

# Largs Community Council

Local Place Plan 2024



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**It should be noted that the enablement and delivery of the aims and aspirations can only be achieved in partnership with other organisations.**

## Executive Summary

This place plan has been produced by the Largs Community Council, having been informed by the Largs Community and Community groups.

In setting out to create a Place Plan, the key underlying questions that need to be answered, whether by individuals, or groups, were:

- What is good about Largs and should be protected by the Local Development Plan?
- How does Largs need to change to make it a better place to live, work and visit?
- What do you or your group wish to achieve?

## Purpose

This place plan aims to set out independently, the key aims and aspirations of the community, people and groups in the Largs area and how they wish their town to be developed and improved in years to come. Ultimately, working with North Ayrshire Council, a Place Plan requires to help inform the future Local Development Plan 3 for North Ayrshire, and specifically, for the North Coast area, and Largs. It needs to ensure that aspirations and goals can, directly and indirectly:

Be supported by North Ayrshire Council in policies, plans and strategies, and at each stage, this plan indicates when, how and where support will be required, and critically, from whom.

Be realistically deliverable by working in partnership with public and private bodies and Community organisations for example, Largs Community Council, Barrfields user Group, Cairnies Quay Group

Whilst the Plan is primarily defined by individuals and groups representing the community of Largs, it should be noted that the enablement and delivery of the aims and aspirations can only be achieved in partnership with other organisations.

Organisations or groups, including Community bodies that can support delivering Local place Plan

- National Government (UK and Scottish governments)
- Local government (North Ayrshire Council)
- Large businesses. Nuclear Restoration Services, EDF, Peel Ports, XLCC, Bakkafrost, Calmac
- Small businesses. Any number of small businesses in the geography
- Largs Community Development Trust



## Approach

The Largs Community Council agreed the best approach to the creation of the plan was to setup a sub-group of the Largs Community Council to consider who, how, why, when and what of the Place Plan and then undertake activities to create it, keeping the Largs Community Council updated periodically.

The sub-group itself was formed of members of the Largs Community Council, however at the inception, all members agreed that the approach was fully inclusive and as such, there were no barriers to participation.

The only exception to this which was identified was the participation of Elected Members. Each member was contacted to ask for their support, and it was through this process that the sub-group determined that the involvement from Elected members would be as part of the consultation but not the creation of a plan.

An initial meeting was held at, and courtesy of, Vikingar and KA Leisure, who have been highly supportive of the undertaking by providing meeting and public consultation space. The meeting agreed this approach as outlined below, as well as identified an initial list of possible ideas and items for inclusion to the plan. A high level discussion on how to engage with the wider Largs Community was held.

### **Actions were agreed with the sub-group to then carry forward.**

The Largs Place Plan subgroup undertook the following activities to engage with the community and seek input to the plan:

- Social Media, various Largs Community Council social media channels were used to promote the creation of the place plan
- A video was created to describe in more detail what a Place Plan was and invite participation in the Place Plan
- The local press kindly published articles outlining the Place Plan and how members of the community could participate
- A specific event was publicised and held at Vikingar in conjunction with the Largs Community Council
- Additional promotion was undertaken through a stand at the Largs Viking Festival

This activity helped the subgroup create the draft plan for a final consultation event. There was in general a low level of interest and participation however those who did participate were interested and provided constructive input.

## Who needs to be involved?

The Largs Community Council worked using our local knowledge, as well as with support from North Ayrshire Council to identify as many known Community Groups who may have an interest in inputting or the output of a Local Place Plan.

### Sport

- Largs Thistle Community Group
- Largs Colts

### Music and Drama

- Barrfields User Group under which sits Largs Theatre, Largs Operatic
- Largs Players
- Largs Music Club

### Hobbies and Interest

- Boys Brigade
- Girls Brigade
- Scouts
- Aubrey Park Model Boat Club

### Health and Wellbeing

- The Cameron Centre
- Dementia Friendly Largs & District
- Largs Green Futures
- Douglas Park Project
- Clyde Coast & Cumbrae men shed
- Opportunities in Retirement

### Tourist and Environment

- Largs Events
- Largs and District museum
- Viking Festival Group
- Cairnies Quay group

### Local Interest and Support

- Largs Resilience Team
- Largs Community Development Trust
- Largs Community Larder
- North Coast Community Cookhouse
- St Mary's Primary Parent Council
- Largs Academy Parent Council
- Largs Primary Parent council
- Largs Community Council







### What is a local place plan?

The following definition of a Place Plan is provided by North Ayrshire Council “Local Place Plans: Handbook for communities in North Ayrshire “ and is used as the basis for the creation of the Largs Local place Plan.

- 1.1 A local place plan is a community-led plan setting out proposals for the development and use of land. A local place plan must fulfil the following criteria. It must:
  - be prepared by a ‘community body’.
  - be a proposal as to the development or use of land
  - fulfil the legal requirements set out in the 1997 Act and the 2021 Regulations concerning the form and content of the plan; how it is prepared, and the information provided when submitted to the planning authority.
- 1.2 In a broader sense, local place plans are a tool for local communities to take the initiative in thinking about how to make their ‘place’ better, including by tackling a particular issue or issues that impact on a community. They provide an opportunity to express a community’s aspirations and priorities; identify ideas and projects and be a catalyst for action that makes positive changes happen



### **How we created an inclusive Place Plan and agreed the approach**

The initial sub-group meeting discussed and agreed an approach to make sure we undertook a logical and structured approach to the work and ensuring that interested parties were engaged in the right way, and at the right time. The approach agreed can be summarised as below:

1. Discuss and input ideas from the experiences and known views of the people of Largs from the current CC inception in 2021
2. Create a working draft plan for internal review and update
3. Informally engage community groups to understand any wants and needs which would be relevant to LPP and incorporate
4. Engage wider public to gauge feelings and likely support on key topics using surveys, personal engagement and use of social media
5. Finalise formal Draft Plan for consultation with all relevant community groups
6. Hold consultation event (using Largs Community Council meeting or single issue meeting if required), as well as distribute plan through various media to ensure coverage and accessibility
7. Review consultation output and update plan to prepare a Final Draft for submission to North Ayrshire Council
8. Finals and submit Plan to North Ayrshire Council.

For Tourism, Largs has much to offer, and within the town there are various groups working on improvements to the offering, whether simply in publicity, signage, or new facilities.



**The Largs Community Council worked using our local knowledge, as well as with support from North Ayrshire Council to identify as many known Community Groups who may have an interest in inputting or the output of a Local Place Plan.**

## Vision for Largs

This section of the Plan contains a summary of all the ideas, plans, hopes and aspirations of the community of Largs, as identified through the outlined approach.

At the outset, it must be made clear that within the town of Largs, there is much positivity about Largs, what it has to offer and how it is perceived by those who live, work and visit here.

Largs is viewed by most as the 'Jewel in the Crown' of North Ayrshire and west central Scotland. A recent survey of local businesses provided results which are consistent with the views gathered by members of the Largs Community Council from the general public.

This plan therefore has a sound baseline to start from, and as such, should be viewed as a series of enhancements that can or could be delivered over the period of the next Local Development Plan, or beyond. There is a general feeling that the town must strive forward to keep Largs at the top of the list for people to visit, and to come and live, and that things cannot just stand still, but be proactive at continual improvement and development.

The Largs Community Council has categorised for the purposes of easier understanding and to provide a view of the key priorities of the community, as well as more detail of each where possible. The following categorisations have been chosen on the basis of their direct relevance to Largs.

These are:

- Tourism
- Parking
- Open Space
- Community Space

For Tourism, Largs has much to offer, and within the town there are various groups working on improvements to the offering, whether simply in publicity, signage, or new facilities. It is acknowledged that whilst Largs does offer much to visitors, there are many untapped resources locally that could add to the bustling local economy.

Whilst having 'Parking' as a Category in its own right may appear unusual, the strength of feeling from those who work, live and visit Largs in this matter is palpable and often dominates discussions on how Largs can be improved. The issue of parking is generational, however through engagement locally, it is recognised that there is significant scope to deal with this problem in a positive way, and that previous inertia should not be a reason not to pursue the matter.



Largs is a rural town, in so far as it is surrounded by farmland and open moorland to the east, north and south, and the Clyde estuary to the west. The setting of Largs against the backdrop of the Renfrewshire Heights means that ensuring the surrounding land is developed in a way that enhances Largs is important, hence inclusion in this Plan. It is acknowledged upfront that the Local Development Plan will have limited scope to support stated aims from the community due to the nature of Planning Law, however it has been included for completeness and to also allow further engagement with a formal baseline of these concerns.

Largs has a suite of Community Spaces available, albeit disparate in how these are provided, and there is scope to build on the offering available to the community, as well as help smooth the path for groups wishing to make improvements to the offering. Compared to other towns across North Ayrshire, there is a feeling in community groups that Largs is 'short changed' in terms of provision, and there are some key ideas that have been raised around developing the community space in the town.



# Tourism

## Toilets

### Issue

Toilet facilities in Largs have been under threat of closure for some time. There is unanimous opposition to this from residents, visitors, community council and elected members. The facilities at Aubrey, Mackerston, Broomfields and the Pencil are in need of upgrade and may require new buildings.

### Comment

The Largs Seafront Car Park fund was used to pay for the upgrade of the public toilets at Gallowgate. North Ayrshire Council is seeking to close the other toilets, however there is no obvious community group in a position to take these over. Notwithstanding this, using the seafront car park funds wisely could provide funding for upgrades.

### Requirement and Solution

- That future Local Development Plan would be supportive of upgrades of existing toilet facilities, and should 'demolish and replace' be required, the Local Development Plan itself should not put any obstacles to permission being granted on or near the existing sites and a larger footprint if required.
- The toilet near the Pencil may be required to be moved to nearer the Championship Slipway to be more useful to those during sailing events.

### Community Support is HIGH

- Historically residents and visitors alike are supportive of public toilets and are on the whole clear that facilities should be improved and not downgraded.



North Ayrshire Council is seeking to close the other toilets, however there is no obvious community group in a position to take these over. Notwithstanding this, using the seafront car park funds wisely could provide funding for upgrades.



## Brisbane Observatory

### Issue

Largs, and the Brisbane Glen, was the home of Brisbane House, build by the late Sir Thomas Makdougall Brisbane, famed astronomer, and after whom the city of Brisbane, Australia, is named.

A project has been launched to save the internationally significant astronomical observatory for future generations. The Project is entering Phase 2, which will leave the building in a stable and secure condition before any further work is considered.

The remains of the Observatory he built near Brisbane Mains are historically significant however are not protected against development which could detract from the current site and any future development in the area.

### Comment

The Trust's aim is to save the Observatory 'for generations yet unborn' (Brisbane's own words). It's objectives are:

1. To preserve the Observatory and provide controlled access to it
2. To involve the local community and especially young people in this element of their history
3. To encourage the study of astronomy and science in Scotland and with international partners.
4. To showcase Scottish skills, ancient and modern
5. To encourage cultural and educational links between Largs and Brisbane

### Requirement and Solution

- That the area surrounding the Brisbane Observatory be protected from development which will detract from the character and history of the area, in particular any building or wholesale tree plantation.
- That the Local Development Plan 3 supports future plans to develop the site into a more formal tourist attraction, which may require a visitor centre or parking area in the vicinity.
- The Local Development Plan would be supportive of any future plans to rebuild the Observatory, either in part or in full.

### Community Support

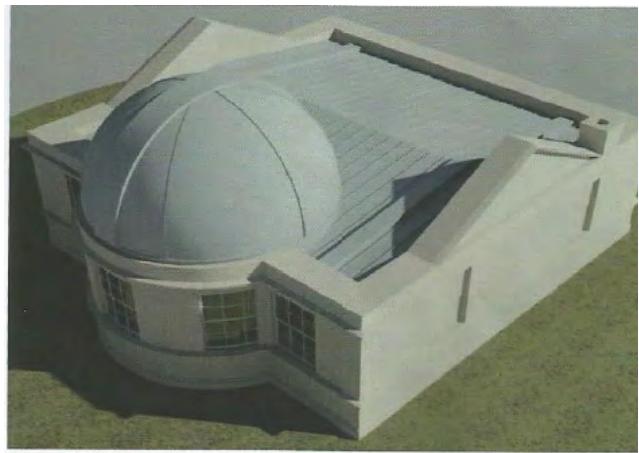
The story of the Brisbane Glen and the Observatory is not widely known or understood locally, however when discussed, people are always supportive of the idea to develop this further for visitors.

The Brisbane Observatory trust has been working to secure funding to develop the area and has recently cleared much of the vegetation and secured the area from animals with stockfencing and have future aspirations for the site.

The remains of the Observatory he built near Brisbane Mains are historically significant however are not protected against development which will detract from the current site and any future development in the area.

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The Trust's aim is to save the Observatory  
'for generations yet unborn'



A provisional computer reconstruction of the original building, from an initial survey (John Simpson)

## Core Path improvements

### Issue

Parts of the Core Path network in and around Largs would benefit from substantial upgrades.  
NC10/11/12/65/15/45A

### Comment

The current pathways has significant issues for safety and useability and the requirements would ensure future upgrades would be possible.

### Requirement and Solution

Specifically (but not exclusively), NC12 from Brisbane Bridge to Brisbane Mains Road end would benefit from carriageway widening and/or a pavement. The road is on a long curve and it is dangerous for Pedestrians to move from the Cemetery to the start of NC11, a dedicated pavement would improve this.

On NC65, the path around The Pencil is very narrow and would benefit from widening and/or realignment to ensure pedestrians and wheeled users (For example, wheelchairs or Tri-Shaws) can be better accommodated.

The Local Development Plan 3 should ensure that where any changes which are more than just upgrades are required (such a road or pavement widening, or new bridges across the Gogo Water), these would be in accordance.

### Community Support

Users of these paths are highly supportive of anything that can be done to make the routes safer and more accessible. In particular, users of the North Coast and Cumbraes (NC) and NC12 to Brisbane Glen find the route from the Cemetery very dangerous.



The current pathways has significant issues for safety and useability and the requirements would ensure future upgrades would be possible.





## Dry Ski slope, Cable Car Station and Parking

### Issue

Various Community members and representatives over the years have indicated aspirations that Largs could benefit from an attraction which would be a 'draw' to the town, and maximise the location on the Clyde Coast.

A cable car from a location within Largs Town to a view point behind the Haylie Brae would offer a fairly unique attraction (unique for the Central Belt of Scotland at the very least) and could offer incentive for more people to visit and spend more time in Largs, as well as also having the potential to transport people into Largs from a parking area. This could massively reduce traffic into Largs as well as help alleviate parking issues.

### Comment

It's noted that the likelihood of such a venture ever gaining traction may be limited, however that in itself should not mean the idea is excluded from the Place Plan. There is support for such an idea, even if no funding and as such, this idea has been included for consideration.

When this plan was close to going to press, Scotland's first 'Alpine roller coaster' was opened at Midlothian Sports Centre, Hillend, showing that such ideas are realistic and can provide a wider benefit to those living and visiting. Councillor Leader Parry is quoted as stating "We want to turn the centre into a national tourist attraction, with visitor numbers for the Alpine Coaster alone expected to exceed 150,000 a year," she said.

"We want it to bring local employment opportunities and direct income to the local economy while profits can be used to help pay for vital council services."

Please visit the [Midlothian View website](#) for more information.

### Requirement and Solution

A feasibility study is required to evaluate what would be possible to fulfil this aspiration.

Without such a study it is difficult to specify precise requirements, other than to state an aspiration that would NOT be prevented purely from a planning perspective. Indeed, many projects are borne from ideas like this, however funding can be difficult to secure if planning consent is unlikely. If the Local Development Plan 3 was framed such that this idea was referenced and could accord with wide aims for Tourism and Parking, this would have the potential to attract investment that might not otherwise be considered.

### Community Support

There is support from the Largs Community Council. Local residents when the subject is broaches are amused but then concede that such a scheme would be fantastic for the area. At least one local elected member is on record as supporting such a scheme, therefore it is our conclusion that there is sufficient community support to warrant inclusion and further consideration.

A cable car from a location within Largs Town to a view point behind the Haylie Brae would offer a fairly unique attraction (unique for the Central Belt of Scotland at the very least).



We want it to bring local employment opportunities and direct income to the local economy while profits can be used to help pay for vital council services.



Figure 3. Space at Douglas Park for landing area for future ski slope or alpine roller coaster.

## Rail and Coach tourism

### Issue

Despite its status as one of the top tourist destinations in Scotland, Largs is rarely, if ever, featured as a destination for UK railtours, or for coach tour operators. As a result, Largs is missing out on vital tourist trade, which could support many different aspects of the local economy, from shops, cafes, restaurants to hotels and guest houses.

### Comment

There are many ways to increase desirability of Largs to rail and coach operators and Largs Community Council is pursuing options which do not require infrastructure or planning changes. That said, there are physical changes that could be made in future to support these aims and these would require to be in accordance with future Local Development Plan.

### Requirement and Solution

That the Local Development Plan 3 be supportive of any rail infrastructure improvements or changes that would support an increase in rail traffic into Largs. Whilst it is not possible to be specific, these could include

- reinstatement or lengthening of platforms in Largs stations,
- reinstatement of removed sidings in the Largs area,
- reinstatement of rail access to the turntable site
- Installation of train servicing facilities at Hunterston (former coal loading facilities adjacent to the main running lines)
- upgrades to the running lines between Hunterston and Stevenston
- Whilst parking is covered elsewhere, a key, basic, need is relating to facilities for visiting coaches, specifically that the Local Development Plan 3
- Make provision for creation of coach parking in the Largs area to allow the accommodation of no fewer than 10 coaches at any one time.
- The most likely area which could be used seasonally could be near the Largs marina in areas which could also be used for Parking, whether Park and Ride or event parking.

### Community Support

Whilst there is little specific community demand for this, when the idea is broached with the public or elected members, there is little opposition to the idea. Whilst we have had limited engagement thus far with coach operators, anecdotally we know that operators struggle with embarkation and disembarkation withing Largs and finding suitable areas to park. The parking within Vikingar has Coach Parking however this is for use of coaches bringing visitors and cannot be regarded as being sufficient to meet the requirement.



There are many ways to increase desirability of Largs to rail and coach operators and Largs Community Council is pursuing options which do not require infrastructure or planning changes.

It is very clear that the community supports a scheme to provide a scheme to allow Park and Ride or Walk.



Figure 4. Open space at foot of May Street which could be used for parking provision



# Parking

## Parking and Park and Ride

### Issue

The concept of a Park and Ride scheme is oft discussed in the Largs Community and few disagree of the need for such a scheme. The main stumbling block is around where this should be sited. North Ayrshire prepared in 2021 a Feasibility Study on the idea, with various options considered in a level of detail. Ultimately, councillors were unable to agree on a preferred option and any further work was shelved.

Notwithstanding the question, all of the options were viable, albeit with downsides. A proposal for Park and Ride (or walk) in Cathcart Road would not avoid queues on the Haylie Brae. A Park and Ride near Bowencraigs would mean any bus provision would still be affected by queuing into Largs. The proposal at the foot of May Street appears to have the most merit, albeit as a Park and Walk scheme.

Were other plans for Largs to come to fruition, for example widening the Core Path at Bowencraigs, then a Park and Ride at that location could become viable, especially if an operator of a 'Petit Train', as operated across Europe, were to be involved and could finally navigate the Core Path back to the Town Centre.

With this in mind, and notwithstanding some of the blockers referenced above, it is very clear that the community supports a scheme to provide a scheme to allow Park and Ride or Walk.

### Comment

Specific ideas and suggestions for location for new or additional parking are as below:

### Requirement and Solution

Any future Local Development Plan is required to ensure provision for future Parking and Park and Ride and Walk schemes. This may be at one or more locations referenced below:

- This Place Plan proposes specifically that land around the foot of May Street, and at south of the marina access road at Bowencraigs should be zoned as such that it would not prevent any future park and Ride development from being pursued. Note, NOT the Playing Fields but land to the SOUTH of the marina access road)
- Explore possibility of new parking on Bath Street, opposite St Johns Church.
- The concept of a replacement building at the former M&Co site incorporating a car park on the roof space and/or a multi storey car park should be considered.
- Given recent and successful Promenade seawall improvement works where the Promenade at Aubrey has been widened, there is scope to widen the Prom around the Largs Ferry slip (opposite Barnardos) and provide dedicated car parking for users of the Cumbræ Ferry.
- Update to parking time restrictions town centre, including areas up to 90minutes, as well as retaining some existing 60mins or no restrictions.
- Explore possibility of additional parking in front of Vikingar!, potentially reduce putting greens to 9 holes and use the other half for car parking.
- Temporary parking facilities adjacent to A78 at the north of Largs
- Land adjacent to Vanduara. This land has history of being used for seasonal tourism in the shape of the 'Big Wheel' attraction. More recently during promenade improvement worked, this space was used as parking for construction works. A small but useful car park could be created which allows easy access to the Promenade, Vikingar! and Aubrey Park.

**The concept of a Park and Ride scheme is oft discussed in the Largs Community and few disagree of the need for such a scheme. The main stumbling block is around where this should be sited.**

### Community Support

There is widespread support for improvements to parking provision in Largs, which has grown since the introduction of Decriminalised Parking Enforcements within North Ayrshire, which is deterring illegal parking, however did not put in place provision for additional parking due to displacement.

During Peak seasons, parking for visitors has very difficult, with limited spillover options available, other than street parking in the streets behind the Prom. During the Viking Festival 2024 this caused many issues with narrow streets becoming blocked, however there was no alternative to try alleviate the overspill.



Figure 5. Land opposite St Johns Church, Bath Street could be used for parking provision.



Figure 6. Land adjacent to the Cumbrae Slip in Largs could be used to create dedicated parking for ferry users, reducing pressure on the sea front car park and encouraging more foot travel to Cumbrae.

There is widespread support for improvements to parking provision in Largs, which has grown since the introduction of Decriminalised Parking Enforcements within North Ayrshire.

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Specific ideas and suggestions for location for new or additional parking are as below.



Figure 7. Low level multi storey car park at Johnstone, Renfrewshire as an example of an option for Largs.



Figure 8. Aerial view of the foot of May Street. The area with the circular imprint could be zoned for parking.

Increasingly land surrounding Largs is being used to plant commercial forestry, and used to provide corporations 'carbon credits'.





# **Remove the ambience, scenic and recreational attractiveness of the area and the benefits from tourism will reduce and parking requirements diminish.**

## **Countryside**

### **Issue**

Increasingly land surrounding Largs is being used to plant commercial forestry, and used to provide corporations 'carbon credits'. Whilst ultimately the intent is to contribution to becoming a Net Zero country, such developments are currently unchecked, and not determined through planning policy, nor considered holistically.

### **Commentary**

A contributor to the plan stated the following "most of the open spaces (Editor, this was in the context of 'Countryside open spaces) also feed into tourism and parking requirements. Remove the ambience, scenic and recreational attractiveness of the area and the benefits from tourism will reduce and parking requirements diminish.

North Ayrshire Council have advised that the creation and management of new woodland generally falls outside of the planning system, and it is accepted that this is the case, however the requirements remains to ensure formal recording if this aspiration and a baseline for any future engagement at the right time. Without recording a concern formally, it will prove more difficult to effectively lobby to deliver the requirements.

### **Requirements**

The Local Development Plan 3 should where possible provide protections from detrimental development at the following locations

- Waterhead Moor
- Unplanted areas of Halkshill & Blairpark
- The Greeto and Gogo Valleys near the Meeting of the Waters,
- Douglas Park hillside,
- Area around Outerwards Hill Fort and Upper Noddsdale.
- Brisbane observatory (see separate item)
- The 'Red road' from Largs to Skelmorlie.



## Open Space

### Issue

With potential expansion of Hunterston PARC, there will be a likely increase in demand for land for housing. The current Local Development Plan (2) has allocations for housing in the area of The Rise and Noddsdale Water and there has been no representation to reverse this allocation.

There has been however concern raised on protecting existing Open Spaces which are used for community purposes and that these should remain protected in Local Development Plan 3. A recent example being cited, whilst not exactly analogous, would be the Mansefield in Beith where what has been regarded as a community Open Space

### Requirement

That areas of open space defined in Local Development Plan 2 should remain designated as such unless specifically called out within this plan for stated purposes.

Areas of concern that should not be considered for anything other than Open Space are:

- Bowencraigs Playing Fields. This has been subject to a Community Asset Transfer for Largs Colts and should not be open to developers to potentially offer cash incentives to sell for housing.
- The Pencil. it is understood that the land surrounding The Pencil may be privately owned. Any move to change the designation of the land for housing should not be supported.
- Barrfields (stadium) and Vikingar, this area is used very successfully for community use of all sorts and whilst this plan references potential expansion of use, it is clear that the community would be completely opposed to any suggestion of housing on this site.
- Open space, including woodland, at Sport Scotland site Inverclyde Centre.

## Community Space

### Aubrey Park

#### Issue

The equipment and general offering for children at this beautiful space is outdated and requires modernisation.

The toilet facilities at Aubrey Boating Pond are basic and the Female toilets are non-functional.

#### Comment

Whilst no funding has been identified for replacements, the LCDT has recently refreshed and painted much of the equipment. Longer term, replacement is required. Replacement equipment at Aubrey will require to be more modern, and will likely be larger and may require a larger footprint.

Despite proposed cuts to toilets in Largs, there is widespread support for retention and upgrade, especially at Aubrey where the facilities are 'male only'.

There has been much commentary around the fact there are no facilities to buy food or drink at Aubrey and that having the opportunity to purchase a warm meal or coffee would be welcome. It has been noted that whilst a license may be granted, there is no formal site for a mobile catering units due to lack of planning permissions and zoning, and no designated space i.e there are parking restrictions and yellow lines.

#### Requirement and Solution

- Any future Local Development Plan should support the installation of larger playpark, provided it remains on the existing site, albeit with a potentially larger footprint.
- Any future Local Development Plan will support upgraded toilet facilities at Aubrey Park.
- Kiosk and food vending opportunities should be specifically allowed in the Local Development Plan 3. This likely would be that part of the green space would be permitted to site 3 mobile catering units, subject to licensing.

#### Community Support

- Whilst there is no group specifically seeking to upgrade play facilities, the Largs Community Council is supportive of new facilities, and has been seeking to work with North Ayrshire Council to identify funding options and possible locations for playpark upgrades.
- Historically residents and visitors alike are supportive of public toilets are on the whole clear that facilities should be improved and not downgraded.



“

Whilst no funding has been identified for replacements, the LCDT has recently refreshed and painted much of the equipment.

Equipment at Aubrey Park renovated by Largs Development Trust.

## Community Hub

### Issue

Largs Town has no dedicated Community Hub space and this is the cause of frustration in the community as the alternatives are disparate and often not fit for purpose or have limited availability.

### Comment

Unlike the majority of major towns in North Ayrshire, Largs has not dedicated Community Hub and has to 'make do' with various disparate properties, few of which were ever purpose built for Community use. These facilities are valued and well used however it is clear from engagement that there is scope to add to the provision to cater better for the needs of the community and support inclusion.

### Requirement and Solution

That the Local Development Plan 3 would be supportive of future Community Hub Developments with specific consideration given to:

- Possible redevelopment of existing but redundant church buildings, in particular St. Johns Church or St. Columbas. Local Development Plan 3 would not prevent such works being undertaken (such as renovation) , should plans for this progress.
- Possible development of Vikingar! to create more Community Space. This may include extension to existing building northwards into the Coach Parking Bay, but also may include additional buildings on part of the open space at the front of the building.

### Community Support

Engagement with Community Groups shows that whilst there is various provision of halls and rooms, there is a lack of a real community hub with dedicated facilities, whether meeting rooms, AV equipment, Changing Spaces or disabled access.



Figure 9. Aerial view, Vikingar Leisure Centre, arial view.



Figure 10. Space at side of Vikingar building which offers potential for expansion.



Engagement with Community Groups shows that whilst there is various provision of halls and rooms, there is a lack of a real community hub with dedicated facilities.

“

Unlike the majority of major towns in North Ayrshire, Largs has not dedicated Community Hub and has to ‘make do’ with various disparate properties.



Figure 11. Map view of St. John's Church, Bath Street.

**The intention is to create a community space to allow a community growing area, bringing local residents of all ages together in a common endeavour.**

### **Holehouse Road proposal**

#### **Issue**

The Largs Community Development Trust, along with the Largs Green futures group intend developing the derelict wasteground behind Holehouse Road, Royal Avenue, Lindsey Crescent. (see image).

Currently, the area is effectively derelict, with minimal maintenance from North Ayrshire Council. It has been used in the past for illegal activities, such as fly tipping and bonfires of illegal waste.

The intention is to create a community space to allow a community growing area, bringing local residents of all ages together in a common endeavour, increasing social cohesion as well as improving the local environment. It is hoped that by creating this space, it will reduce the instances of anti-social behaviour in the area.

The vision is for an area which is fully accessible, with an orchard, seating, BBQ facilities, as well as raised beds for growing.

#### **Requirement and Solution**

The requirement is that the Local development Plan would include provision for this space to remain 'Open Space' whilst permitting a small scale community development as described.

#### **Community Support**

The Green Futures Group has engaged with residents in the surrounding area and received overwhelmingly positive support for the project.



Holehouse Road site.

## Douglas Park courts

### Issue

The old Tennis Courts at Douglas Park are subject to potential Community Asset Transfer to the Largs Tennis club and Largs Green Futures. Both groups may have requirements to create new facilities on this site.

### Comment

Whilst at this stage there are no firm plans preparing to be lodged, it is expected that if the Community Asset Transfer/s are approved, then in the future there may be a requirement to create facilities such as toilets or changing areas, or storage buildings.

### Requirement and Solution

The requirement is that the Local Development Plan 3 would not prevent small scale development at this site provided it is to fulfil the aspirations of the users of the old Tennis Courts, as per the Community Asset Transfer process underway.

### Community Support

Each of the groups proposing the Community Asset Transfer have support from the local community and this has been demonstrated through public engagement events which led to North Ayrshire Council agreeing at Council to allow the proposal from the Largs tennis Club and Largs Green Future to proceed.



In the future there may be a requirement to create facilities such as toilets or changing areas, or storage buildings.



Figure 12. Dilapidated Douglas Park Tennis Courts awaiting Community Asset Transfer.

## Cairnies Quay

### Issue

The quay area around Cairnies Quay fell into disused and disrepair over the last two decades. A group has been setup to reverse the decline of this quay area, with the aim of encouraging more visitors to Largs by boat, whether yacht or motorboat. The aims include restoration of the slip to allow safer tying up for small vessels (dinghy's etc), offering mooring facilities, dinghy storage park upgrade. Longer term there is aspiration to include basic facilities for those who wish to stay overnight, which may include changing and locker facilities. Whilst there are no specific plans at this stage, this could incorporate the existing Shelter structure, toilets, or demolition and replacement of both. A café facility could be developed to maximise the location of the site, which is in an area of Largs Prom with little food and drinks facilities.

### Requirement and Solution

The Local Development Plan 3 should be cognisant of future aspirations to bring Cairnies Quay into more regular use. Whilst the area is designated open Space currently, should plans come forward to develop facilities in this area, the plan should acknowledge this and ensure that well thought out, beneficial developments specific to Cairnies Quay would accord with the development principles.



Figure 13. Aerial view of Cairnies Quay and adjacent Prom and toilet facilities.



Figure 14. Cairnies Quay and surrounding area.



## Support of balanced trading estate in Largs

### Issue

Within North Ayrshire Planning policy, there is no mechanism to restrict use of retail establishment. Specifically, there is much feedback from residents and businesses alike that there is a significant increase in Barber, Charity and Nail or Beauty Shops to the point that it appears to be disproportionate to the size of Largs.

### Comment

A recent business survey provided valuable insight to local trading conditions and there was repeated feedback and commentary around an increase in shops such as barbers, nail salons and vape shops. Whilst none suggested these are not required, the point was made that there seems to be a disproportionate number of these and no way to limit the prevalence of the same type of shops.

### Requirement and Solution

That the Local Development Plan 3 considers how 'over provision' of a type of establishment can be defined within planning and provide a legitimate means to refuse a use or change of use where there already exists sufficient of that type already.

## Wet Weather Attractions

### Issue

As part of Community engagement, there is widespread acknowledgement of the lack of facilities for people, young and old. Whilst there is a great offering from KA Leisure and the Inverclyde Centre, there is a lack of breadth of activities, such as:

- Indoor play area incorporating various activities directed towards younger children.
- Indoor ten-pin bowling area.
- Small scale cinema with regular weekly Saturday viewings.
- Teenage cafe or drop in centre.

### Requirement and Solution

The Local Development Plan 3 should be mindful that the community wishes to see more facilities for residents and visitors, old and young, and that the plan should be supportive of any proposals which meet this requirement.



A recent business survey provided valuable insight to local trading conditions and there was repeated feedback and commentary around an increase in shops such as barbers, nail salons and vape shops.

## Water Sports

### Issue

Outside of Largs Marina, there are limited formalised facilities for watersports. Whilst there is the Royal National Lifeboat Institution slipway, otherwise any watersports are undertaken using 'best endeavours' basis.

There is a wish by one of the main watersports organisations in the area (Largs Sailing Club) to develop the Club further into a "watersports hub", in addition to the obvious dinghy and keelboat sailing, they also have training in many aspects of watersports (over 100 young people and adults trained in 2024), and already offer many water sports activities such as canoeing, kayaking, sailing, or rowing, either directly by the club, or through group members such as the Firth of Clyde Coastal Rowing Club, and Castle Craigs Canoe Club (sea kayaking).

The facilities at the Largs Marina are becoming dated and there is an active intent to develop these further, particularly following the closure of the Cumbrae Watersports Centre in 2019, which has left a significant gap in Scottish watersports. There have been active and constructive discussions with sportscotland, Inverclyde Sports Centre, and Royal Yachting Association Scotland since 2019, on the synergy of accommodation and gym facilities at Inverclyde, and how LSC could fill the gap left by Cumbrae's closure. There is an outline proposal for some clubhouse upgrades (the building is now 25 years old), and improved facilities for changing, training, race control etc.

### Requirement and Solution

The Local Development Plan should support any development at the Largs Marina to support ambitions to develop and update additional water sports facilities.

Furthermore, the Local Development Plan should be supportive of any future initiatives to improve access to the water from public areas. This would include, but not be limited to:

- Provision for canoe launching and safe area.
- Cold water swimming
- Safe swimming areas
- Safe scuba diving areas.
- Changing Facilities at Pencil



Figure 15. Aerial view of Largs marina during a sailing event.

# **Playpark upgrades now go beyond simply installing new swings and a climbing frame.**

## **Playparks**

### **Issue**

Across Largs, there has been a lack of any real investment in play areas, and as such, the playparks compared to other areas of North Ayrshire, or Glasgow or Inverclyde are exceptionally poor. Whilst North Ayrshire Council point to budget cuts, local people agree that the playparks are in need of upgrading.

### **Requirement and Solution**

Playpark upgrades now go beyond simply installing new swings and a climbing frame. They can include significant play structures, which as that near Glasgow Green, and take up significant space. The requirement therefore is that Local Development Plan 3 should allow significant playpark upgrades in Largs on existing locations, and

### **Community Support**

Local feedback from residents and young people is that the facilities are basic and need to be better.



Figure 16. Dilapidated playpark at Mackerston.

## **Barrfields Stadium upgrades**

### **Issue**

The Barrfields Stadium is well utilised but requires much improvement to the buildings and facilities. The stadium fabric is in poor condition and whilst floodlighting is planned, much is needed in the long term to improve the area.

### **Requirement and Solution**

Should improvements to the Barrfields Stadium be presented through Planning, the Local Development Plan should be supportive of such developments. This may be in the form of replacement canopies, or new stands, changing facilities or buildings to support both training and fixtures. Developments that support community events and gatherings should be possible through the Local Development Plan and Planning policy.

## **Compatibility of Largs Place Plan with Local Development Plan 2 and National Planning Framework 4 and Local Priorities**

### **North Coast Local Priorities**

Within the North Ayrshire Locality Partnership are defined Key Priorities for focus.

These are:

- Improving access to financial services
- Increasing social inclusion
- Improving mental wellbeing
- Supporting skills and work opportunities

It is considered that this Place Plan supports all of the above priorities, whether directly or indirectly. For example, the aspiration to develop additional Community Hub space would support an increase in social inclusion and mental well being. Developing new facilities at the Largs Marina, or maintaining Open Spaces will support continued positive mental wellbeing. Indirectly, by supporting tourism and parking, this will help develop the Tourism economy, driving jobs and skills development to support this. Nothing in the Place Plan detracts from the 4 Priorities.

### **Local Development Plan 2**

The LPP was created through consultation and engagement with the community, and was been reviewed after this against the key strategic policies within the existing Local Development Plan 2 (to ensure that the exercise was not driven by the Local Development Plan 2).

- Strategic Policy 1. includes objectives and policies for how development can enhance and protect our Towns and Villages, our Countryside and our Coast.
- Strategic Policy 2. Our Placemaking policy will ensure we are meeting LOIP priorities to make North Ayrshire safer and healthier by ensuring that all development contributes to making quality places.
- Strategic Policy 3. We will support the development of the Strategic Development Areas identified in line with the guidance set out.



# **There is nothing contained within the LPP which would require Largs to be considered a Strategic development Area.**

The LPP accords with the existing Policies 1 and 2, and the existing Local Development Plan therefore is already aligned with these. This Place Plan details specifics pertinent to Largs, which the Local Development Plan 2 could directly, or in most cases, indirectly support. No fundamental change would be required to these policies to support the LPP aims.

Within Local Development Plan 2 there are no Strategic Development Areas within Largs, and there is nothing contained within the LPP which would require Largs to be considered a Strategic development Area.

## **National Planning Framework 4**

The LPP accords with various aspects of National Planning Framework 4. It would be unrealistic and unproductive to list each requirement against National Planning Framework 4, however overall, the LPP plan supports the following aspects of National Planning Framework 4, and does not conflict with any other areas:

- Liveable places
- Scotlands Forestry Strategy
- Historic Assets and Places
- Forestry, Woodland and Trees
- Sustainable Places: Environment, Communities and Economy
- Sustainable Transport
- National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network
- Play, recreation and sport

Developing new facilities  
at the Largs Marina, or  
maintaining Open Spaces  
will support continued  
positive mental wellbeing.





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