewel of the Highlands’ helps convey it has wonderful things in common with other villages and then narrative can differentiate Plockton and convey its own unique sense of place. Plockton is a village you decide to visit – its neither on the NC500 or the road to Skye – but its not far away. It involves a conscious choice to visit which does actually differentiate it from many other villages on ‘routes’. It is also the village with the east facing harbour on the west coast – providing shelter and a safe haven for kayaking and paddleboarding – and was the reason to establish a planned fishing village over 200 years ago during the highland clearances.

A very distinct quality of Plockton is that it is home to many people and while this is threatened by the growth in second homes there is a golden opportunity to state up front that part of what really makes Plockton special is not only is it a jewel of the Highlands – it is also ‘the place that we call home’. The people running the businesses are locals and its locals’ homes that are centre stage of the many photos taken of Plockton



PLOCKTON – A JEWEL OF THE HIGHLANDS ... AND THE PLACE THAT WE CALL HOME



6. Plockton Place Branding

PLOCKTON – A JEWEL OF THE HIGHLANDS ... AND THE PLACE THAT WE CALL HOME

There are several interesting and unique attributes and points of differentiation about Plockton. A very significant one is that it is the village itself as an entity that differentiates it from other places where its origins as a clearance village, a fishing village, its geography around a very sheltered bay and the layout has created a quite unique village setting and - most importantly - ambience.

Google searches for images of Plockton presents a plethora of images of the village and not individual buildings or features of interest. Unlike searches for many other villages.

The destination competency appraisal clearly flagged that the attraction is the village itself – this generated a lot of discussion - and this places it alongside other conservation villages like Luss on Loch Lomond and Culross in Fife.

However Plockton isn't a conservation village without soul. It has a unique ambience where the locals and the local way of life is prominent. Concern was expressed at the workshop that this is gradually being eroded and therefore a priority is to conserve this in a meaningful way



6. Plockton Place Branding Positioning



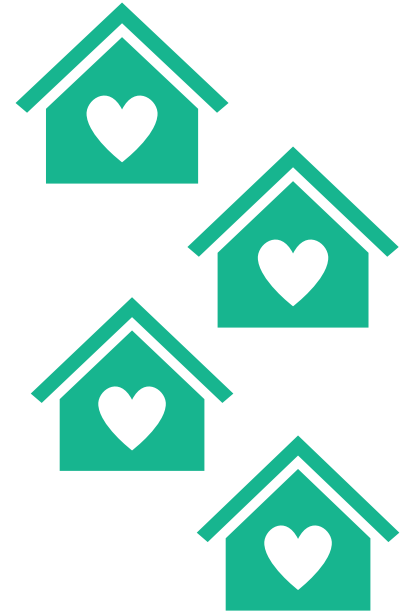
PLOCKTON – A JEWEL OF THE HIGHLANDS.... AND THE PLACE THAT WE CALL HOME

This positioning is focusing on the need to convey to visitors that Plockton is a village – a beautiful conservation village – and a place that people call home.

The positioning is seeking to challenge visitor mindsets and engender a sense of respect and also privilege – a concept close to SCOTO's heart. Any visit should be seen as a privilege – an exceptional opportunity to slow down and be part of a community and experience what life is like as a local – to be a temporary local.

There is a strong sense of community in Plockton but it was raised at the workshop that this is dwindling and could be lost. The key challenge is housing related and the gentrification of the accommodation stock. Plockton had a strong tradition of small B&Bs and holiday cottages for self catering with families returning year on year for summer holidays – and local families moving out their main residence to welcome visitors over summer. The number of B&Bs has drastically reduced (which is a pattern across Scotland) and Plockton has less self-catering options than before. The hotels now offer higher rates rooms and there is very little if any budget accommodation. Of note there are more and more second homes and a good number lie empty for notable periods of time – and in the meantime the cost of housing now means there are virtually no affordable housing to allow young people to return or to welcome new families to the village.

The proposed short term let regulation zone is a step in the right direction although this is aimed at B&Bs and self catering and will not control second homes.



6. Plockton Place Branding

The Place that we call Home



Plockton is known as a picturesque village on Scotland's west coast. A typical issue with conservation villages and/or villages that have been sets for TV series and films is lack of awareness that this is where people live and work – and go to school. There can be a perceived disregard for locals and day to day life. Luss on Loch Lomondside was the setting for Take the High Road and residents often reported people wandering into their gardens and peering into their homes.

A simple campaign and content approach that would be ideal for Plockton would be a series of images of real people doing day to day activities and some words from them about their connection to the village and occupation. This could then be developed as podcasts and videos and shared across social media on local channels and also shared with WRB, Visit Wester Ross and VisitScotland.

Plockton – “The place that we call Home” Content Initiative

Photos of individuals in situ – at a place that means something to them/doing something that is part of their everyday life. Including school kids with part-time jobs would be ideal.

A simple 3 Q&A approach can be adopted for simplicity with say six alternative questions asked and the most compelling answers used for different people to get contrast and wide interest.

NHI offer £2.5k for quick wins and this could pay for a tear off map and a local photographer to capture some images and create a new meet the locals home page on VisitPlockton with associated social media content.



7. Reflections ...



7. SCOTO Reflections

A Sense of Positivity



Press Pause in Plockton has been fascinating..

A notable observation from the workshop was that there isn't (yet) an anti tourism sentiment. Energy focused on the need to deal with the traffic management and gentrification issues .

In other communities that have been overwhelmed by tourism and lack appropriate infrastructure there has been evidence of very strong antitourism sentiments – the Plockton situation is both refreshing and constructive. Importantly - this could change – and soon. Several comments suggested a tipping point is looming. So time is of the essence.

Key aspects have floated to the surface which differentiate Plockton from other North Highland communities and present a unique set of challenges to address.

Plockton although close to, is neither on the NC500 or on the direct route to Skye so does not have the passing traffic experienced by villages on these routes. People choose to go to Plockton. It is a destination in every sense of the word with travelers seeking it out both on land and on water and typically with their own vessel or vehicle. A notable increase, and especially since lockdown has been in the number of motorhomes and campervans visiting and stopping over and also travel groups staying at the hotel.

However services are limited with next to no motorhome provision and facilities are sub standard. The biggest day to day issue faced, especially in the height of the season is traffic management. Traffic management is vital – the village is a deadend and the existing roads are narrow with onstreet parking and intermittent places to pass. It is not suited to larger vehicles like motorhomes.

The accommodation offer has recently suffered notably from gentrification – a term often used in an urban context and playing out in a blatant way in Plockton. The number of B&Bs has dwindled and the number of second homes has increased to an alarming level.

These very real issues need urgent solutions as they have a very worrying trajectory? There are solutions that can be income generating and capacity will be a key consideration.



7. SCOTO Reflections

Partnerships are Key



Although the village gets busy and can sometimes this can be at an overwhelming level, tourism is still welcomed in Plockton. The main tensions relate to traffic issues. Tourism is seen and understood to be a key part of the local economy and there is a very realistic perspective on the need for this to continue. This is healthy.

There are short term and longer term options for traffic management which will need the council's support and partnership. Conversations have been underway for some time, and improvements have been introduced which have been effective. However measures like the 'invitation to pay' for parking need carefully assessed and consideration given to extending this for visitor parking in the village as there is an obvious displacement issue. Consideration of what happens to the proceeds is important and also potential a resident permit scheme. This stands out as the key priority for the village.

Partnership is needed to address the parking and gentrification issues, especially with the NTS as a key landowner, and the council as planning authority in relation to short term lets and local affordable housing solutions.





8. Recommendations

Embracing Community Led Tourism

Plockton is an established destination and has been active in community led tourism over recent years with a number of facilities, activities and achievements.

These include the Visit Plockton website, the visitor information point run by NTS with local volunteers and the heritage society, the toilets run by the Harbour CIC, the Knitters at the Old Post Office and the craft fairs and other events in the village hall.

This appraisal has demonstrated that Plockton is an appealing and successful west coast destination. It has built up a reputation over many years and has continued to attract visitors without major investment in marketing campaigns. People seek it out. It is off the beaten track in that it requires a detour from a trunk road which has not been a deterrent – and adds to its appeal – a sense of discovery.

However the visitor facilities that do exist and assets in community ownership are generally tired and in need of refurbishment – which offers a golden opportunity for upgrading and provision of new facilities and services which can then be a revenue stream. The toilets need upgraded and potentially relocated allowing better disabled provision, shower facilities and changing areas for sailors, watersports and other activities. Plans have been drawn up for the back area of the car park.

Asset transfers also offer significant opportunities to the community to address current priority issues and secure revenue streams for further reinvestment – notably at the airfield where parking, event space and overnight aire provision would be possible. However capacity is an important consideration when exploring the possibilities. It was highlighted at the workshop that there is a need to engage younger people to build capacity..





8. Recommendations

New Visitor Facilities

Plockton has scope to progress two key sustainable community led tourism initiatives which will help address existing traffic pressures and enhance the accommodation offer - and be potentially lucrative social enterprise ventures that can derive further benefits for the community.

- 1. An asset transfer of part of the airfield for a camping and motorhome stopover site with waste facilities and staff accommodation, plus satellite parking for the village and event space**
- 2. An asset transfer and redevelopment of (part or all of) the main car park area with a new facilities building (plans drawn up) based on a management agreement with the council for their flood defence walls**

There are solutions to the issues faced in Plockton and asset transfers offer significant opportunities for the community to address these. The fact there are two assets offering potential is a strong position to be in. However capacity is an important consideration when exploring the possibilities. And a project management resource is vital from the outset as a core part of any early funding considerations. The recent £15k grant the Trust has received will allow these to be scoped out.

There are notable examples of successful initiatives driven forward by communities which have addressed the problems faced in Plockton, and which have provided local jobs and secured a good revenue stream which has then allowed other issues to be tackled. They also haven't got everything right and can readily share their experiences.

Specific examples are

- Luss village parking and visitor facilities
- Findhorn Motorhome Stopover
- Wick River Campsite
- Lochaline Pontoons and Service Block
- Gairloch parking and waste disposal at the harbour

A very specific recommendation is a learning exchange to one or more to fully understand the capital investment and operational considerations. Funds are available from Scottish Community Alliance and SCOTO can be the network sponsor.



8. Recommendations

Charging & Donations



The council recently introduced a voluntary 'Invitation to Pay' scheme in the car park. Over time this has generated funds which are split 50:50 between the council and the community after admin charges are applied. In the first year the community received £4.5k and this year expects £7k. The community has to state what the funds will be used for to be able to receive the funds. It is evident that people are willing to pay. Some inspirational information on how the parking charges are supporting the community should be considered so there is evidence that the community does directly benefit from the voluntary payments made – which can help visitors decide it is worth paying. There could be a simple display in the refurbished information point with images of what has been funded.



The toilets are currently run by the community on a voluntary donation basis with collection boxes inside. A £200/month payment is made by the council under their Comfort Scheme which does not cover the costs so donations are necessary to top this up. Increasingly less and less people carry cash so on the face of it the donations are limited. The toilets are well used. Payments have however dropped since the voluntary parking was introduced which suggests some people don't expect to pay for both and also may misunderstand the role of the community in providing toilets. More and more communities plus businesses who operate public toilets are using digital payment collection either with a pay barrier or simply as a donation. This is recommended in the short term for Plockton while ideas for new facilities are explored. Again, it always helps to explain why donations are needed and how they are used. SCOTO can readily share experience from elsewhere.



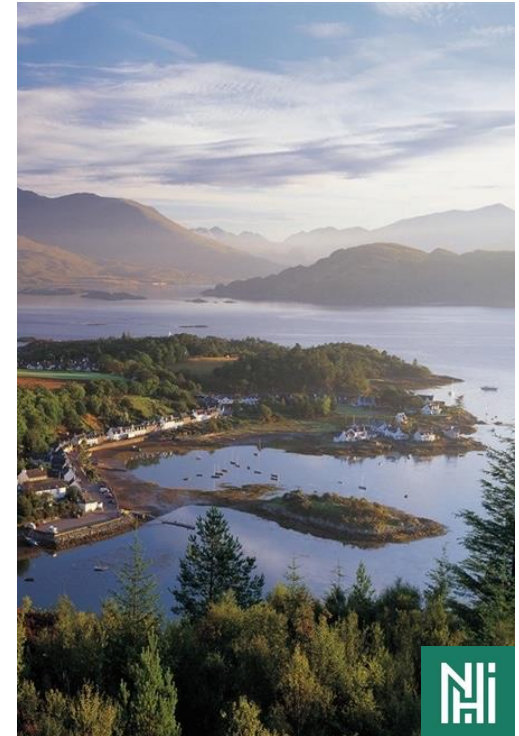
8. Recommendations

Plockton – Potential Quick Wins



Based on this review, there are several immediate opportunities for Plockton to consider and use the £2.5k grant from NHI to achieve

- Set up a Plockton Together Whats App group for quick information and idea sharing between interested parties
- Arrange a learning exchange to Luss and other villages where traffic management and visitor facilities have been introduced differentiating between visitors and locals
- Arrange a learning exchange to Findhorn, Cromarty and/or Wick where the communities run camping and motorhome sites and stopovers and have secured capital funding for investment and are securing good revenue streams for other purposes
- Refine the Plockton Place Brand and visitor proposition ideas with associated products, events and online content
- Work with NTS to reopen the VIC and develop the displays – develop a new tear off map for use here and other outlets
- Actively manage visitor expectations (eg provide easily accessible information on parking and eating options/opening times/booking) as a post on local FaceBook page and website, plus have a QR code anyone can include in booking confirmations for accommodation, activities etc
- Provide local walking information and directional finger posts to encourage exploration and dwell time
- Consider a pilot Plockton festival outwith the main season that celebrates the crofting heritage and lifestyle – Possible partnership with NTS
- Explore Community Rail Partnership possibilities for the Kyle Line





8. Recommendations

Plockton Be Local Giving Scheme

Building on 'The Place that we call Home' brand positioning, a very specific initiative recommended for Plockton which is equally relevant in any community where the extent of second homes has tipped a balance, is to introduce a simple payback/giving scheme dedicated to second home owners. Its intent is to build a good relationship between the residents and often absent owners by providing a very direct way where they can contribute to community wellbeing. This acknowledges that they are already being asked to pay higher council tax but by also contributing directly to a dedicated community fund they can be directly supporting community endeavours.

The principle is that the community, via the trust, set up a Be Local Scheme which generates a fund that second home owners are invited to contribute towards on an annual basis – potentially via a monthly or annual direct debit arrangement and with a recommended minimum amount - that will directly fund local initiatives. These could be linked to hanging baskets, paint to regularly spruce up public spaces, buy bunting and fence banners, support annual community events and the community Christmas tree/lights.

12 monthly payments of £12 would bring in £144 per home minimum and if there are 40 second homes pay in this could secure over £5,000 a year. There can be an option to contribute more and if administered via a charity then gift aid can also apply. This could also be tied to an annual or even monthly community Be Local day which includes a few activities such as a beach clean, scrub clearance and fence/hut painting to which all are welcome and is combined with a social event.

SCOTO are currently developing a model for this approach. Messaging will be key and specifically around helping second home owners better appreciate the issues the village faces and how second homes do contribute to these. This strives to. Remove any sense of them and us – which is divisive – and to better convey that when everyone gets their shoulder to the wheel community endeavour can achieve a lot. Some second home owners can have family ties to the area, others can have retired or change in workstyle plans and will be keen to support the community especially when provided with a dedicated mechanism.



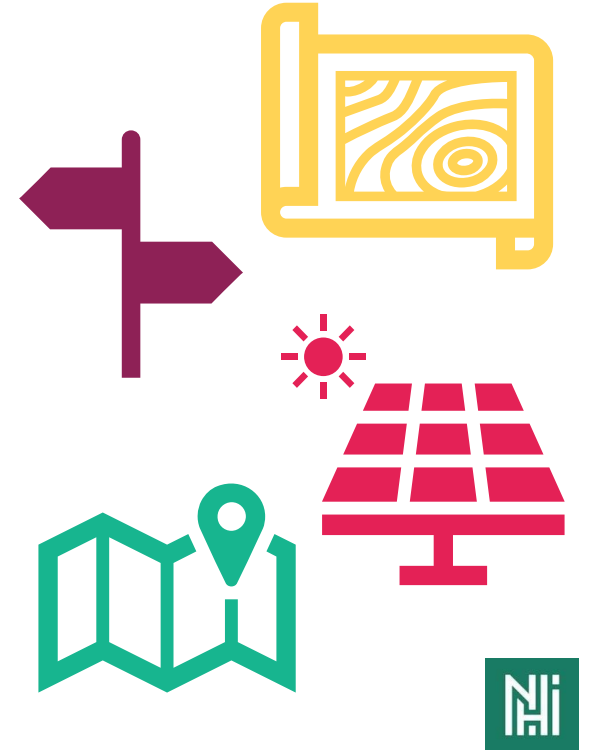
8. Recommendations

Suggested Quick Wins

There are some quick wins that can be easily progressed and create momentum with a grant of £2.5k from NHI specifically for this purpose.

Some suggestions:

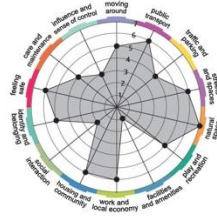
- An open day event in the village hall to share the Plockton Press Pause findings, gather interest in project ideas and recruit new volunteers for specific initiatives
- A follow-on display in the village hall for people to learn more about Press Pause and follow up actions and sign up to be involved in different things (this can be part of a wider Place Planning display)
- Establish Plockton Together Whats App group with anyone interested in tourism in the district to share ideas and notifications of relevant information
- Produce a Discover Plockton tear off map with all key features, attractions and services (plus nearest alternatives), plus walking routes and parking advice for cars and specifically motorhomes – available at VIC and key outlets
- Develop/ repurpose an existing open FaceBook page – BeLocal Plockton for businesses to post day by day inspiration and updates on opening times and for visitors to ask questions
- Pilot the 'Place that we call Home' content with photography of locals
- Road test the Be Local Fund





9. Recalibrating Tourism Measuring Impact in Plockton

Place Standard –
How good is Our Place?



Tourism in Scotland is traditionally measured by inbound flights, footfall, overnights stays, spend and employment numbers. This only tells part of the story and doesn't consider impact. SCOTO seeks to recalibrate tourism and measure what is important to the individual community. Many communities have developed Community Action Plans and/or are taking part in Place Planning activity.

These plans highlight priority themes and issues for the individual community. By measuring impact of tourism activity in relation to local priority issues the benefits can be clearly articulated – eg young people retained/attracted to return, permanent and/or living wage jobs provided, local crafters and producers supported, heritage assets conserved, local traditions celebrated, volunteer hours provided and succession addressed. This measurement demonstrates tourism as a force for good within the community.

In addition identifying which UN SDG's are being supported by individual enterprises is an effective way of demonstrating the local contribution to global priorities. SCOTO is currently working on an infographic that can be used by local enterprises.



9. Recalibrating Tourism

Measuring Impact in Plockton



"What we measure affects what we do. If we measure the wrong thing, we will do the wrong thing. If we don't measure something, it becomes neglected, as if the problem didn't exist".

Carnegie UK

Plockton has and continues to engage in community action planning and Place Planning activity which has helped inform local priority issues and actions

Current activity demonstrates that young people are a priority as is conserving and celebrating the local crofting history and heritage, extending the season and attracting more people travelling to Plockton to stop longer, spend more and explore the immediate vicinity

Community Led Tourism measures can be identified that respond to these priorities and progress can then be monitored. These measures can become drivers of success by encouraging businesses and community enterprises to all focus on these key themes - eg permanent jobs (move to annualised hours), support small businesses and supply chains (stock local crafts and produce), extend the visitor dwell time (cross promotion and collaborations).

Extending the area of interest of Visit Plockton was highlighted at the meeting and it is worth considering how far to extend in relation to the Lochalsh peninsula and the three community council areas. Visit Plockton has got traction and reach.

Business to business networking is always important and by identifying it as a priority and to ensure it happens setting up relevant measures can be effective. Numbers engaging in a new Whats App group plus number of networking meetings and social events can be measured, as well as numbers taking part, new joint projects and collaborative products developed.

It is important to identify measures that matter as this then motivates action.



10. Press Pause PLOCKTON

Closing Thoughts



SCOTO's Vision

“for every community in Scotland to embrace and be ambassadors for localness and to develop community led tourism as a force for good which enables their community to be an even better place to live, work and visit”.

The Press Pause initiative seeks to help individual geographic communities take time out to consider tourism and how it could be much more of a force for good within their community. This involves business and community interests – everyone with a stake in the game – exploring relevant topics and making collective decisions.

This reports seeks to set out what was discussed together, highlight what could be done differently to help support community cohesion and development and provide a range of ideas for consideration with inspiration from elsewhere. The community is the driver needs to now establish which ideas to pursue or explore further.

A key next step is to review all the recommendations and prioritise activity which has local support and can readily be progressed - not least quick wins that NHI can fund with their £2.5k grant. For longer term initiatives worth progressing the key is to focus on what is needed to set it in motion. And for project ideas that are already on the table but suffering from inertia seek to better contextualise them and clarify roles and responsibilities and first steps.

Whatever action is taken the primary aim should be for tourism to deliver real benefits that address local issues at an individual community level.



PLOCKTON

'PRESS PAUSE' REPORT

APPENDIX – SUMMARY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

AUGUST 2024

PLOCKTON, LOCHALSH



KEY FINDINGS



1. **Visitors are welcome despite tensions with some visitors (notably motorhomes) and traffic issues**
2. **Uniquely, Plockton's appeal is the village itself rather than component parts**
3. **The accommodation offer has changed a lot - much less B&Bs and hotel rooms are more costly**
4. **Plockton is the villagers home first and foremost and this needs respected**
5. **Second home owners are an issue and a reality and need to be enabled to contribute**
6. **The airfield is a potential community asset**
7. **Campervans and motorhomes are a major issue and an opportunity to secure revenue**
8. **Traffic management, parking and state of the art toilet and waste facilities are needed and will secure revenue**
9. **Local capacity building is key to driving any major initiatives**
10. **Plockton United – important to secure a shared vision between community and business interests**

10 QUICK WINS

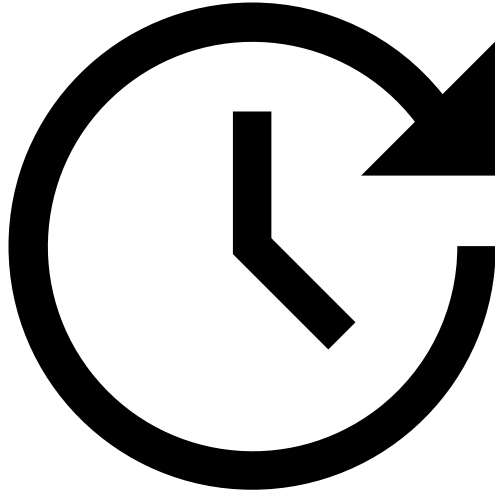


1. Refreshed branding and tag line “Plockton – a jewel in the highlands and the place that we call home”
2. Whats app group to share ideas and keep in touch
3. Press Pause ‘socialisation’ with the wider community
4. Reach out to neighbours to extend Press Pause to Kyle and Lochalsh communities
5. Welcome to Plockton Tear off maps and visitor information with a note from the community
6. “The Place that we call Home” blog and podcast content with key players on website and to share with VisitScotland and others
7. Electronic donation system for the toilets
8. ‘Be Local’ Second Home fund raising pilot to attract donations to support local initiatives
9. Learning Exchanges
 - to Luss – traffic management in heritage village
 - to Findhorn, Cromarty and Wick – revenue generating community run camping and motorhome aires
 - to Gairloch – parking and motorhome waste disposal point
10. Work with NTS to reopen the Visitor Information Point or find an alternative in the short term – eg a small area within the Old Post Office





LONGER TERM PROJECTS



1. The airfield – parking, camping and motorhome aire facilities and possible event space
2. Visitor facility building at the car park/pontoons
 - Toilets
 - Showers and changing facilities
 - Waste disposal
 - Visitor information
 - Activity ticket sales and booking
3. Destination Lochalsh Collaboration which promotes the hub credentials for exploring Skye, Torridon, Applecross etc to support multi night bookings
4. Plockton Festival - programme of activities over the year which celebrate the village's unique sense of place

COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGE WICK RIVER CAMPSITE & FACILITIES

www.wickcampsite.co.uk



COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGE FINDHORN MOTORHOME AIRE STOPOVER



www.findhornparking.com



COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGE GAIRLOCH BEACH & HARBOUR TOILETS AND WASTE FACILITIES



COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGE LUSS CONSERVATION VILLAGE & PARKING



COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGE

LUSS CONSERVATION VILLAGE & PARKING



Community Led Tourism



NHI “PRESS PAUSE”

PLOCKTON

Report and Recommendations

August 2024

BE LOCAL

SCOTO
Scottish Community Tourism