

CHANONRY POINT MANAGEMENT OPTIONS STUDY

For The Highland Council

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Note

A plan showing property and land boundaries plus proposed improvements is being prepared by the THC.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Chanonry point lies at the end of a triangular spit of land, known as Chanonry Ness, and extending south into the Moray Firth within easy walking distance from the villages of Fortrose and Rosemarkie in the Black Isle.
2. The point has received international acclaim, through Internet and television, as one of the best places in Europe to see dolphins from the shore. The point also has a 19th century lighthouse and it was a historic crossing from Fort George, on the south shore of the Moray Firth.
3. As a consequence it is estimated the point receives, in the order of, 120,000 – 140,000 visitors per annum making it, in effect, one of the 10 most popular visitor attractions in the Highlands.
4. Aside from local people walking to the point most visitors arrive by private car. Access to the point, from Fortrose, is via a single track road across the 19th century golf course to a 30 space gravel car park from where there is short walk to the point where the best views of dolphins may be had.
5. In 2008 and 2009 the sheer volume of traffic has given rise to range of problems for golfers, those living at the point and the unknown number of visitors who just turn around and leave because they are unable to park. Traffic has exceeded the car park capacity, on average, for almost 50% of days between March and October, with the greatest pressure between April and September.
6. This report was commissioned to come forward with a plan to tackle these problems as it is generally accepted that, as long as the dolphins are regularly seen at the point, visitor numbers coming to see them at Chanonry will remain high.
7. A range of improvement measures have been proposed to increase the capacity of the existing car park and better manage vehicles by imposing a parking charge with surpluses being used to finance on going management and improvements at the point. An over flow car park, capable of accommodating a further 30 -40 cars with a coach waiting area, is proposed for a later phase.
8. Land and property at the site is in multiple ownership and decision making has been hampered by a lack of clarity on property boundaries.
9. Park and ride, new toilets and a visitor centre at the point have been specifically ruled out, unless circumstances change in the future. Most stakeholders acknowledge the site is 'not fit for purpose', the status quo is not an option, and that changes are best made incrementally and the informality of the site must be retained.

10. Other management improvements are proposed including a better welcome and orientation, a formal path to the point, joint interpretation with the Northern Lighthouse Board and in the longer term an aspiration for the under grounding of the very unsightly power poles and wirescape at the point.
11. A non executive Advisory forum, chaired by a local member, is recommended as a way of bringing together, on a biannual basis, stakeholders who have an interest in Chanonry Point. The work to improve infrastructure would be directed by the Highland Council through the Ward Manager. Initial works to extend car park capacity in time for summer 2010 have been given priority.
12. Longer term it is proposed the point could be managed by a local trust, or similar group, with car park incomes channelled back, for example, to site improvements, improvement to existing public toilets in Fortrose and dolphin based projects.

STUDY REMIT

The remit was set down as follows by the Highland Council (THC) in their study brief to consultant Duncan Bryden.

There are a range of management issues that require to be addressed to ensure that the experience available at Chanonry Point for visitors is maintained. This study is aiming to look at these issues and come up with a range of management options that will address the site needs over the next 5 years.

This study is funded by THC Black Isle Ward, THC Planning and Development, Leader and the Fortrose and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund.

1 SITE LOCATION

- 1.1 Chanonry point lies at the end of a triangular spit of land, known as Chanonry Ness, extending south into the Moray Firth between the Ross-shire villages of Fortrose and Rosemarkie.
- 1.2 Built by the accretion of coastal sediments on a huge bank of morainic material which nearly blocks the Firth the spit is nowhere more than 5 metres above sea level but the remnants of old stable dune ridges create frequent small-scale undulations. Twin beaches of sand and shingle have formed at the coastal edge.
- 1.3 Across the Moray Firth another spit of land, occupied by Fort George, extends north. The waters, forming a tide race between Chanonry Point and Fort George, are known as the Chanonry Narrows and mark a boundary between the inner and outer Moray Firth.
- 1.4 The name **Chanonry Point** is from the gaelic Gob na Cananaich or Rubha na Cananaich, "The point of the chanonry", i.e. in the ownership of the canons of Fortrose cathedral.

2 SITE VALUES

Natural heritage values

- 2.1 The Moray Firth hosts one of only two known resident populations of bottlenose dolphins, *Tursiops truncatus*, in UK and the last remaining resident population of bottlenose dolphins in the North Sea. Within Europe they are considered rare.
- 2.2 For this reason the inner Moray Firth was designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in 2005 to protect this small, isolated and vulnerable bottlenose dolphin population. In 2005 their condition was described as 'unfavourable but recovering'. Over the last 15-20 years the Moray Firth dolphins have become one of the best studied populations in the world. Dr Paul Thompson of Aberdeen University noted at the 2008 Moray Firth Partnership Conference.

"We can often see dolphins leaping off the point at Chanonry, but this doesn't necessarily mean that dolphin numbers across the whole of the Moray Firth have remained stable. It's especially important to remember that we're dealing with a very small and vulnerable population here. We are extremely lucky in the Inner Moray Firth. We have the animals here on our doorstep, and are able to reap the economic and cultural benefits they bring. Whilst 130 dolphins on our doorstep may seem a lot, we must remember that this represents just about all the bottlenose dolphins that can be found across the whole of the North Sea."

- 2.3 The SAC designation places a requirement on government to ensure for the long term
 - The population of the species as a viable component of the site
 - The distribution of the species within site

- The distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
- The structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
- No significant disturbance of the species

The SAC Management Group has prepared a Management Scheme for the designated area.¹

- 2.4 Bottlenose dolphins are a European protected species and in addition to the protection provided within the SAC, Articles 12 & 14 of the EU Habitats Directive also offer a strict level of protection throughout Scottish and UK waters.
- 2.5 While the individuals may range further afield during certain times of the year, dolphins are present in the Moray Firth throughout the year and the same individuals, identified by unique markings, have been seen over periods of many years.
- 2.6 Chanonry Ness and Fort George create a unique natural ‘bottleneck’ for tidal waters and dolphins frequently gather in the Chanonry Narrows just off the point, particularly on an incoming tide, to socialise and forage.
- 2.7 Other significant species using the site include grey and common seals, porpoise, otter and the site supports roosts for ringed plovers and dunlin.
- 2.8 Chanonry supports some locally important dune and maritime heath type habitats above the high water mark. Although modified by management activity, they do provide a pleasant setting for walkers. There is evidence of erosion, apparently caused by walkers, on the short path from the car park to the point and from Rosemarkie to the point but duneland is naturally dynamic and bare sand does allow some pioneer species to re-colonise.

Tourism values

- 2.9 The value of Chanonry point for tourism lies in
- the unique physical arrangement of the firth which forces tidal currents and dolphin prey species around Chanonry point and hence brings wild dolphins in close proximity to the shore;
 - the frequency and reliability of large, charismatic, wild dolphins being seen behaving naturally in the open sea²;
 - accessibility of the point to most people;
 - dolphin viewing opportunities without the need for optical aids like telescopes;
 - wildlife photographic opportunities for non – specialists;
 - the low relief of the point allowing a 270 degree view point east and west along the firth and across to Fort George;

¹<http://www.morayfirthpartnership.org/assets/files/MF%20SAC%20MANAGEMENT%20SCHEME%20REVISION%202.pdf>

² Dolphins were placed fourth in a top 10 of socially important species as defined by people in Scotland.

- a landmark lighthouse;
 - a pleasant sandy beach;
 - the relative sustainability of shore watching compared to boat trips;
- 2.10 Chanonry Point is variously described locally in tourism literature, visitor centres, Tourist Information Centres and on internet sites as the best and most famous spot in the British Isles to view, from the shore, wild bottlenose dolphin engaging in natural behaviour. Guidance for visitors now frequently includes information on the best state of the tide to see dolphins and tips on photography. So, in addition to the daily pattern seen by most visitor attractions, people may visit the point early and late in the day to coincide with tidal cycles.
- 2.11 The point, well known locally for many years as a place to see dolphins, gained national publicity when shown on the prime time Coast, Spring Watch and the One Show BBC TV programmes, and visited by well known presenters including Kate Humble. The point is now believed to attract approximately 120,000 visitors per year with most people motivated by the opportunity to see dolphins.

"Scotland is one of the best land-based dolphin watching hot spots in the world" - Simon King, BBC Springwatch.

- 2.12 Other wildlife, including birdlife, porpoise, common and grey seals is also regularly seen from the point. European otters are also occasional visitors. Chanonry is 'flagged' on the internet as a 'great destination' for seal watching.

Local values

- 2.13 Chanonry point is home for four resident house holds and has one self catering property and two holiday houses. One resident acknowledged that, despite the traffic, they enjoy living at Chanonry. There is little turnover of land and property ownership. Three of the households are occupied by retired people. One owner has lived at the point for 40 years and another for over 25 years and a third has owned property for over 30 years.
- 2.14 Local residents of Fortrose (popn:1174) and Rosemarkie (popn:650) use Chanonry Ness for general recreation, mainly walking, with dog walking in particular being a popular and frequent recreational activity. People also travel from elsewhere in the Black Isle and Inverness to enjoy the point. Chanonry point is a local landmark regarded with great affection by local people, many of whom have deep personal connections with the site.
- 2.15 The Fortrose and Rosemarkie Golf Club, which has Community Amateur Sports Club status, has been in existence for 121 years, has a turnover of the order of £420,000 and provides employment for between 10 throughout the year rising to 15 in the height of the season. The Golf Club is probably one of the largest private sector employers on the Black Isle; as most of the employees are local residents the economic benefits of the Club are spread throughout the local community.

Heritage values

- 2.16 The lighthouse at the point was designed by Alan Stevenson and became operational in 1846. It is described as a short circular white tower on a semi-circular single-storey base and a circular triangular-paned lantern with a domed top 13 metres high and 48 steps to the top of tower. The lighthouse, gatepost piers and the surrounding wall are A listed.
- 2.17 The lighthouse has been fully automated since 1984. The tower and engineering room are still owned by the Northern Lighthouse Board. The A listed lighthouse keeper's single story Egyptian style residence (20 Ness Road) and surrounding land were sold off as surplus to requirements and are now privately owned.
- 2.18 Much of the land between Fortrose and the point on either side of Ness road is occupied by the 18 hole Fortrose and Rosemarkie Golf Club designed by James Braid and founded in 1888. There are two holes adjacent to the point, the Lighthouse, the 4th hole (455 yards) and the Icehouse, the 5th hole (132 yards).
- 2.19 Chanonry has had a long history as crossing point on the Moray Firth. The royal pilgrimage route taken by James IV on his regular trips to St Duthac's shrine in Tain sometimes included Ardersier to Chanonry as a crossing point.
- 2.20 The C listed Chanonry pier is a ramped masonry ferry pier with a central protective wall, designed by Thomas Telford and dates to the late 18th to early 19th, century, possibly 1819. Built at a cost of £4,000, some of this money came from the residual funds of the Commissioners of the Forfeited Estates.
- 2.21 It was the terminal of a ferry from Fort George until regular crossings stopped in 1932 when the last regular ferryman died. Irregular use continued up to 1953. A proposal to reopen the route was considered in 1965. Steamers also made regular calls at the pier and a wooden pier was added in 1879 but it had rotted away by the middle of the twentieth century. The ferry pier description in the RCHAMS Canmore database is shown in Appendix 2
- 2.22 Currently the pier is not used, although, from time to time, in recent years private individuals have used the slipway to launch kayaks and, occasionally, motorised craft.
- 2.23 Ferry House (19 Ness Road), adjacent to the car park, is also C listed and was built at the same time as the pier, probably as an inn, to service those using the crossing.
- 2.24 The infamous execution of the Brahan Seer or Coinneach Odhar is commemorated by a memorial stone adjacent to the car park. A smaller stone, on the golf course, nearer the club house, is more likely to have been the actual site and is described as the remains of the Cross of the Ness and in 1871 was recorded as consisting of a circular stone shaft 1ft in diameter that stood about 5ft high.
- 2.25 The intact remains of a disused Royal Observer Corps underground post are situated on Chanonry Point, on the W side of Ness Road, about 60m SE of 23 Ness Road 'West Shore Cottage'. It is believed to be a 1950s cold war type,

concrete, underground three man bunker. The site is owned by the golf course. There are over 1500 ROC bunkers throughout the UK. Most sites were de-commissioned in 1968, the rest in 1991. A typical design is shown below.

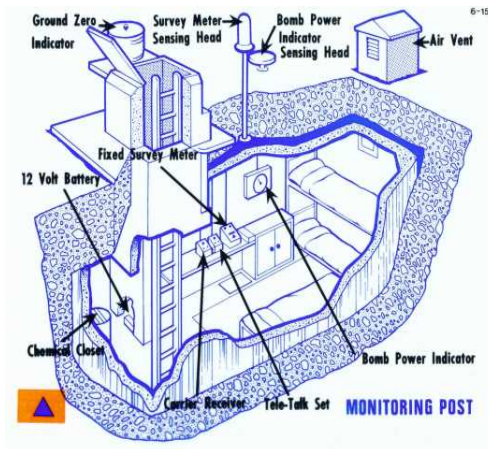


Fig 1 ROC Post design



Fig 2 ROC Chanonry post surface view

- 2.26 Located some 100 m NW of the car park (NH 74716 55744) and within the curtilage of 22 Ness Road are two large C listed vaulted ice houses joined and parallel to each other and dating from the early 19th century. They have steep pointed gable ends at the north-west elevation. Construction is of rubble but the turf roofing has been removed. The ice houses were probably used for storing salmon caught by netting operations at Chanonry. Land at the point was sold to the Moray Firth Salmon Fisheries Company Ltd in 1921 although netting probably began many years previously.
- 2.27 On the beach, probably dating from WWII, are the remains of two sets of steel beams inserted upright into the beach and then encased in circular concrete. These structures, and the stacked concrete ramps below the golf course 6th tee, are connected to the area being used to practice landings prior to “D Day” in 1944.
- 2.28 Two 19th century boats are recorded as being wrecked on the point.

3 SITE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

- 3.1 Vehicle signage using the words ‘Chanonry Point’ can be seen on approach roads to the point.
- On the A832 at the junction with Academy Street signing drivers onto the Ness Road junction;
 - On the A832 at the junction with Ness Road (accompanied by a P for parking sign) – double sided sign on a single pole with five other signs – resulting in a less than clear sign which is also obscured by overhanging vegetation.

- 3.2 Pedestrian access, either from Rosemarkie or Fortrose, is normally taken along the beach or, on the paths (both rights of way and core paths) above the highwater mark, at the edge of the golf course. The latter routes are both signed with words 'Chanonry Point' on:
- Timber blade signs on a timber post (erected by the Ross and Cromarty Access Project) – now poorly maintained and difficult to read. Erected at the start of both beach paths
 - Metal sign 'Path to the lighthouse' erected at the start of the beach path on the Rosemarkie side

Walkers and cyclists may also choose to use Ness Road.

- 3.3 From the A832 Ness Road is a single carriage way until it reaches the edge of the village. Ness Road then becomes a single track road, with passing places for approximately 1000 m, from the edge of the village through the golf course to the car park. Ness Road is signed with 30mph limit signs at regular intervals and there are seven alternate passing places on the single track section. Further signs at the edge of the village advise that there is:
- No parking for buses at Chanonry Point (also in gaelic)
 - Large exclamation mark and words - Beware of golf balls for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile
- 3.4 The road terminates in a tarmac 'tear drop' shaped turning head (diameter approx 15m) encircling an area once considered as a wild flower garden but now rather unkempt. The grassy turning head circle has T bar barriers and carries the signs 'No overnight parking' in yellow and 'Turning area – no parking'. No marking are in place to indicate priority direction for vehicles and observation shows vehicles travelling both clock wise and anti clockwise when using the turning head. Further small advisory signs located in the circle refer to drinking in public places and dog fouling. Tarmac along the edges of the turning circle is breaking up, especially in front of 18 Ness Road leading to water retention and further damage.
- 3.5 Accessed from the turning head is an unsurfaced car park, its boundaries defined by decaying round timber edging just outside of which (T bar) timber railings were erected in May 2009. The car park is not marked with bays and is believed to have a 'design' capacity of 30 cars. There are no formal parking arrangements for other vehicles like motor homes or coaches. Some visitors consider the T bars delineate parking spaces leading to poor use of available space. Some of the T bars are damaged.
- 3.6 Once at the car park people are now directed by temporary local signage (erected in 2009) to a sandy path between Ferry House/Chanonry Point Cottage and the house 17 Ness Road which takes them to the upper shore on the northern side of point. Prior to 2009 there was no signage. The current sign attached to the offset wooden fence (installed as a planning condition) has been deliberately obscured by white paint.

- 3.7 An informal path then leads over the dune land at the rear of the lighthouse to the shingle strip at the tip of the point where most watchers congregate. At certain states of the tide pedestrians can also walk along the beach below the retaining wall protecting the lighthouse. At times when the site is busy and at high tide some 'first time' and more regular visitors walk to the point through the private curtilage of the lighthouse.
- 3.8 There are no dedicated disabled parking spaces and no formal provision for all ability access at the site. Those with mobility problems, especially wheel chairs, cannot readily get to the point via the existing path due both to a set of four broad steps and the rutted path surface.
- 3.9 The interpretation panel at the site is believed to have been installed in the past by Ross and Cromarty District Council. The current panel is not fully accessible to wheelchair users.
- 3.10 The site has a range of advisory signs, several of which are unlikely to be compliant with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code
- At the point x2 Danger (in red) Strong Currents No Bathing (aluminum on 2m steel posts) carry the Highland Council logo. The posts are showing signs of rust.
 - The same sign x1 is attached to the wall to the right of the gate entering the lighthouse grounds and at the Rosemarkie end x1 of the foot path.
 - Private no entry wall unsafe (x3)
 - Footpath Pedestrians only (x4)

At busy periods some of the Danger signs are obscured by people using the signs for shelter or to hang clothes and equipment.

- 3.11 The site has no public toilets and no shelter. Despite the lack of toilets residents have not reported a great problem with human waste at the site. There are four picnic benches on the grass between the car park and the high water mark. There are also two wooden picnic benches at the point placed there in 2008 by the Community Council. None of the benches are all ability accessible as they have cross timbers supporting built in seats. A seat with a back rest has been placed at the point in memory of a local resident. All the seats are, generally, in poor repair, especially those by the car park, and in good weather some parties can monopolise them for extended periods. There are no seats on the paths leading to the point from Fortrose or Rosemarkie.
- 3.12 There is a low level of litter at the site arising from both visitors and sea borne debris, mainly blown down the firth from Inverness and onto the beach. Stakeholders have noted significant levels of cigarette butts around the point discarded by people waiting to see the dolphins. Residual sea borne debris, like cotton bud sticks and often pre dating improved sewage treatment, lies amongst the shingle at the top of the western beaches. The community council organises an annual spring beach clean. Dog waste is noted as a problem (in common with many other locations) and there are no dog waste bins. Dog waste is a particular concern of the Golf Club.

- 3.13 There are six (there is space for eight) green, domestic size (240 litres) litter bins contained in two small timber compounds in the car park giving 1440 litres of capacity. The bins are emptied twice weekly (Tuesday and Friday) by the Highland Council. This schedule was noted as being insufficient by the Community Council in their minute of meeting July 2009. Residents at the point suggest bin capacity is insufficient during the summer months. The Highland Council has intimated they will continue the twice weekly collection throughout the year but recognise occasionally a collection may be missed.
- 3.14 Domestic properties at the point are on mains water via a one inch alcathehene pipe serving all properties. Residents have reported problems with water pressure.
- 3.15 There are no known public sewers in the vicinity of the point. Domestic properties at the point use individual septic tank systems.
- 3.16 Mains electricity is available at the site. Power is brought via poles, along the Avoch side of Chanonry Ness, arriving at a distribution pole, with a pole mounted transformer, beside the car park.
- 3.17 The Northern Lighthouse Board maintain the retaining seawall protecting the lighthouse. However, there are three large red signs with the words 'Private No entry wall unsafe.' A life buoy is also attached to the wall but it is uncertain who maintains it.
- 3.18 Ad hoc catering at the point is provided by an ice cream van which takes up station in the car park at busy times. In effect this van will occupy parking spaces.
- 3.19 One property at the point is a self catering unit. Nearby in Fortrose and Rosemarkie there is a range of accommodation. Camping and caravan sites are located on the edge of both settlements. In addition there are local hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfasts, and 4% of the local housing stock is second homes.

4 VISITOR PROFILES

- 4.1 Informed by a variety of surveys and counts it is suggested that recent years have seen approximately 120,000 visitors to Chanonry per annum, possibly even more as records relate to people who have walked to the point rather than all those arriving at the car park. This does not include those visitors deterred by congestion or a lack of parking spaces. Clearly, under the strict definition of staying a night away from home, not all of these visitors are tourists and as noted in later paragraphs surveys have shown that up to 25% are local day visitors from within a 10 – 15 mile drive or arriving on foot. Most visitors come to the site by private car between March and November, especially during school holidays, with some additional activity around Christmas and New Year. The majority of visitors do not stay long, although the average dwell time for visitors at the point is unknown and much depends on dolphin activity and the weather. Some cars may just drive to the point, turn and depart again. A small number of visitors stay, at the point, for extended periods, particularly people travelling by motor home.

- 4.2 The conservative estimate of 120,000 makes Chanonry point, arguably, the most popular wildlife watching site in Scotland and very important in UK terms (see Table 4). The Seabird Centre in North Berwick records over 284,000 visitors, centre staff report only 25% come principally to view the wildlife, and most are attracted by the coffee shop and retail space.
- 4.3 Chanonry attracts a mix of visitors with varying levels of understanding and awareness of dolphins. A study in 2002³ showed a sample of 50 visitors to Chanonry to be representative of four different categories.
- 19 % Gazers (those who enjoyed looking at the scenery)
42% Beginners (those that have an interest but lack any real knowledge)
6% Dabblers (those that have an interest in wildlife and little knowledge)
32% Studiers (those with a real interest in and good knowledge of wildlife)
- 4.4 Irrespective of their level of knowledge the underlying motivation for most tourists in 2009 appeared to be the opportunity to see dolphins⁴. Anecdotally it is believed, more than ever before, visitors appear to have a basic understanding of dolphin behaviour. This is evidenced by visitor arrival times at the site being linked to tidal state. Many visitors now understand that the state of the tide is a key factor in successfully seeing dolphins during their visit. When 100 visitors to Chanonry in 2009 were asked to respond to the statement '*I planned some or all of my trip in order to see dolphins around here*' 68% agreed. This suggests a majority undertake some level of advance trip planning and have some awareness of what to expect.
- 4.5 WDCS staff at the North Kessock Centre and, to a lesser extent, at their Spey Bay Wildlife Centre, report it is now common for tourists to ask for directions to Chanonry point by name rather than seeking general advice on shore based watching opportunities around the Moray Firth.
- 4.6 Some visitors return to the site on a regular basis and local people use the site frequently. The 2009 Aberdeen University survey results from a sample of 100 visitors show 19% came from Scotland, 62% from the rest of the UK and 19% from overseas⁵. In the 2002 study 63% were from England, 24% were local (Lairg to Inverness) and 13% were from elsewhere in Scotland. It is unlikely overseas visitors were not present in 2002 but their numbers in 2009 suggest a growing international interest in the dolphins.
- 4.7 Based on over 500 regular visits, at different time of day, to the point in 2007, 2008 and 2009, local resident Bill Taylor, compiled the following information.

³ Bryden 2002 Quality of Wildlife Tourism Sites in the Highlands and Islands report for HIE

⁴ Bill Taylor in personal communication suggested perhaps up to 90% of tourists are motivated by dolphin watching opportunities

⁵ See reference in 5.17

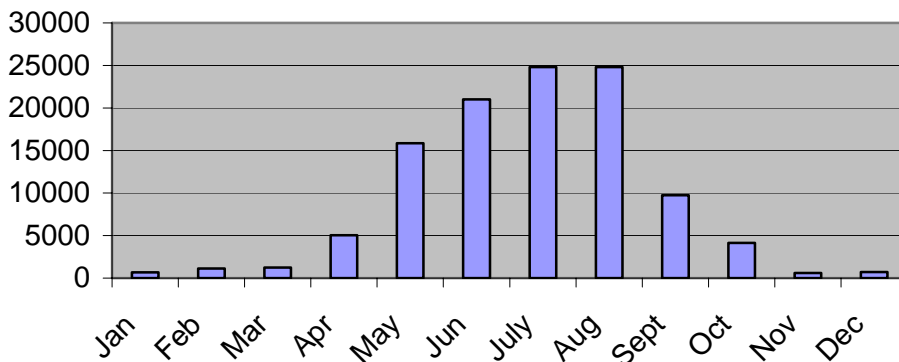
Table 1 Average numbers of people and cars⁶

	No of people present at the point (note 1) at the time of the visit expressed as a daily average by month			No of cars present at the point at the time of the visit expressed as a daily average by month		
	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009
No of Visits	65 Jul - Dec	210	238		210	238
J		2.2	2.5		7.6	6.3
F		4.1	3.3		7.1	7
M		4.1	2.9		6.5	5.8
A		8.8	17.2		9.7	16.5
M		13.3	26.3		15.6	22.5
J		31.9	35.6		27.9	28.3
J	37.6	45.7	50.5	n/a	31.8	33.4
A	40.6	60.1	62.4	n/a	35	37.9
S	14.7	21.1	12.3	n/a	24.8	26.1
O	7.2	11.2	14.5	n/a	12.4	13.8
N	2.7	1.4	4.9	n/a	5	9.3
D	4.1	1.9	1	n/a	4.3	3

Note:

- 1 The point is defined as the sand and gravel tip of Chanonry beyond the lighthouse – hence people could remain with their vehicles or go elsewhere and not be counted at the tip of the point
- 2 The shaded section of the table shows the busiest months

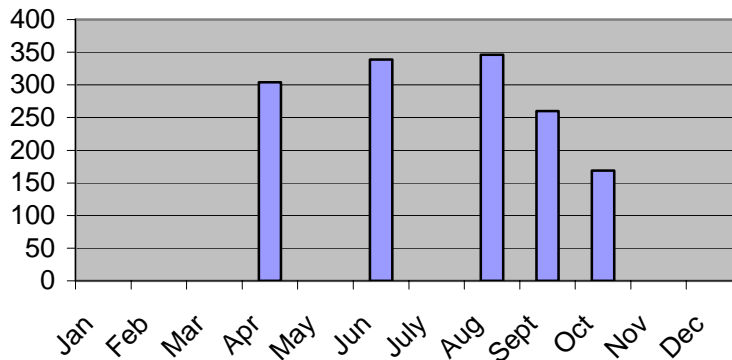
Chart 1 Estimated annual distribution of visitors at the point (not the car park) in 2008⁷



⁶ Unpublished survey data from Bill Taylor, Fortrose resident

⁷ Unpublished survey data from Bill Taylor, Fortrose resident

Chart 2 Average daily vehicle counts 2009⁸



Note: The traffic counter was in place for five periods of two weeks from March to October 2009 and does not provide a full year of data

- 4.7 The proportion of total site visits, carried out by Taylor (BT), when recorded car parking exceeded the recognised capacity of 30 vehicles is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Car park capacity⁹

Month	No of visits by BT in 2008 to Chanory	No of visits when car park capacity was exceeded (%)	No of visits by BT in 2009 to Chanory	No of visits when car park capacity was exceeded (%)
April			27	4 (15%)
May	16	1 (6%)	26	7 (27%)
June	18	9 (50%)	21	14 (67%)
July	11	5 (45%)	21	14 (67%)
Aug	19	13 (68%)	22	18 (82%)
Sept	18	6 (34%)	8	2 (25%)
Oct	19	1		
Total	101	30 (30%)	125	59 (47%)

- 4.8 The greatest number (100) of vehicles in a single count was recorded at the point followed a sighting of a sperm whale in August 2008. At certain times of the day, for one third to more than half of all the days in May June, July, August and September 2008/9 and even on a few days in April and October the car park at the point is well beyond capacity. Furthermore, on occasions up to eight motor homes have been recorded, parked up at the site, with two or three commonly present from late spring through summer.

⁸ Figures from Moray Firth Partnership Car Counter installed on Ness Road

⁹ Unpublished survey data from Bill Taylor (BT), Fortrose resident

- 4.9 Moray Firth Partnership traffic counter figures for 2009 show the point to be most busy on Sundays and August the busiest month with an average of 350 vehicles visiting the site per day. On a basis of 2.2 passengers per vehicle, August visitor numbers at the point are in the order of 23,870 suggesting the August figures in Chart 1 to be the correct order of magnitude. Visits by car appear to increase during the school holidays. Estimated visitor numbers for October 2008 appear to be lower than the vehicle based estimate for 2009.
- 4.10 In conclusion, for 2009 visitor figures may have been slightly less than 2008 in the peak period, but greater in the shoulder months. Overall, the estimate of 120,000 visitor per annum seems reasonable although informed local opinion suggests numbers may be as high as 140,000 per annum.
- 4.11 For comparison visitor numbers at other Highland sites in 2008 are shown in table 3 and other Scottish natural heritage attractions in table 4.

Table 3 Top 10 Highland Visitor Attractions as listed in VAM 2008¹⁰

Top 10 Highland Visitor Attractions	Visitor Numbers 2008
Eilean Donan Castle and Visitor Centre, by Kyle of Lochalsh	270,822
Urquhart Castle, Drumnadrochit	270,097
Aros Experience, Portree	214,934
Nevis Range, Fort William	146,388
CairnGorm Mountain Railway nr Aviemore	145,154
Culloden Visitor Centre, Inverness	129,327
Chanonry Point	120,000
Glen Nevis Visitor Centre, nr Fort William	110,000
Rothiemurchus Estate, by Aviemore	106,561
Dunvegan Castle, Dunvegan	90,076
Cawdor Castle, Nairn	82,897

Table 4 Top 10 Scottish Nature Reserve, Wetland and Wildlife Trips as listed in VAM 2008¹¹

Top 10 Scottish Nature Reserve, Wetland and Wildlife Trips	Visitor numbers 2008
Scottish Seabird Centre, North Berwick	284,166
Chanonry Point	120,000
WDCS Wildlife Centre, Spey Bay	64,981
Loch Muick & Lochnagar Wildlife Reserve, by Ballater	48,654
RSPB (Vane Farm), Kinross	46,577
RSPB Nature Reserve, Lochwinnoch	30,874
RSPB Shetland (Sumburgh Head Reserve), Virkie	29,000

¹⁰ Visitor Attraction Monitor VisitScotland 2009

¹¹ Visitor Attraction Monitor VisitScotland 2009

Sands of Forvie National Nature Reserve, Collieston	26,500
Loch of the Lowes, Dunkeld	20,402
Dolphin & Seal Centre at North Kessock, Spey Bay	17,095
Seaprobe Atlantis Cruises, Kyle of Lochalsh	15,101

Note: All the sites have built facilities where numbers are recorded so total site visitors in some cases may be under – represented.

- 4.12 The number of people with disabilities visiting Chanonry is unknown. Anecdotal information does suggest that the accessibility of the site by vehicle and the opportunity to easily see wild dolphins close to the shore makes Chanonry popular with this societal group. Groups with wheel chair users from Inverness are known to visit Chanonry regularly.
- 4.13 The 2001 census for Fortrose identified 20% of the population with a limiting long term illness.¹² Research shows approximately 1 in 4 UK households to contain a person with some form of recognised disability. The Highland Council is obliged under the DDA to make reasonable efforts to ensure equal access to its sites.

5 SITE CHALLENGES

- 5.1 Vehicle congestion in the parking area, and vehicle movement along Ness Road, has increased markedly over the past three years. The increase in private cars carrying visitors is principally due to the popularity of dolphin watching at Chanonry Point (an estimated 120,000 people in 2008 and 2009). Coaches visit the site on a relatively frequent basis as do ‘mini coaches’ carrying ‘eco -tourist’ type groups. The number of coach parties visiting Chanonry is unknown but their size makes them more visible and more prone to causing disruption. The police attended on a number of occasions in 2008/9 following traffic incidents. Concerns about the congestion have been raised with the Highland Council officers, the Black Isle Ward Manager and local councillors and the Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council.
- 5.2 The concerns raised mainly relate to vehicle movements and inconsiderate parking rather than to inappropriate dolphin related activities. However, according to WDCS, there are recorded incidents of people entering the water, mainly seeking photographs, which WDCS consider could be detrimental to dolphin welfare. The increase in foot traffic appears to have resulted in accelerated disturbance, trampling and erosion to the grasslands adjacent to the beach.
- 5.3 There is little evidence of direct concerns being raised by visitors themselves. There is, of course, no real mechanism for visitors to register their concerns so they may be under reported. Anecdotally there are reports of ‘anger at lack of

¹² Scottish Census on Line
<http://www.scrol.gov.uk/scrol/browser/profile.jsp?profile=Health&mainArea=Fortrose&mainLevel=Locality>

proper parking¹³ and further frustration as there are no contact details to register a complaint. Formal complaints regarding an incident with personal watercraft coming close to dolphins have been registered.¹⁴ 'Registered concerns' tend to be more local in origin and have been raised by Chanonry point residents, some Fortrose residents, drivers of coaches inconvenienced by congestion, golf course representatives and representative groups including the community council.

5.4 The concerns reported over the last two years are centred on the following issues. After consultation the following list of traffic management issues has been prioritised. Other concerns have been raised during the consultation but are generally not backed up by objective evidence of their scale, severity or frequency.

- **Issues of traffic management**
 - Car parking exceeding capacity
 - Disturbance to residents living at the point e.g. Buses with engines running outside properties, parking being blocked
 - Traffic slowing down play on golf course on six or seven of the 18 holes
 - Access for emergency and service vehicles being hindered
 - Bus having to be reversed out along Ness Road
 - Over spill car parking on the golf course
 - Motor homes occupying a number of spaces and staying for extended periods
 - Traffic pressures on side roads leading to the point through Fortrose
 - Vehicles turning on the golf course
 - Speeding vehicles along Ness Road
 - Coaches dropping off passengers and parking on the golf course
 - Unknown number of visitors being unable to park and thus turning away disappointed from the site
- **Issues of visitor management**
 - Visitors taking access through private curtilage e.g. Lighthouse grounds to get to the point.
 - Poor sense of place – welcome, orientation, interpretation
 - Poor all ability access especially for those in wheelchairs or with mobility difficulties
- **Issues of site servicing**
 - Lack of toilets at the site (visitors asking house holders to use their toilets, visitors using Golf Club toilets)
 - Litter at the site – sea borne and dropped by visitors
 - The area is unregulated and unkempt and the 'wild garden' is no longer maintained
 - Erosion of dune and heath habitats around the point
 - Wear and tear on paths along the edge of the golf course, west site of point in particular
- **Issues around the welfare of dolphin and other wildlife**

¹³ Alan Ward – pers comm

¹⁴ Moray Firth Partnership – pers comm

- People, photographers in particular, entering the water in pursuit of a better view or photograph
- Launching at the site and passage of small craft including kayaks and personal water craft (see Appendix 1 item 6)
- Wading birds displaced from traditional roosts at the point
- Lupin and sea buckthorn planted alongside path to the point

Media Coverage

- 5.5 The concerns expressed locally about traffic and visitor management and site servicing at the point have been picked up in 'negative terms' by local and regional media and led to articles including;
1. The Press and Journal on the 1st August 2009 carried an article '***Bid to resolve Chanonry Point traffic chaos***'
 2. The Ross-shire Journal on the 24th April 2009 carried an article '***Summer of chaos alert on beauty spot***'
 3. The Ross-shire Journal on the 6th March 2009 carried an article '***Beauty spot pressure for wheelchair access***'
 4. The Ross-shire Journal on the 5th September 2008 carried an article '***A summer of chaos at Chanonry Point***'
 5. A question and two responses posted in September 2009 on the internet site Motor Home Facts – connecting Motorhomers also highlights some of the challenges facing Chanonry from those with disabilities and motor home users.
 6. The Press and Journal on the 28th August 2009 carried an article '***Jet-skiers could face prosecution after 'buzzing' Chanonry dolphins.***'

Copies of these articles are included in appendix 2

- 5.6 Concerns have also been expressed to the Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council both in letters and through discussion at their meetings. These are recorded in their meeting minutes available from Community Council web site.

Impacts on other species

- 5.7 In a commissioned report for SNH¹⁵ Chanonry point is identified as a roost for ringed plovers and dunlin feeding off Ardersier and Avoch. In the past, birds roosted either side of the point, depending on wind direction and disturbance. They tended to roost on the beach on the east site of the point, around grid reference NH74808 55831. Due to disturbance they move up and down the beach, often concentrating on the tip of the point.
- 5.8 The report notes that during easterly winds the main roost was on a small gravel point at grid reference NH74678 55706. This area is now on an increasingly popular route for walkers and the roost at the tip of the point is regularly occupied by dolphin watchers. As a result Chanonry Point is now used by far fewer birds.

¹⁵ http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/commissioned_reports/252.pdf

The mean dunlin count 1995-2006 for this section of the coast was 639, in the last three years it was only 242.¹⁶

Economic and social contribution

- 5.9 There is evidence that dolphin watchers contribute significantly to the tourism economy at a local, regional and national level.
- 5.10 A study of Natura 2000 (N2k) sites in 2002¹⁷ noted that the Moray Firth is becoming very well-known as a place for dolphin-watching and an example of the direct link between the natural heritage interest (bottlenose dolphins) and socio-economic activity.
- 5.11 Significant proportions of visitors cite dolphins as reason for their visit Arnold (1997)¹⁸, Leyshon (1999)¹⁹, Tourism and the Environment Initiative/SNH (1998)²⁰. Hoyt (2001)²¹ estimated that, in total, land and boat-based whale and dolphin-watching in the Moray Firth attracted 73 000 tourists and generated £477 000 as direct expenditure and £2.34 million in total expenditure in 1998.
- 5.12 The North Kessock Dolphin and Seal Watching Centre also run by the WDSC acts as an informal community interpretive centre with important educational and social (rather than commercial) functions. For first time visitors the North Kessock Centre provides advice –e.g. the best sites for watching dolphins. WDSC report that many people have already heard of Chanonry and are merely looking for directions and/or tide times.
- 5.13 Ease of access to dolphin viewing was cited by Coulthard (2002) as a benefit of the SAC in addition to high educational value (school projects), protecting sea views and as a selling point for houses overlooking the SAC area.

¹⁶ Source: local Wetland Bird Survey data.

¹⁷ Coulthard N (2002) A study to investigate the possibilities for demonstration and promotion of the local socio-economic benefits which can be derived from Natura 2000 (N2k) sites in Scotland. Scottish Government.

¹⁸ Arnold, H (1997) *The Dolphin Space Programme - The development and assessment of an accreditation scheme for dolphin watching boats in the Moray Firth, A report for Scottish Wildlife Trust, Scottish Natural Heritage and the EU LIFE Programme*, Inverness: SNH and SWT.

¹⁹ Leyshon, B (1999) *The Dolphin Space Programme - An accreditation scheme for wildlife cruise operators in the Moray Firth*, Inverness: SNH (unpublished information note 11/5/99).

²⁰ Tourism and the Environment Initiative/SNH (1998) *Marine wildlife tourism: Developing a quality approach in the Highlands and Islands*, Inverness: Tourism and the Environment Initiative and SNH.

²¹ Hoyt E. 2001. Whale-watching 2001: Worldwide Tourism Numbers, Expenditures, and Expanding Socioeconomic Benefits. International Fund for Animal Welfare: Crowborough, 158pp

- 5.14 The profile of the Black Isle on the World Wide Web has increased considerably in recent years aided by media coverage of dolphin watching at Chanonry point
- 5.15 Opportunities to see dolphins at Chanonry have, arguably, helped public awareness about the need for dolphin conservation in the Moray Firth and in the wider marine environment. Increased awareness of cetaceans is a strategic outcome for the WDCS. Chanonry, with an estimated 120,000 visitors, virtually twice the numbers to the WDCS visitor centre at Spey Bay (see table 4) must contribute in some way to the achievement of this aim. Spey Bay has a larger car park and will have more visitors than just those that are recorded by the visitor centre but their motivations are unlikely all to be dolphin related. Hence, in terms of awareness raising through direct experiences, Chanonry is an important site for WDCS.
- 5.16 The WDCS operates an 'Adopt a Dolphin' scheme, now with 38,000 family members, which generates valuable core annual income for the charity. Some visitors may visit Chanonry with the hope of seeing 'their' adopted animal.
- 5.17 Much of the existing material on economic impacts associated with dolphin watching, in particular, is a number of years out of date. There are two new relevant studies underway in 2009 both initiated by the Moray Firth Partnership.
- A study, led by the Moray Firth Partnership on behalf of a range of partners and covering the area from the Moray Firth around the east coast to Fife, is looking at the direct and indirect economic value of the bottlenose dolphins and issues regarding sustainable marine wildlife watching. The study being carried out by the Aberdeen Centre for Environmental Sustainability at Aberdeen University.
 - A study by the Moray Firth Partnership looking at marine and coastal tourism and recreation activities around the Moray Firth.

6 SITE POLICIES

Ross & Cromarty East Local Plan, Adopted Plan, February 2007

- 6.1 Strategic planning themes relevant to Chanonry are picked out of the Local Plan

Theme 2. Adopting a proactive approach to the wise use of the natural environment by

- building on the work of the Moray Firth Partnership in respect of business/tourism expansion and environmental protection, and the need for a strong marketing campaign to promote awareness of the area's assets

Theme 6. Addressing the need for quality living environments by

- having regard for residential amenity, surroundings, local character and identity and making use of local materials

- reducing the environmental impact of traffic in settlements and larger developments through traffic calming measures and by giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists
 - improving recreational opportunities, including a new sports centre in Tain and access to the countryside possibly as part of the Highland Access Project initiative
 - Balancing the recreational use of the Firths with the conservation of the natural and cultural environment
- 6.2 The Council will also encourage appropriate management measures and consider the scope for improved interpretation and small scale visitor facilities, in association with land owners, tenants, community groups and other interested parties.
- 6.3 In the Fortrose section, the Local Plan identifies the following relevant points.
- **Point 17.** The Council will investigate the prospects for upgrading or replacing the existing public toilets and providing new toilets at Chanonry Point.
 - **Point 19.** The Council will also seek to maintain the open character and recreational ability of the coastal strip between Fortrose and Rosemarkie, and towards Chanonry Point
 - **Point 20.** The Council will protect established footpaths paths from new development and the network will be extended or improved, as appropriate, in conjunction with significant development proposals.
- 6.4 The Black Isle Ward 10 Development Plan October 2008 reinforces these objectives.

Land ownership and burdens

- 6.5 The exact extent of Common Good Fund land at the point remains uncertain, although it is believed that the car park and access to the point are located on land either belonging to the Highland Council or the Common Good Fund.
- 6.6 Some of the properties at the point have already been mentioned in the built heritage section above. Table 5 shows the ownership of these and other properties and plots of land (if they are known) at the point including.

Table 5 – Summary of ownership at Chanonry Point

PROPERTY/LAND	COMMENT
Chanonry Cottage and garden 17 Ness Road	Private house
Chanonry Point Cottage	A self catering holiday cottage sleeping 4

18 Ness Road	people and available year round. Is attached to the gable end of Ferry House
Ferry House and garden 19 Ness Road	C Listed private house
<p>Research Unit Building A triangular plot of land adjacent to the rear wall of 19 Ness Road and the lighthouse grounds.</p> <p>(Full planning approval (08/00336/FULRC) was granted on 15 Jan 2009). The applicant appealed the conditions attached to the approval but the Reporter's decision on the 22 July 2009 only varied condition one slightly.</p> <p>As of December 2009, there are some basic foundations on the site, an offset light timber barrier has been erected across the path preventing vehicle access and a sign, now deliberately obscured with paint, has been attached to the barrier. See Appendix 2 item 7</p>	<p>Applicant - Wildlife, Sealife and Countryside Trust Approval includes the following conditions relevant to access</p> <p>Approval only for 5 years after which site should be reinstated to its original condition</p> <p>The access track should not be surfaced in bitmac but be of materials which preserve its existing characteristics;</p> <p>Two parking spaces shall be provided within the curtilage of the site.</p> <p>A sign shall be erected on or adjacent to the point at which the proposed access meets the public road. The sign shall promote the fact that no vehicular access, save access to the research unit, is allowed along the private access road.</p>
Light house	A Listed Northern Lighthouse Board property
'Pharos' Lighthouse Keepers Cottage 20 Ness Road	A listed private house. Includes triangular area of ground around the lighthouse and wall with integral 'lean to' structure in dressed stone. Two caravans (1 touring and 1 static) both in poor repair are located adjacent to the lean to structure.
<p>21 Ness Road House and 500m2 plot currently occupied by a private house of Dorran type construction.</p> <p>30 Jan 2007 The Ross and Cromarty Planning Committee approved the application for demolition and rebuild on a 76m2 foot print. Permitted development rights in relation to boundary enclosures and extension of the house were removed.</p>	<p>The Planning Design Statement in the application includes the following description. The new house consists of a masonry ground floor structure that defines the setting of the building to provide privacy and establish context. Above this there is a lightweight steel and glass living area with an external perimeter balcony.</p> <p>The curved stone walls provide a softer shadow/silhouette to the building removing hard edges, to help reduce its visual impact.</p> <p>The design is also aero-dynamic to direct</p>

	<p>the prevailing winds around the building reducing the potential for wind chill and the impact of storms.</p> <p>On the corner adjacent to the road we have marked the arrival at Chanonry Point by introducing a white harled wall, reminiscent in colour and proportion to the tower of the lighthouse visible beyond.</p>
Chanonry Point 22 Ness Road	Private house which includes two listed ice houses in its curtilage and is surrounded by garden ground with mature trees and bushes
West Shore Cottage 23 Ness Road	Holiday bungalow accessed by short track. No garden ground. Shown on older map as the Pavilion
Fortrose and Rosemarkie Golf Course	Property of members of Fortrose and Rosemarkie Golf Course. Includes ROC bunker
Chanonry Car Park	THC – TEC Services
Chanonry Slipway	THC – TEC Services
Picnic area between Car park and High water mark	Property of Common Good Fund Holdings
Land to north east of lighthouse and Golf Club Car Park	Property of Common Good Fund Holdings

- 6.7 The Ordnance Survey shows Ness Road to be at a level of 4.5m AOD. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) suggests sites below a level of 4.16m may be subject to a current flood risk and also the risk of flooding from long term climate change. Parts of the point (car park and up to the lighthouse) lie within the limits of marine flooding shown upon the Indicative River Coastal Flood Plan (Scotland) for floods with a 1in 200 year return period (i.e. a 1 in 200 chance of occurring in any one year or 0.5% annual exceedance probability).
- 6.8 Fortrose and Rosemarkie Golf Club, as major stakeholders in the entire Chanonry Ness area, have expressed serious concerns over the challenges raised by increased visitor use. They consider the viability of the Club, as it strives to sustain present and future level of facility presentation of its facilities, could be compromised by changes to the visitor experience at Chanonry point.
- 6.9 The Club contention is that it is inevitable that if the visitor experience is enhanced, the demand for access will get no less and more than likely road traffic and pedestrian and cycle traffic will increase. They consider that they shoulder some unseen and unrecognised burdens arising from the popularity of the site. The attractiveness of the Golf Club and its facilities will, they fear, become tarnished and therefore place further burdens on the on-going viability of the Club and potentially result in a reduction in the level of the workforce should enhancement take place without addressing the current issues of

- The undue financial burden placed on the Club dealing with the very obvious coastal erosion on the shoreline facing Avoch that is in danger of cutting into the core pathway itself and is exacerbated by erosion as a result of increased footfall and cycle use.
- The burden placed on the Club from dealing with dog waste, in bags, depositing into the tee boxes as there are no proper dog waste bins provided. This has created a health and safety issue for Golf Club staff that has required the funding and provision of the requisite protective gear to enable the bins to be cleaned hygienically.

6.10 In addition to the Golf Club, residents at the point do experience some additional burdens and few benefits as a direct result of the site being popular. However, it is also fair to say that, some of the burdens like dog waste, are mainly imposed by people local to the area and are less directly connected to the presence of dolphins and their associated human watchers. 'Dolphin' tourists do also bring benefits to the local economy and, probably, contribute to business success, to tax revenues and employment, and conceivably to property values. Furthermore, irrespective of whether site improvements are undertaken, visitors and the congestion they bring will remain.

7 PRACTICE ELSEWHERE

7.1.1 Managers at scenic/wildlife sites elsewhere in the UK, comparable to Chanonry point, have used a range of measures to reduce and manage traffic congestion including

- Management by improving visitor information
- Management by parking tickets
- Management by complete road closure
- Management by closure but with seasonal limits and exemption for some
- Management by options for all

Management by improving visitor information

7.2 Scrolling signs have been installed beside the approach road to Cairngorm Mountain (Figure 4) with the purpose of providing information to visitors on funicular times, car park capacity and weather conditions. Managers at Cairngorm Mountain control sign content and consider the signs provide invaluable assistance for visitor management.

7.3 SEPA's electronic signs²² (Figure 3) provide real-time daily forecasts on predicted water quality at 11 Scottish beaches and are operational throughout the bathing waters season. The electronic beach signage can also be accessed via network, internet, phonenumber and text messaging services.

²² http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/bathing_waters/bathing_water_signage.aspx



Fig 3 Beach Sign



Fig 4 Cairngorm Mountain advance warning sign

Management by parking tickets

- 7.4 At the Spittal of Glenmuick Car Park, near Ballater in Aberdeenshire, ticket machine have been installed and the car park re-formed to better manage visitor's cars and raise revenue for site and path maintenance. The site attracts around 120,000 visitors per annum. They come to walk, look at the scenery and watch wild Red Deer.
- 7.5 Site management is by the Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) and the income in 2008/9 was £37718 collected from ticket machines on mains power (£3 per car £15 per coach). Funds raised are used to support path maintenance. Messages that clarify how funding will be deployed are an essential part of engaging the public. Compliance levels for payment are uncertain but levels of 30 - 40% are suggested by COAT managers.
- 7.6 Site management at Glenmuick is aided by a seasonal part time car park attendant on two flexible days per week. She lives near by and makes her own judgement, based on traffic congestion when to work. She wears a 'Hi Viz' jacket for identification and posts reminders on vehicles without tickets, collects litter, checks ticket machines, gives visitor information and generally acts as 'eyes and ears'.
- 7.7 Similar ticket machine arrangements are employed by the National Trust for Scotland at sites like the Linn of Dee, also with over 100,000 visitors per annum (there is also a composting toilet at the car park) and the Grey Mare's Tail. The Forestry Commission Scotland uses ticket machines at several sites including Glenmore Forest. Private estates including Rothiemurchus, Invercauld and Glen Tanar in the Cairngorms National Park have used machines and/or attendants at car parks for a number of years. The Highland Council have recently installed ticket machines at the Glen Nevis centre car park and HIE plan to install machines at the car parks on Cairngorm Mountain.

- 7.8 The Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (LWT) manages a reserve at Donna Nook that has a population of breeding grey seals. Between October and December some 65,000 visitors come to see the pups on the beach. The permanent car park has space for 45 vehicles but some weekends may see 1800 vehicles coming to the site. A local farmer has opened up adjacent fields, within 200m of the seals, provides portaloos, sells vegetables and charges £1 per vehicle. The LWT installs temporary huts to provide information and souvenirs. A minimum of one LWT staff member and two volunteers are on site every day.
- 7.9 Visitor numbers have levelled off in recent years. LWT have no plans to further develop facilities. Winter tourism in this part of Lincolnshire has improved due to the seal watching with local pubs and B&Bs benefiting. Stakeholders meet annually to discuss issues. The challenge, according to the LWT warden, has been getting council decision makers to attend the stakeholder management meetings.

Management by seasonal road closure with exemptions for some

- 7.10 Road closures in the Upper Derwent Valley in the Peak District National Park are made with the purpose of creating a more relaxing environment for walkers and cyclists. On Sundays throughout the year, and Saturdays and Bank Holidays from Easter until the end of October, the road beyond Fairholmes to the end of the valley is closed to motor vehicles.
- 7.11 A frequent minibus service operates between Fairholmes and King's Tree at these times, and blue badge holders may continue to drive up the valley respecting other road users. Due to its popularity and the limited parking available, a roundabout has been constructed near the entrance to the valley together with a sign indicating when full parking capacity has been reached. At peak times in the summer it may not be possible to park at all.

Management by road closure with options for all (Horse Bus, Electric Trolley services)

- 7.12 Road closures operate in Polperro in Cornwall with the purpose of reducing congestion in a popular seaside village. There are vehicular access restrictions to Polperro throughout the summer period.
- 7.13 Day visitors park in the main car park (charge) which is about half a mile from the village centre and harbour. A short walk down a gentle slope takes visitors to the village centre and harbour. In the summer there is choice between a horse bus service and an electric trolley/minibus service, both charging, to take visitors to the village centre.

8 ANALYSIS

Introduction

- 8.1 The opportunity to easily see dolphins in their natural habitat, on a reasonably reliable basis, makes Chanonry Point an attractive destination for large numbers of visitors to the area and for local people. A majority plan their trip to the point. Significant visitor numbers increases over the past two years appear to correspond with television exposure and is uncertain if the same rate of increase will be maintained. However, if the dolphins continue to be present at the site, evidence suggests visitor numbers will at least remain at similar levels over coming years. Thus, although the status quo/do nothing option does not incur additional costs, congestion and disruption from people and traffic are unlikely to diminish in the short term and the inevitable decline in quality will have negative socio – economic implications for the area.
- 8.2 Visitor numbers of 120,000 – 140,000 per annum are easily comparable with the top 10 visitor attractions in the Highlands, making Chanonry an important site for Highland tourism. However, even given visitors only stay at the point for a short period, when analysed in the context of facilities provided in proportion to visitors, Chanonry Point fares rather poorly in terms of staff, car parks, toilets, interpretation, catering etc. Unlike the ‘top 10’ visitor attractions where charges are levied Chanonry visitors contribute no direct expenditure at the point but evidence does point to indirect local expenditure on goods and services especially in Fortrose and Rosemarkie. Less tangible benefits of well being, civic image and property value premiums may also occur but are unverified.
- 8.3 The reasons for these disparities between Chanonry and paid visitor attractions are many. The low key ‘patch and mend’ approach at the site was adequate for the more modest visitor numbers in previous years. Site capacity is now much more frequently compromised and there are no overall visitor management objectives for the site and no clear integrated system responsible for the visitor experience. Frankly, as a result, although most stakeholders wish to see the site remaining as informal as possible, the site is becoming rather scruffy and unkempt and could be regarded as ‘unfit for purpose’.
- 8.4 Infrastructure, including timber edging around the car park, paths, benches and signs is decaying and badly need replacement. Signs are poor quality and do little to inform or direct the visitor. Low level litter is endemic. Landscape and amenity features like the power poles by the car park, pole mounted transformers (and the line of poles out to the point) and derelict caravans behind the lighthouse do little to enhance the quality of the site.
- 8.5 Poor site conditions and regular traffic congestion will tend to have greater impacts on those potential visitors who arrive at the site and quickly leave because they cannot park’ and very regular visitors who consistently experience problems.. Other visitors may be more inclined to put up with difficulties in parking if they only visit occasionally. The lack of all ability access and toilet provision may affect certain visitor groups, like seniors and young children, more than others. Other parties including residents and golfers from time to time also experience the consequences of poor site conditions and especially traffic issues.
- 8.6 Does the condition of the site matter? Internet comment tends to focus on the positive experiences of dolphin viewing, not about the site. So despite site conditions it could be reasonably expected that visits to Chanonry are likely to

- have increased public awareness of cetacean issues but there is no firm evidence of any measurable change. On the other hand, there is little hard evidence of visitor expectations relating to Chanonry visits and levels of visitor satisfaction are generally unknown other than by an absence of complaints.
- 8.7 Management at Chanonry is complicated by land ownership arrangements and different approaches. For example, the Golf Club adopts a firm tone in its signage and has placed some physical vehicle barriers along side Ness Road where it is adjacent to the golf course to deter overspill car parking. Local residents have erected an array of ad hoc signage and the Highland Council has also reacted by installing a variety of signs and measures. All have had limited effect and this ad hoc approach has resulted in clutter and confusing messages for the visitor.
- 8.8. Most respondents favour a proportionate designed response to the issues at the point. They wish to see the 'informality' of the site retained with for example unsurfaced car parking areas retained and a minimum level of 'urban type' infrastructure (no toilets) and signage.
- 8.9 Highland Council planners would be generally receptive to a 'development brief' for the site which sets out any proposed changes to site infrastructure aimed at improving site conditions in an integrated fashion. It is not believed proposed measures will contribute to change of use or neighbour issues which might raise material planning concerns.
- 8.10 This analysis of existing and potential management measures has examined the following options

Traffic restrictions

- 8.11 This report is not a legal assessment, but there is clear advice from stakeholders including the Highland Council TEC services that management options involving road closures, restrictions and prohibitions would require lengthy consultation and there is no guarantee of success. Comparable proposals at other sites have encountered similar opinions from local authorities.
- 8.12 For example, a rationale for road closures systems would involve a legal process with opportunity for objectors to make their case. Short term temporary road closures can be made using the following legislation. Section 16B of the Road Traffic Regulation (Special Events) Act 1994 contains restricts closure to one per year for up to 3 days without agreement from the Scottish Government. Section 62 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 allow for a temporary closure of up to 7 days. Longer term or more regular closures are much more difficult to justify. A traffic system discriminating against large vehicles like coaches on the grounds of road condition, turning space, safety etc, while still permitting large service and delivery vehicles, would be difficult to sustain.
- 8.13 TEC Services advise that measures to restrict access at certain times (for example through advisory signs) would be difficult to enforce and police. Especially if people, responding to changing tidal cycles as a predictor of the best dolphin watching opportunities, arrive at the site at all times of the day from early

morning to late evening. Signs advising no parking for buses at the point are in place but appear to have little effect.

- 8.14 Currently there is yellow cross hatching on Ness Road where golfers on the 5th hole play over the road. Further use of road markings, hatching and double yellow lines requires consultation and may need Scottish Government approval. Some stakeholders are not keen on this perceived 'creeping urbanisation' of the site. In addition Northern Constabulary advises that they are unlikely to prioritise the necessary man power to police such restrictions.
- 8.15 Height restriction would prevent larger motor homes and coaches from accessing the car park but would also impact on servicing vehicles and possibly cars with roof racks and larger vans. Height bars would also impinge on the open setting of the car park and could displace parking to another unsuitable location nearby.

Traffic flow context

- 8.16 Current traffic flow arrangements include 30 mph signs on Ness Road, golf ball warning signs, advance signs advising 'No parking for buses/coaches at the point', turning point – no parking signs at the turning head. Most are un noticed or ignored by visitors.
- 8.17 Any future measures, such as reducing the Ness Road turning head or replacement with a hammer head arrangement, which require large vehicles to reverse into areas with significant pedestrian movement, could be seen to compromise safety at the point. Unless suitable arrangements are in place to secure safety such changes may be resisted.
- 8.18 Measures intended to deliver improvements in traffic flows and allowing vehicles to exit the site more freely would have to consider any wider consequences. For example extending the seven lay byes of the provision of additional lay byes along Ness Road might improve traffic flow but may also create bunching of vehicles and thereby impede golfing activity. There could be an additional land take requirement. Conversely, were the lay byes to be successful, the consequence could be a more regular flow of vehicles and fewer gaps for golfers to play their shots through. Lay byes could also become windfall parking locations for those trying to avoid charges and could exacerbate parking problems along the length of Ness Road.
- 8.19 Use of Wester Greengate and Academy Street exiting onto the High Street (A832) as part of a circular 'one way' route from Ness Road would be resisted by roads engineers and residents. Their preferred route to and from the point is from the A832 via Ness Road which is a well engineered two lane road, until it becomes single track on leaving the Fortrose village envelope and entering the golf course.
- 8.20 The Local Plan identifies additional housing planned by Tulloch Construction for the allocated site south west of Ness Road between Deans Road and Chanonry Crescent. Approval for this development has been given in due course will add to traffic movements in the area and make options for using side roads even less likely to be supported.

- 8.21 An option for clarifying and potentially expanding (should suitable arrangements be agreed) the current limited informal car parking opportunities for those choosing to leave their cars and walk to the point from Wester Greengate or Ness Road East/Marine Terrace (Rosemarkie) using core paths would be dependent on anticipated volumes of users.
- 8.22 Chanonry's main attribute is the comparatively easy access by vehicle. Whilst encouraging people to walk, cycle or even use a park and ride is laudable the challenge of getting people to leave their vehicles is huge. Vehicles carry old and young and provide personal shelter and refreshments. Because of these major hurdles other sites like Donna Nook in Lincolnshire have discounted measures requiring visitors to leave their vehicles any distance from the site. Park and Ride arrangements have been considered at Donna Nook, but dismissed due to council unwillingness to close the road and the perceived difficulties of getting visitors out of their vehicles.
- 8.23 A Park and Ride arrangement for Chanonry would require an 'up front' investment in a suitable parking area in Fortrose and a contract with a suitable shuttle bus provider (reliability would be vital) and liability insurance for all concerned. Parking arrangements could require 'change of use' permission from the Highland Council acting as the planning authority. As noted in section 7, other locations have used road closures in conjunction with shuttle bus type arrangements and employed measures to allow residents, blue badge holders etc to have access. The intention at Chanonry would be to create a 'cost neutral' operation whereby visitor income from a shuttle bus fee would cover the operational cost. Walkers and cyclists would, of course, not be charged to access the point under this arrangement. Should there hurdles be surmounted a seasonal park and ride arrangement might be possible. Perhaps using neighbouring fields or, during school holidays, allowing use of the Fortrose Academy car park. But more visitors arriving by shuttle or on foot could have major implications for pressure on the provision of shelter, toilets, refreshments, foot paths and litter collection en route and at the site.

Site Infrastructure – car parking arrangements

- 8.24 The existing car park is estimated to have capacity for 30 cars with no dedicated space for large vehicles or disabled user vehicles. Based on figures collected in 2008 and 2009 the current car park capacity is exceeded for at least 90 -100 days per year with some regular users suggesting even more. As noted in section 4.7, during 2009, capacity was exceeded on almost 50% of the monitoring visits from April to September.
- 8.25 Residents and others have requested the 'informality' of the site be retained. They do not wish to see an urban tarmac surface on the car park with white lined parking bays, preferring a porous gravel surface and rural 'car park furniture'.
- 8.26 **Making the existing car park larger is the simplest option to improve capacity.** Initial measurements of the existing car park suggest that by redesigning the turning head, minor boundary adjustments (into land it is believed

to be in Common Good or THC control) and relocating litter bins a further 5-10 parking spaces could be established, extending capacity to 40 plus vehicles.

8.27 It is proposed to restructure the car park with

- A 26 m turning circle to permit coaches to turn
- Make the turning head clearly one way – i.e. entrance straight down Ness Road to the east side of the turning head and turn right into the car park and then exit on the west side of the turning head through a clear give way arrangement.
- Extend car park towards ice houses by 10m and towards building plot 21 Ness Road by 4-5m
- Car Park seaward boundary treatments using low dressed sandstone block walls and square timber sections with gaps for access to complement existing lighthouse wall/slipway and to provide additional seating and mounting for interpretive panels. Alternatively natural stone boulders could be a cheaper option. This to replace timber barriers and metal panel mounting
- Ground level edges and individual bays marked with recycled stone setts set into surface replacing rotten timber edging
- Retain water bound but porous aggregate surface
- Remove litter bin enclosures and relocate bins elsewhere (e.g .to the centre of turning circle). Bin capacity to be increased during summer months.
- Establish the two most easterly parking bays adjacent to the slip as short stay disabled parking bays with the turning circle having two additional long stay disabled parking bays and racks for cycles and motor cycles
- Chevron parking as an option on the inner part of the car park.

8.28 With 120,000 visitors there is an obvious opportunity to generate revenue to better manage the site. **Car park charging is considered the most equitable means to raise revenues.** Charging at popular rural car parks in the north and east of Scotland is already employed by Highland Council (Glen Nevis), FCS (Glenmore), NTS (Linn of Dee), COAT (Spittal of Glen Muick) and private estates (Invercauld, Rothiemurchus and Glen Tanar) using mains powered ticket machines or a car park attendant. Charging for car parking at Chanonry, at what has traditionally been a 'free' site, will inevitably raise some strong feelings amongst both residents and visitors. To counter those views, it is proposed that

- A traffic order is sought to establish charges
- Changes to arrangements are trailed well in advance in the local press and media
- Charges remain modest to reflect the often short dwell time at the site
- Charging is applied on a seasonal basis
- A clear message be given that charges are 'ring fenced' for local use to reflect the provision of services like safe parking, paths etc with surpluses going to fund local projects – like the Fortrose public toilets and local paths
- Arrangements will be made for passes for local people – perhaps on a post code basis
- Charges to be per vehicle, more for larger vehicles

- Charges to be collected via two machines (to allow for break downs)
- Enforcement steps to manage car drivers seeking to avoid payment by parking elsewhere along Ness Road

- 8.29 **Mechanism to employ a part-time seasonal car park attendant (weekends and holidays May to September) could be sought.** Their role is to encourage payment of parking tickets and to give positive messages relating to ‘considerate practices’ at Chanonry – engines turned off, take litter home, sensible parking etc. This person will be the key ‘face’ at the point but will not necessarily be a dolphin ‘expert’. Good people skills will be required. Shelter and toilet provision will be required and training will be essential. Difficulties in ensuring staff welfare (see 8.36) may preclude a staff appointment as an option.
- 8.30 **To accommodate excess capacity from the main car park it is proposed an overspill car park with a design capacity of 30 cars (approx 1500m2) be constructed close to the point.** The overspill car park may only be open for a limited period and surfaced with a reinforced porous mesh or grid type material to encourage grass to grow. This location could also be a drop off and turning point for coaches.
- 8.31 **The proposed over spill car park location is between the ROC post and Ness Road on land owned by the golf club.** Subject to agreement (and community support) on a land swap arrangement with the Golf Club (in return for the Golf Club car park which is on Common Good Fund land), the option of a designed ‘informal’ overflow car park on the ROC post site has received support from some key stakeholders including the Golf Club. Ideally the ROC post should be left undisturbed at the edge of the car park and could be the subject of its own interpretation. Access to the point would be via the existing path behind 22 Ness Road and the rear of the 5th green and along the front of the existing car park. Pathwork to improve the surface and remove the steps to ensure all ability use would be required.

Site Infrastructure – public toilets

- 8.32 There are no public toilets at the point, the nearest being in Fortrose. With 120,000 visitors public toilet arrangements might be seen as essential. However, a lack of public toilets has not been a great source of recorded complaints from visitors and residents do not report incidents of ‘human waste’ being found, although residents do report visitors knocking on doors to request use of a toilet. There is some evidence that a lack of public toilets at the point encourages a faster turnover of visitors, thus freeing up car parking spaces.
- 8.33 Were public toilet thought to be essential at some time in the future, arrangements at the site could be on a permanent structure or a temporary ‘portaloo’ facility located on a seasonal basis. They could also be part of a multipurpose structure providing staff shelter and interpretation. As noted the point has not the necessary additional utility capacity and any new toilet facilities at the site would require the water supply and waste water treatment infrastructure to be significantly upgraded. Composting and waterless toilets, using solar panels for energy have been installed in some locations like the RSPB Osprey Hide at Boat of Garten. They tend to need more maintenance than

conventional toilets and benefit from a staff presence. Smell and odour may be an issue during periods of high use or warm weather. Toilets must also be DDA compliant. Vandalism could be a problem with such large numbers of visitors. The Highland Council manages its public toilets using local contractors, some being opened, closed, cleaned and replenished daily and this would seem the most logical approach for day to day facility management.

- 8.34 However, local residents are not supportive of new toilet facilities fearing it would prolong the length of time people stay and encourage overnight parking. Placing toilets might prove difficult as any building would require sensitive location relative to other buildings, screening, materials, cladding and waste water management. The location should also be above any 200 year flood risk areas. A possible location is close to the proposed overspill car park.
- 8.35 Taking all these points into consideration **toilets are not believed to be a practical option at this time**, but the situation should be monitored and suitable sites identified and safeguarded should conditions change in coming years. As an alternative and certainly in the short term, information on the location of toilet facilities in Fortrose should be prominently displayed at the point. Income from the car park could be used to help better sign and maintain the existing public toilets in Fortrose, delivering a direct community benefit.
- 8.36 Of course there is 'toilet' question for any arrangement involving staff and volunteers being at the site for a prolonged period and some form of provision would be required for them. The down side is that staff could be approached by members of the public who are 'caught short' and refusal could put them in an awkward situation.

Site Infrastructure – orientation, interpretation, signage and waste

- 8.37 There is little evidence of a 'welcome' for visitors arriving at Chanonry for the first time. **A modest 'welcome' feature at the road side is proposed** – design to be agreed but including the words Chanonry Point to signify arrival.
- 8.38 Visitor orientation at the point is poor. When they arrive visitors are provided with little guidance on where to go and what to do at Chanonry. **A visible orientation/information feature is proposed, illustrated, perhaps, by an aerial view of the point giving clarity on direction.** Messages on safety, toilet locations, consideration for other users and residents should to be communicated at this feature. It is recommended a risk assessment for the site be carried out.
- 8.39 Chanonry has two main themes or stories to tell to visitors.
- A special place for dolphins and
 - Its role as historical lighthouse, crossing point/gateway/observation/ fisheries point
- 8.40 Both themes should be utilised in site and web based interpretive media with messages and text to be developed. WDCS may consider a role at the point, similar to that performed by the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust at Donna Nook, of positioning 'identifiable' (badge/jacket) volunteer interpreters at the point to help

- visitors better understand the dolphins and other wildlife. There is an informal 'Friends of Chanonry' type group, made up of local people who visit the point regularly. They may be willing to act as volunteer guides in some capacity.
- 8.41 Under other circumstance 120,000 visitors could justify a dedicated visitor centre. **But, on balance, a visitor centre is not a recommended option for Chanonry.** Quite apart from the operational costs and economic pressures to include retail and catering, any centre at Chanonry would undoubtedly increase traffic and extend dwell time at the point. The Scottish Seabird Centre in North Berwick records only 25% of their visitors engaging directly with wildlife via remote cameras and other interpretation the other 75% of visitors being more interested in coffee and cakes in a scenic location and the centre shop. The Hermaness National Nature Reserve, Unst in Shetland in one place where shore buildings that once served the Muckle Flugga lighthouse have been turned into an informative little visitor centre. But visitors then have a three mile return walk to the reserve and the centre provides for those unable or unwilling to make the journey. There is perhaps an argument for a small temporary (seasonal) building at Chanonry, with a private toilet, to act as a base for site staff and to provide basic interpretation. The proposed overflow car park could be a location for such a structure.
- 8.42 To interpret the coastal environment the Highland Council is developing the Wild Ocean Trail with a booklet and series of interpretive panels planned for coastal site including Chanonry. WDCS have commissioned an interpretive strategy and are considering proposal to install interpretation at the Rosemarkie café and prepare leaflets. Online remote viewing opportunities have been suggested via a web camera mounted on the lighthouse. There are technical difficulties in achieving the necessary magnification from a web camera located on the top of the lighthouse and the angle of view, which could be blocked by watchers on the shore, if the dolphins are close to the beach.
- 8.43 Pictures could be streamed through a web site to the world –wide- web and other local locations such as the Rosemarkie café and the North Kessock centre. WDCS have expressed an interest in managing such a facility in partnership with the NLB.
- 8.44 Signage can be advisory (safety) or convey information (e.g. about launching from the slip) Signage at the point is confusing and in a range of styles and quality. A review of site signage (wording, materials and location) with replacements using a consistent design and materials is proposed.
- 8.45 Other sites, noted in section 7, have used real time advance electronic signs to provide messages on available car park capacity. Should capacity continue to be exceeded following the implementation of early improvements in the longer term it is proposed that advance warning signs could be erected beside Ness Road, but within Fortrose, to pre- warn visitors that parking is unavailable at the point and suggesting alternatives.
- 8.46 Waste and litter management requires proper consideration. Current arrangements are barely adequate. Dog waste is a problem, with no dedicated disposal bins. A small number of dog waste bins should be installed, although

this is more of Black Isle resident issue as the majority of visitors arrive with out dogs.

Site Infrastructure – access

- 8.47 Currently principle access to the point from the car park is the path between No 17 and 18/19 Ness Road. This path does not offer all ability access with steps and the poor surface condition over the dune land section creates a barrier. It is not fit for purpose. The planning condition on the path associated with the approval for the Wildlife, Sealife and Countryside Trust building has created some issues for this path, not least an unsuitable barrier and sign – now deliberately obscured with paint. (See Appendix 2, item 7)
- 8.48 This path, a key route to the beach for many users including horses, and the first section, at least, should have a multi purpose surface. A simple lockable bollard to prevent vehicle access from Ness Road would allow other users through. The grassland through the dune section is also showing signs of trampling damage and erosion in some sections. Bare sand may not always be ecologically detrimental but in this case **a constructed path and/or a board walk, designed to cause minimal intrusion, from the car park to the point is proposed** – see appendix 2 for the THC Access officer proposal offering a potential option.
- 8.49 Cycling route and times from car parks in Fortrose and Rosemarkie should be included on web sites and leaflets. Secure cycle racks should be available at the point.
- 8.50 Walking routes and times from car parks in Fortrose and Rosemarkie should be included on web sites and leaflets. There is also increasing erosion, down to the underlying shingle, on the path from Rosemarkie to the Point, caused by considerably increased pedestrian traffic, and this will require investment and active management in collaboration with the Golf Club. Routes on either side of Chanonry Ness are core paths and if they are to remain fit for purpose must be prioritised for attention. Designation as core paths has followed from wide community consultation, although continued liaison with the Golf Club would be helpful to minimise disturbance along these routes.
- 8.51 There are no dedicated disable parking spaces. Visitors with mobility difficulties cannot readily negotiate the current path to the point. Seats and interpretation are currently inaccessible to certain groups. There is a lack of seats on the approach paths from Fortrose and Rosemarkie. This lack of resting points can deter to less able bodied walkers. These are relatively simple design issues which would be tackled by following established good practice.
- 8.52 **A simple, removable but lockable bollard(s) is recommended for the entrance to the slipway.** Clarity on permitted use of the slipway is required. As the slip is under the Highland Council ownership the launching of larger craft could be restricted by the bollard. Smaller craft like canoes could be lifted over or through any barrier and control is not deemed practical. Under current access legislation – Scottish Outdoor Access Code – non motorised boats and canoes may be freely launched from any part of the shore; a legal right some land based

watchers may not fully understand. The only long term solution is for all users to understand their rights and responsibilities and behave accordingly.

- 8.53 Dolphins and other sea mammals are protected species, it is an offence to disturb or harass them and what constitutes appropriate behaviour on the water when they are present. Some respondents have suggested an 'exclusion zone' but the practicalities of enforcement make this unrealistic. Displaying a 'contact number' for the local wildlife crime police officer could be an option for genuine cases but this also raises issues of over use by well meaning, but over zealous, watchers misinterpreting both dolphin behaviour and boating activity.
- 8.54 Visitor numbers and motivations have been recorded intermittently at Chanonry. A more regular traffic counting and survey programme is recommended.

Promotional context

- 8.55 There is a belief amongst some stakeholders that WDCS are, through their promotion of the site, a key influence in the increase in visitor numbers. Whilst WDCS do promote the merits of shore based watching around the Moray Firth there is no real evidence of this promotional effort significantly inflating visitor numbers at Chanonry. Further more the WDCS mission statement clearly identifies the organisation's purpose as conservation rather than promotion.
- 8.56 The power of prime time television has a much greater promotional influence and the recent surge in visitor pressure appears to coincide closely with screening of the programmes described in 2.11. Dolphins are such iconic creatures that the media will always seek out sites like Chanonry and the forecast is for more rather than less promotion in the future. However stakeholders especially the Highland Council do have some choice, should they wish to use it, in any decision to enable the media to feature Chanonry in future television programmes by controlling access to car parking. Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust has declined approaches by the BBC's Autumn Watch because of the additional pressures they feel are created by this type of promotion. Word of mouth and internet promotion will continue to bring more visitors to the site.
- 8.57 Future low key promotional and interpretive activities by WDCS and Highland Council will have a bearing on visitor management at Chanonry. WDCS operates the small cabin centre adjacent to the A9 (T) at North Kessock. This centre provides an opportunity to influence visitor choice of shore based watching point, although many have already heard of Chanonry and are merely looking for directions.
- 8.58 Dolphin watchers should be made aware of other locations around the Moray Firth and elsewhere on the coast. WDCS are in the process of developing a more strategic approach to their activities and interpretation. Redevelopment of North Kessock site should aim to encourage visitors to use a range of sites where possible.
- 8.59 The Highland Council is developing their tourism literature (booklet) based on the 'Wild Ocean Trail' which promotes 25 coastal wildlife watching sites including and beyond the Moray Firth and onto the north and west coast. The first phase of a

project to replace or install interpretive panels along this trail is underway with Chanonry planned for a second phase.

- 8.60 The future role of the VIC at North Kessock is uncertain. One option being considered by Highland Council is to incorporate the existing WDCS cabin at North Kessock into a more expansive 'natural heritage orientation facility' based in the main North Kessock VIC building showing people where best to 'watch wildlife' in the Highlands. Whilst Chanonry would be represented the centre could also help direct visitors to other sites.
- 8.61 Some stakeholders have queried the role of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and VisitScotland (VS) at Chanonry. SNH is the government's advisor on wildlife and natural heritage and has responsibility for overseeing the well being of designated sites and species. Chanonry Ness is not designated and the pressure on the dolphin population does not come from shore based watching thus SNH has no purpose to be involved. SNH is supportive of sustainable economic growth, including sustainable wildlife tourism, and other government for health and well being which includes promoting responsible access. VisitScotland is concerned with national tourism marketing. Wildlife tourism, walking and golf are tourism priorities but VS does not generally get involved with projects at the local level.
- 8.62 Table 6 presents a summary of the range of proposed management options.

Table 6 Summary of proposed management options

OPTION 1 – Do nothing and maintain status quo
OPTION 2 – Short term actions (Phase 1)
Action 1 – Establish an advisory forum for Chanonry Point to share in an integrated approach to management
Action 2 – Improve traffic management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reshape and expand existing car park • Clearway along Ness Road (with yellow lines if required) • Establish an overspill car park • Car park charging • Employ seasonal car park attendant • Encourage walking and cycling to the point
Action 3 – Improve visitor management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Orientation point • Signs • All ability provision • Interpretation • Web site/ Web cam • Carry out a risk assessment of the site
Action 4 – Improve site servicing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackle litter and dog waste more effectively • Path infrastructure at and to the point to be improved • Monitoring visitor numbers and motivations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning to advise on caravans at the lighthouse
Action 5 – Better manage off site promotion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated interpretation
OPTION 3 – Medium term actions (Phase 2)
Action 1 -To pre-warn visitors of capacity issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real time electronic signage in Fortrose
OPTION 4 – Longer term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with Scottish Power undergrounding of power lines – or at least pole mounted transformers
Options not favoured at present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road closures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricting coaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Height restrictions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal/ Part time Park and Ride from Fortrose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Toilets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor centre

9 OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Resource implications

- 9.1 **The site is operating beyond its design capacity and investment is recommended.** The business case justification for THC has to be the return on that investment. In Scotland the average spend per night is £64 for overseas tourists, £73 for English tourists and £48 for Scottish tourists²³. Spending by day visitors is much less, the Scottish Recreation Survey in 2008 identified £9 per person on average, with many people spending nothing. The 2009 Aberdeen University survey results, from a sample of 100 visitors, show 19% came from Scotland, 62% from the rest of the UK and 19% from overseas.
- 9.2 Seeing dolphins, for many visitors, is a key motivation for visiting the Highlands and their presence, it could be argued, has real economic value. Calculating that value is more complex. Using the percentages above a value has been estimated, based on a single visit by 120,000 people, where the assumption is made that one quarter of the spend for that day was attributable to a visit to Chanonyr point (based on 1 hour travelling and 1 hour spent at the site)

Percentage Split	Visitor numbers	Full day	Quarter day
62% Rest of UK	74,400	£5431200	£1357800
19% Overseas	22,800	£1459200	£ 583680
9% Local	10,800	£ 97200	£ 24300
10% Scotland	12,000	£ 576000	£ 144000
Total	120,000	£7563600	£2109780

²³ Source Visit Scotland fact sheet 2008

Research suggests the opportunity to see dolphins at Chanonry to be a prime motivator for 68% of visitors. A modest estimate of value suggests a figure in the order of £1.2 million is generated annually for the Scottish economy (supporting 30 -40 FTEs) by Chanonry visitors when only prime motivation (they might have gone elsewhere) is considered and domestic spend is discounted. For comparison the Golf Club reports a turnover of £420,000 per annum and supports 10 FTE and 5 seasonal posts. Investment in a small scale works package at Chanonry of say £120,000 would help underpin significant visitor spend on a 12:1 basis and would be well in line with similar investments elsewhere. The question is where will that investment will come from.

- 9.3 Given severe pressure on public sector spending TEC services have indicated, in general terms, significant adjustments to the approach road arrangements at Chanonry are unlikely to be seen as a priority for budget allocation in the foreseeable future but they are willing to consider phased small works.
- 9.4 In making a business case within THC for capital funding for a small scale works package at the point – car park alterations, access paths, signs and interpretation – economic benefit from visitor spend and unlocking a longer term revenue stream generated from car parking are both important factors. With a proposed source of longer term core funding, THC's task in obtaining matching partner funding and funding from sources like LEADER could become easier.
- 9.5 Partnership funding will be important in helping to fund some elements of the package. For example the NLB have indicated, in principle, that they would consider co-operating with THC, WDCS and the Moray Firth Partnership in joint interpretive projects, such as panels.
- 9.6 Current public sector spending pressures may make the employment of a Chanonry car park attendant by Highland Council, even on a part time seasonal basis, difficult to justify. However, an attendant could be contracted through the Highland Council but employed by a third party, a local trust or community company, perhaps with charitable status. Such a trust would have to be democratically appointed, accountable and subject to necessary scrutiny. The trust could also be the recipients of car park income and site managers in the long term.

Project stages and timescale

- 9.7 The following project stages and timescales are proposed
- (a) Client (The Highland Council) agrees project context, rationale and management options based on this desk report. (Proposed management options for the project are summarised in Table 6)
- (b) Get agreement on immediate measures for 2010
- Main car park expansion – 10 additional spaces by June 2010
- I Assemble a short term Highland Council working group to oversee the Chanonry project to include

- Planning and tourism/ economic development to pursue signage and interpretation
- Roads to pursue car park requirements
- Local members to 'chase progress'
- Ward manager as project coordinator

(d) Working group to 'buy into' a common purpose and the rationale for the project and establish Chanorly as a Highland Council strategic project.

(e) Team site visit (if required) to confirm project understanding and details.

(f) Set up a longer term Chanorly Point advisory forum to bring together interested stakeholders in order to share views, promote understanding and inform progress.

- This forum is principally to improve communication between stakeholders.
- Chaired by a local councillor the forum should meet once or twice annually, ideally pre and post the main season with a remit **to review progress and advise only i.e. no executive role.**
- Membership of the Forum is still to be agreed however an inclusive approach is recommended. An initial list might include the following – The Highland Council (various departments as required), Golf Club, Community Council, Local Residents, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, Moray Firth Partnership, Northern Lighthouse Board, Local Access Forum, Disability Group representative.

(g) Agree management arrangements to receive income, employ staff as required etc – e.g. Community Interest Company

(h) Agree on land exchange to secure overflow car park location

(i) Seek approval for capital project funding conditional on satisfactory management and land exchange arrangements to secure overflow car park location

(j) Project working group to develop design – consult and test with advisory group, wider stakeholders and the community – cost to best value principles

(k) Bring to THC committee for funding and planning approvals if required

(l) Begin work to be completed for spring 2010/11

Design

APPENDIX 4 Design at the site should use published design guidance for advice and source material for suitable standards and conditions.

FEATURE	PUBLISHED ADVICE
Car parks	Car parks in the Countryside: a practical guide to planning design and construction SNH 2000
Furniture	Countryside Access Design Guide SNH 2002
Paths	Lowland Path Construction; A Guide to Good Practice SNH, SE and PFA 1997
All Ability	A Good Practice Guide to Disabled People's Access in the Countryside – BT Countryside for All Manual Fieldfare Trust
Signs	Advisory Signage for Outdoor Access PFA and SNH
Interpretation	Interpretive Planning Handbook. TEF 1997

Safety and liability

- 9.9 Chanonry is not an inherently dangerous site but risk should be assessed and controlled where practical. Water is the obvious hazard. Visitors do have a right of access to land and the foreshore, but not to private riginall around property. Access rights do extend to crossing over golf courses but the public must keep off greens, and not interfere with golf games. As with any golf course there is the danger from flying golf balls and 'best practice' advice should be sought on the most suitable type and wording for warning signs. Advice should also be included in leaflets and web sites.
- 9.10 Paths should be followed where they exist and dogs kept under control or on a short lead as set down by the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Under the Code visitors are required to take responsibility for their own actions. Landowners and managers do have a responsibility of care under the Occupier Liability Act 1960 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

10 CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 Chanonry Point is clearly an iconic site visited by increasingly large numbers of people – visitors and local residents. The point is however, becoming quite 'scruffy' through general wear and tear and action is required.
- 10.2 The status quo, although cheap, is not a suitable option and to do nothing would reflect poorly on Fortrose and the wider Black Isle. It would also 'short change' the visitors and residents who currently enjoy their experience at the point.
- 10.3 At least in the short term, were the status quo arrangements to be continued and the dolphins remained in the area, visitors would still come in comparable numbers but associated problems would, it is suggested, remain and indeed possibly worsen. Burdens would remain with some stakeholders.
- 10.4 Enhancing the site would not, it is suggested, significantly increase numbers as numbers are dictated by visitor awareness and tourism promotion rather than the quality of site conditions. However, burdens are more directly related to poor site conditions and could be alleviated by improved facilities and management.

- 10.5 Site management responsibilities are unclear and communication between interested stakeholders is currently only on an ad hoc basis. Previous measures like signs and yellow cross hatching have been useful, but are more in the nature of 'sticking plasters'.
- 10.6 Any changes to the site must recognise its special qualities and developments should be sympathetic to the setting and that the wider site has a successful, and long established, Golf Club employing 10 -15 people and Chanonry is home to several households.
- 10.7 Change has to reflect the desire for informality and not, by default, urbanise the setting through inappropriate design or materials.
- 10.8 A small works programme presented as an integrated master plan for the site is considered to have the greatest chance of success in applying for both planning permissions and funding of the initial investment.
- 10.9 Given the current restrictions on public sector funding, car park charging is seen as the only practical way of providing a surplus to fund future management and maintenance programmes at the site.
- 10.10 Dealing with car parking and associated infrastructure is seen as a priority and a small scale works programme could begin before the main 2010 season; March being a good month for works to be carried out, although with consultation, agreements, funding, planning and tendering considerations to be satisfied this could take longer.
- 10.11 Long term management arrangements must be sustainable and have community ownership. Management and advisory arrangements must also be transparent and accountable. It will not always be possible to satisfy all parties with an interest in the site, but legitimate views must be acknowledged and a rational case presented to support a particular course of action.

APPENDIX 1 – PRESS COVERAGE

APPENDIX 5 The Press and Journal on the 1st August 2009 carried the following comments in an article '**Bid to resolve Chanonry Point traffic chaos**'

Residents often witness bumper-to-bumper parking along the half-mile road, which also blocks the route of golfers on the Fortrose and Rosemarkie course who play on either side of the road. Yesterday, Northern Constabulary's Inspector Matthew Reiss met local councillor Billy Barclay, ward manager Di Angew and volunteer Bill Taylor, who will help develop the area's five-year management plan. Among the suggestions were removing the turning circle to allow more parking spaces and introducing a pay-and-display machine, with the income going to Chanonry Point and its wildlife.

After the meeting, Mr Barclay said: "Everyone agreed that something needs to be done. It was chaotic down there. We are getting 20 or 30 cars down there an hour."

A Northern Constabulary spokeswoman said: "Police will give the appropriate response to any breach of criminality, which includes parking and road offences.

"There is a traffic warden who patrols the area around Chanonry Point. However, he also covers a large, predominantly rural area."

APPENDIX 6 The Ross-shire Journal on the 24 April 2009 carried the following comments in an article **Summer of chaos alert on beauty spot**

One of the biggest visitor draws in Ross-shire is poised for another "summer of chaos" despite efforts to resolve a problem created by its very success. While hopes are high that the use of double yellow lines preventing parking at a key choke point near Chanonry Point — acknowledged as the best land-base in Europe from which to watch bottlenose dolphins — will alleviate snarl-ups which have infuriated locals and sparked safety concerns, two key figures this week voiced their doubts.

The matter came under the spotlight again at last week's Black Isle ward forum at which Northern Constabulary Inspector Matthew Reiss admitted, "It was a problem last summer and it will be again." With only one traffic warden sporadically covering several Ross-shire communities, he admitted doubts as to how effectively the restrictions can be enforced. Speaking after the meeting, ward councillor Billy Barclay said he was anticipating it being "an absolute nightmare down there" again this summer, accepting concerns as to how effectively the parking restrictions could be enforced.

Scottish Natural Heritage area manager George Hogg, who was attending last week's meeting, said the agency "may have been part of the problem in that early on we were promoting the dolphins and drawing attention to the fact that it's the best place in Europe on land to go and see dolphins". But he also pointed

to the attraction's importance to the local economy and stated his belief that the solution "is not in the hands of any one organisation". He said SNH was keen to be part of the solution to the problem, which last summer prompted bitter complaints from local people hemmed in by up to 100 cars and several bus loads of passengers per day at peak times — and fears emergency service access could also be restricted.

- 3 The Ross-shire Journal on the 6th March 2009 carried the following comments in an article **Beauty spot pressure for wheelchair access**

A quest to establish disability access at a world-renowned tourism hot spot in Ross-shire has been launched by a small campaigning group of wheelchair-users. The bid to build a new wheelchair-friendly path to the tip of Chanonry Point in the Black Isle was revealed in the week that Highland Council officials and representatives from the nearby golf course met to discuss a solution to the parking chaos at the dolphin watching spot. Thousands of tourists flock to Chanonry Point in the Black Isle each year to catch a glimpse of the famous bottlenosed dolphins. The narrow sand path which runs from the busy car park to the point is currently unsuitable for wheelchairs and means that many disabled visitors cannot reach the prime viewing spot. The car park can also be unsuitable for wheelchair access at peak times as it has limited parking for 30 cars, but can attract up to 100 vehicles at the height of the tourist season. The parking chaos blocks householders in their homes and has led to vehicles churning up the greens at the golf course.

- 4 The Ross-shire Journal on the 5th September 2008 carried the following comments in an article **A summer of chaos at Chanonry Point**

Drastic measures are needed to break a parking gridlock that could significantly impact lives at a world-renowned tourism hot spot. A blanket ban on tour buses and camper vans is one of the controversial tactics being flagged up at one of the prime dolphin-watching spots pending a long-term solution.

Locals hemmed in by a chaotic peak-time parking free-for-all at Chanonry Point and enraged golf course chiefs fed-up with their prestigious greens being encroached on by cars are among those up in arms over the issue. Tourists hoping to catch a glimpse of the world-famous bottlenose dolphins bring up to 100 cars and buses a day to a site described by some as the best place in Europe to see the endangered creatures.

Despite the enormous popularity of the site at Fortrose, there is limited space for around 30 vehicles in the cramped car park often resulting in cars and buses being left abandoned outside houses — hemming in householders — and on the golf green. Concerns the traffic bottleneck on the narrow road near the lighthouse is blocking access to emergency services and refuse lorries has also highlighted the need for a larger car park.

That could involve years of negotiation and cost Highland Council a six-figure sum, however. Local councillor Billy Barclay said that while a new car park with toilets is the ideal long-term solution to establish a proper visitor attraction, a ban

on buses and motor homes should be introduced as soon as possible as a short-term solution.

The issue will be discussed at next Wednesday's meeting of the Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council after a local resident passed on photographs showing major traffic snarl-ups. Cllr Barclay has received complaints from local householders hemmed in by parked buses and cars. Golfers are also unhappy the prestigious course is being churned up by large vehicles parking and turning on the grass.

Cllr Barclay wants to see a public meeting between the residents, golf club, originally and Highland Council officials to hammer out a solution before next year. He said, "We have to get arrangements in place and I believe we need a ban on coaches and camper vans as there is not the space to park them safely.

"This is a major issue — if there was a house fire or someone had a heart attack there is no way an emergency vehicle could get through all these parked vehicles." People pay a lot of money to play golf and the last thing they want is an obstacle like a car or a bus restricting them."

Community council chairman Gwyn Phillips confirmed the council had received a complaint and several photographs highlighting the issue from a resident who lives near the car park. He said, "It is quite obvious there is a very serious problem with people being blocked in by coaches and motor homes. Coach parties and motor homes go down there along a single track road through the golf course to a limited turning area with some car parking spaces."

He believes the parking arrangements need upgrading. One suggestion made to him was to introduce parking charges which would then be invested to pay for a new car park." Chanonry Point has been heavily promoted as the best spot on land to watch the dolphins and the numbers that have been there this summer have been quite astounding," he said.

"It is a good thing for the area, but not such a good thing for the residents who can't get their cars in and out and have trouble getting into their houses." Alness-based inspector Matthew Reiss said the issue had been raised at a recent Black Isle ward forum.

Police do not have resources to maintain a constant presence at the car park but officers deal with each complaint regarding parking as they come in. "For the future it seems the council and other local people should look at introducing more formal arrangements including possible parking restrictions or originally a larger car park."

APPENDIX 7 A question and two responses posted in September 2009 on the internet site **Motor Home Facts – connecting Motorhomers** also highlights some of the challenges facing Chanonry from those with disabilities and motor home users.

- *Our trip to Scotland is to start (all being well) on Thursday. Am hoping if all goes well to get to Chanonry point to see the dolphins. Our Ace Roma is 23feet (7m) long and my wife has limited mobility, needs to use a wheelchair as walking any distance is impossible. Anybody know how the access is here?*

Responses

- *We went there last year in our MH which is 7 meters and found no problems at all with parking. We stayed all day and made lunch etc. It did get busy but there were a few other motorhomes parked there. I don't think you'd have a problem. Google Mapping it might give you an idea.*
- *Went there a few years ago and we could watch the dolphins form the comfort of the van. Only ever seen them in spring and summer though, I think they must go somewhere warmer in winter. 😊 Chanonry point was a high light, one mum with baby virtually beached it's self and allowed us to pet it. I remember only being able to approach on foot, within walking distance of the site.*

APPENDIX 8 *The Press and Journal on the 28th August 2009 carried the following comments in an article Jet-skiers could face prosecution after 'buzzing' Chanonry dolphins Visitors watched in anger as pair revved up in feeding ground off Black Isle*

Jet-skiers are being warned that they could face prosecution after several were accused of endangering dolphins in the Moray Firth.

Visitors at Chanonry Point on the Black Isle were said to be furious after two jet-skis were seen zooming across the water, where dolphins had been jumping in the surf moments earlier. The jet-skiers launched their craft at the beauty spot on Sunday afternoon, before travelling towards Fortrose and returning about 10 minutes later.

Onlookers said the "stupid humans" then remounted their jet-skis and once again roared across the firth, close to where the dolphins had been seen.

Tourist Ian Lench, 51, from Saffron Walden, said: "Everyone knows what sort of damage jet-skis can do.

"People have been killed by jet-skis, so I dread to think what they can do to dolphins, and what damage they may have already caused."

Terry Duncan, 69, of Bridlington, who was on holiday with his family, said the two men were seen to get on the jet-skis directly opposite the path between the houses on Ness Road.

He said: "They went noisily and at high speed right through where the school of dolphins had shortly before been entertaining, and scooted around Chanonry Point towards the west side of the town.

"Ten minutes later, as the dolphins made a reappearance, the roaring jet-skis made a return journey, right through the route where we had last seen the dolphins disappear."

Last night, Scottish Natural Heritage area officer Ben Leyshon said that deliberately or recklessly harassing whales or dolphins carried a fine of up to £5,000 or a six-month prison sentence.

He said that owners of powerboats and personal water craft, such as jet-skis, should avoid sudden change in speed and direction and avoid travelling at high speed.

He added: "Anyone spotting an incident of deliberate or reckless harassment or disturbance to dolphins or other protected species should call the local police immediately, noting as many details of the incident as possible."

Last month, police questioned two jet-skiers who repeatedly sped along the River Ness between the Ness Bridge and the Infirmary Bridge.

7 *The North Star on the 23 July 2009 carried the following article **'Dolphin spotting site block row'**.*

A group of environmentalists has incurred the wrath of locals and visitors alike by trying to block an access at one of the most important wildlife watching sites in Ross-shire. The Wildlife, Sealife and Countryside Trust has erected a gate and a warning sign at scenic Chanonry Point at Fortrose on the Black Isle, where thousands of people flock each year to view the rare bottlenose dolphins.

Ross-shire councillors had earlier sounded alarm bells that the plans by the North Kessock-based trust to erect a study centre at Chanonry were not in keeping with such a key site where people have always enjoyed complete freedom of access. And now, with the latest unwelcome developments, their worst fears are being realised. The trust gained planning consent for the study centre in January despite strong local objections.

However, no building has yet started on site, and trust is now challenging through the Scottish Government a condition of the consent in a bid to be able to use the centre 24 hours a day. Black Isle Highland councillor Billy Barclay said: "This has been a public right of way for as long as anyone can remember, hundreds of years, and it's totally unacceptable what's going on down there.

"The sign they originally put up had logos of various organisations on it, including SNH, which was very misleading as it was nothing to do with SNH and the trust had to take it down.

"This latest sign is also offensive and it has a whole lot of nonsense on it about people having to keep quiet and dismount from their bikes, which has no legal

basis whatsoever. People have been using the beach since the beginning of time and they don't need to be told how to behave there.

"I saw some foreign holidaymakers reading it the other day and they walked off looking bewildered. What kind of message does that give out to visitors? I want the sign removed."

Cllr Barclay said: "There is also no reason for the gate to be there because there is nothing on the site at present. The only thing they're doing there is trying to grow potatoes in the sand. Phil Waite, the council's right of way officer, is not happy with the gate."

He added: "I think long-term the plan is to get living accommodation on that site. That is why they are seeking 24-hour working consent."

Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council, which objected to the trust's planning application, is fully behind Cllr Barclay.

"Our concern in particular is the fact that the access road is being blocked by this gate," said chairwoman Elizabeth Brown.

"This route was recorded as a Core Footpath by Highland Council as far back as 1981 and again in 2001, and you are not allowed to block a Core Footpath.

"Chanonry Point is a very important tourist destination and has grown more so since it featured on the BBC's Springwatch programme with Bill Oddie.

"There is a great sense of unease about the whole way that this has developed and there is a feeling that we are being taken over."

The North Star was not able to contact the trust this week.

It has its own website on which it states it is a registered Scottish charity and invites people to make donations, or sponsor or convey into the trust.

Its mission statement is "to convey knowledge and assist folk to understand, respect and conserve the physics, chemistry, geology and biology etc. which constitutes our life support system here on Earth".

APPENDIX 2 FERRY PIER DESCRIPTION

a massive, lengthy, elegant structure of large red stone blocks, 250yds (228m) long and over 6yds (5.5m) wide. Seven courses high at the point, 110yds (100.5m) from the shore, where the pier turns slightly eastwards, it slopes to five courses at the tip. Only the lowest, outermost block is slightly undercut by the sea. A parapet wall running nearly the full length of the W side, with a neatly curved butt at each end, shows slight signs of wear at about the half tide mark, the level at which so many works are initially breached by wave action. It is secured by iron straps, and a continuous central linear cramp, in sections of uneven length to accommodate the uneven sizes of the blocks, held in place by flat-headed iron bolts. Two very large iron rings, on ring-headed bolts, survive near the shore end of the pier. The massive kerb blocks of the pier margin are carefully fitted, alternately long and short sides out, to form keys for the stones of the pavement, and are curved on the outer edge. The tip of the parapet wall is of five courses, including two heavy capstones, the top one neatly curved. The parapet stops a little short of the pier end, leaving an angular platform accessible from the sea on two sides. All faces of the pier and parapet wall are battered, no doubt because this was believed to strengthen them, and certainly with fine aesthetic effect.

APPENDIX 3 – CHANONRY POINT DISABILITY ACCESS.

Draft Specification

This indicative specification was provided by Phil Waite HC Access Officer. Following discussion with Kenny Shand of Cheshire House Musketeers and Marj Donaldson of the R & C Disability Access Group the following construction is recommended to provide all ability access the picnic area/ dolphin viewing area at the point.

2. Car Park, down lane to Trust parking area. 57m
 - Provide smooth stone surface. Constructed with Type 1 and quarry dust. 1.3m wide. Agree with Trust that path should not be driven on and car wheels go either side.
 - Rough estimate = £1000
3. Trust parking area, downslope to grassy strip at back of beach 24m
 - The mid section of the slope is currently 1:10 gradient, too steep for wheelchair use. This will require some re-grading to a ramp/ level/ramp section of fixed boardwalk
 - Rough estimate = £1500
4. Current path desire line at back of beach, to 'NO bathing sign' 109m
 - Fixed boardwalk, 1.5m wide, gaps between decking boards should not be more than 10mm. Edge rail on both sides, Passing places should be included every 25m This provides a good surface whilst causing minimum disturbance to existing ground and vegetation.
 - Rough estimate = £6000
5. Picnic area, 5m x 3m
 - A decked area including at least 1 adapted picnic table and ramp down to beach Edge rail.
 - Rough estimate = £500
6. Across beach to MHW, 25m
 - An optional element to get as close to the sea as possible.
 - Rough estimate = £1500

Total Estimate = £10,500

APPENDIX 4 – CONTACTS

Those who were contacted direct are highlighted in bold italics (not everyone chose to respond)

ROLE	NAME
<i>Ward Manager</i>	<i>Di Agnew</i>
<i>Planning and development</i>	<i>David Baldwin Stuart Black Gordon Ireland</i>
<i>TEC Services</i>	<i>Bryan Stout Neil Gillies Sam McNaughton</i>
<i>Ranger</i>	<i>Martin Hind</i>
<i>Tourism Officer</i>	<i>Colin Simpson</i>
<i>Access Officer</i>	<i>Phil Waite</i>
<i>Councillor</i>	<i>Billy Barclay</i>
<i>Councillor</i>	<i>David Alston</i>
<i>Councillor</i>	<i>Isobel McCallum</i>
LEADER	Liz Whiteford
<i>Moray Firth Partnership</i>	<i>Kathryn Logan</i>
<i>Steering group</i>	<i>Bill Taylor</i>
<i>Resident 17 Ness Road</i>	<i>Mr & Mrs David Galloway</i>
Owner 18 Ness Road	Mrs Jean Maclean
Resident 19 Ness Road	Mr William Gammie
Resident 20 Ness Road	Ms Aileen Fraser
Owner 21 Ness Road	Mr D Maclean
<i>Resident 22 Ness Road</i>	<i>Mr & Mrs Nigel and Celia Ffitch – Stewart</i>
Owner 23 Ness Road	Mr R Napier
The Wildlife and Sealife Countryside Trust	Lawrence Lochart
<i>Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council</i>	<i>Elisabeth Brown (Chair)</i>
<i>Rosemarkie Amenities Association</i>	
<i>Fortrose and Rosemarkie Golf Club</i>	<i>Alan Murray (Club Captain)</i>
<i>'Friends group'</i>	<i>Alan Ward</i>
<i>Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society</i>	<i>Alice Mayne (Centres Manager Scotland) Deb Benham</i>
Aberdeen University	Ben Davies
Cheshire Homes	Kenny Shand
<i>Northern Lighthouse Board</i>	<i>Greg Doctor</i>
Tulloch Homes	Bill Hepburn
<i>Northern Constabulary</i>	<i>Inspector David Greenlees</i>

