

Note of meeting to plan developing a Tourism Place Plan for Plockton

Plockton Village Hall, 4th March 2024

Attendees:

Plockton & District Community Trust	Ali Doc Mackenzie, Bill Taylor, Sandra Holmes
Plockton Historical Society	Mary Jane Campbell
Plockton Harbour CIC	Gill Bennett
Plockton & District Tourist Association	Ann-Mags Pearson
Plockton Common Grazings	Alex Townend
NTS	Iain Turnbull
Plockton & District Community Council	Ian Hay, Mary Gollan, Peter Mackenzie
Plockton Village Hall	Jane Mackenzie

Apologies Paul Acari, Plockton & District Tourist Association
Duncan McAndrew, fishermen
John Maclean, Plockton & District Community Trust

Introduction

- Since meeting in Nov 2023, PDCT has secured the following funding. The SCOTO workshop is match funding for the Tourism Plan, so need to be considered as a package.

SCOTO Press Pause workshop	• £3,500 North Highland Initiative • £500 Highland Coast Hotels
Tourism and Plan	• £15,000 Highland Council (Community Regeneration Fund)

- A condition of the Council's funding is that the *"Tourism Place Plan includes traffic and pedestrian management, at least as a high level consideration in highlighting issues and potential interventions to be taken forward."*
- The CC raised concerns that inclusion of the traffic considerations may absolve the Council of its legal obligations to undertake a Road Traffic Management Plan. PDCT did not share this view but agreed to communicate to Highland Council that the work we propose to undertake will not constitute a Road Traffic Management Plan. The CC will continue to press the Council for said Road Traffic Management Plan.
- The CC confirmed that there was no follow up action from Highland Council following Malcolm Macleod's site visit to the car park in November 2023. This was at the invitation of Highland Coast Hotels, and to which the CC were also invited.

General discussion

PDCT and NTS provided a high level overview of the SCOTP Press Pause workshop and report. It has been piloted in Lochcarron and Thurso, and Applecross, Plockton and Brora will comprise the second intake. The content is to be shaped by each locality, but in essence it is to help communities determine: what is and isn't working; what positive change might look like, to encourage the sharing of different views and perspectives; etc.

The facilitator is a rural tourism specialist and will be able to share experiences from elsewhere. It will run for about 3½ hours and can accommodate 10-25 attendees.

Our hope is that the workshop will help get issues on the table so we can build a consensus, if possible, as to what tourism offering we wish to promote/deliver. The vision should ideally reduce tourism related impacts on the wider community. In short, how can we meet visitor expectations and make Plockton work better for everyone, especially in the busy months.

This work will then help us develop a brief for the Tourism Place Plan which will go out to tender. It is anticipated that this will focus on scoping and prioritising capital infrastructure improvements to support the vision of Plockton working better for visitors and residents alike (or whatever we agree the vision to be).

There was agreement to this direction of travel and it was noted by a few participants that it is up to us to be willing participants and to engage constructively. The consultant can only work with what we provide; we'll get out what we put in sort of thing.

SCOTO Press Pause planning

The following is a summary the points raised to be added to a briefing for the facilitator. Please sense check and add to this list:

- Need to ascertain what visitors want
- How to manage camper van visits? Do we make provisions, if so where, or do we not want to attract more? How to manage inappropriate parking and associated issues if no facilities are provided. If facilities are provided should this be private/council or community owned?
- Impacts of the 'invitation to pay' in the car park which we anticipate will become mandatory in time. Would free parking with payment for facilities be more beneficial?
- Provision of EV charging points
- How to ease traffic congestion to lessen the incidence of gridlock. What traffic order restrictions might assist?
- Revisit the CC plans to develop the car park to provide facilities for visitors, visiting yachts, the sailing club, the fishermen/seaweed/oysters, historical society, tourist info hub, laundrette, etc, as well as more parking.
- Existing toilets need redeveloped before they can be a 'charged for' service. Issue with them being used by paddle boarding companies – can't cope with heavy use and are left in a mess.
- Wish to encourage slow tourism – longer stays. The hotels and some short-term lets have some loyal, returning visitors that stay for multiple days.
- Marketing/interpretation/signage/way marking – what is needed?
- Identified need for more walks with way markers and possibly QR code guided routes.
- There is a lack of places to eat and this has a knock-on effect to accommodation providers.
- Far fewer traditional B&B's – only 3 left and some only cater for Rabbits Tours.

Note to all: Please send Sandra other ideas, more details on the issues, particularly evidence-based info. This will then be collated into something more coherent than the above random order list. The CC (traffic), Harbour CIC (loos, invitation to pay) and PDTA (improvement for visitors) are likely to be best placed to help here, but all input is most welcome.

We can have up to 25 attendees at the workshop. Agreed to develop a long list and then look prioritise. Please add to the following:

- CC
- PDCT
- Harbour CIC
- PDTA
- Plockton Historical Society
- Plockton Hall
- Crofters
- NTS
- PSBSC
- Fishermen/oysters/seaweed
- Seal Trips
- Paddle board and kayak companies: Alison French/Matt Jones/
- Plockton Hotel
- Plockton Inn/Haven
- Plockton Shores
- Harbour Fish Bar/Shonzeys
- Plockton Craft Fair: Lenice
- Kyle & Lochalsh Community Trust / Lochalsh Collaboration: Maggie Byrne
- Plockton High School - couple of young people
- Airstrip

It was agreed that we should aim for the workshop between mid-end April 2024.

Sandra Holmes
PDCT
4 March 2024

