

CROMARTY TOURISM IMPROVEMENT PROJECT 2019



Jan 2019

Camping and Ferry Project Plan
Cromarty Community Development Trust

Cromarty Community Development Trust and partners Nigg and Shandwick Community Council, propose to improve the tourist experience in the area through the development of a campsite with appropriate facilities and the upgrading of the ferry slipways.

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CAMPING AND FERRY PROJECT PLAN CROMARTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the past few years, in line with the popularity of the NC 500, Cromarty has become increasingly attractive as a tourist destination. Visitor numbers have increased year on year and this has placed the town and its services under some pressure. The Cromarty and District Community Council and latterly the Cromarty Community Development Trust, have been working with local residents and businesses to find solutions to the issues the town, and visitors to it, are experiencing.

Key Concerns

Through extensive consultation 2 key areas of concern have been highlighted.

Firstly, the increasing number of wild campers that have been using unserviced amenity land to camp overnight reducing space for local users. Throughout this plan there will be reference to 'the Links' – the amenity land that the campervans currently park on free of charge. This area has no facilities and this has meant that human waste and van waste have been regularly dumped by visitors causing both alarm and distress to local residents.

Secondly, the state of the ferry slipways which have been impacting heavily on the reliability and frequency of the ferry service between Nigg and Cromarty. The ferry operator is Highland Ferries, further information can be seen at <http://www.highlandferries.co.uk/>

I think that due to the fact that there are no public toilets in the area, this causes widespread concern for many community members. This is not a campsite. If people are camping on the area, then they should pay - and this money can be pumped back into the economy to potentially develop another carpark/campsite. At the moment, it is draining on the community, frustrating for home owners, especially who own property nearby or own parts of the links, and is an eyesore. Similarly, there should be toilets nearby - at the moment, people are using the links as a toilet space and this is not suitable. Cromarty is a beautiful place and thus it should be treated with respect.

Outline Proposal

Our proposal is

- to provide a purpose built campsite equipped with all the appropriate facilities for campervans in a separate, non-amenity, location
- to upgrade the ferry slipways to allow them to be in a fully functioning state of repair

In order to complete this work we estimate costs to be in the region of £430,000 hence this application to the Rural Tourist Infrastructure Fund.

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

The business proposal will be a sustainable venture. It is designed so that the income from the campsite and the ferry ensures both elements can prosper.

Based on the number of campervans that currently come to Cromarty and park free of charge there is the opportunity to have a reasonable income generated from campsite usage. This revenue will allow CCDT to cover costs of running the site including ground maintenance, cleaning and marketing of the services including an online presence.

The slipways currently generate income from the ferry operator who pays a fee for use. If the slips are upgraded and the ferry is replaced with a larger capacity vessel, income from rental will also be increased giving further funds to further support the project in the long term.

These figures have been laid out in full in the financial analysis.

All evidence points to ferry operations acting as magnets for tourists. That should be particularly true on the east coast of Scotland where only this one is left working. But as well as attracting visitors, ferries add something important to the psychology of the communities they serve; something that speaks to their self-esteem. Many of Cromarty's residents used to take this ferry to Nigg, when the fabrication yard there employed thousands. These days are long gone, although the diversification of the Nigg yard continues apace with the growing importance of offshore renewable energy projects. The ferry can help tie Cromarty's past to its future opportunities.



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The business will employ one or two part time employees who will be overseen by the Development Trust Board of Directors.

Construction will be put to tender using the appropriate tendering and procurement processes in partnership with the Highland Council. A feasibility study will inform us of the exact requirement of the build for the ferry slipways, further research will allow us to develop the campsite.

MARKETING

MARKET RESEARCH

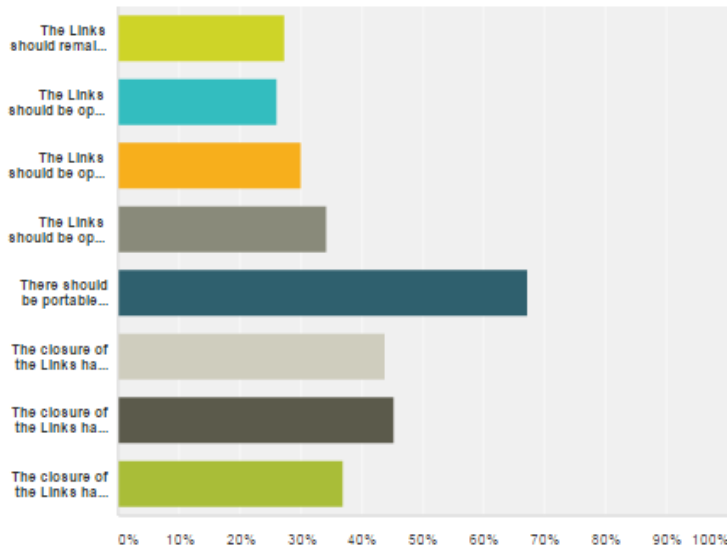
Community views on the current usage of the links:

For a number of years the use of the links by campervans has caused a dilemma for the people of Cromarty. There is a clear understanding that visitors enhance Cromarty and their impact on the economy of the town is noted.

45% of people asked thought that the closure of the Links in 2015 (due to serious health and safety concerns) had a negative economic impact on the town. However 37% of locals recognised that the lack of vans on the Links enhanced the area for locals who were able to walk their dogs, play with their children without the concern of vehicles on the area.

The Links has generated a large amount of discussion and we are keen to get the views of local residents about how the Links should be used. Please tick any of the statements below that you agree with.

Answered: 73 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses
▼ The Links should remain closed to all traffic.	27.40% 20
▼ The Links should be open to all traffic during the summer months.	26.03% 19
▼ The Links should be open to cars only during the summer months.	30.14% 22
▼ The Links should be open for overnight campervan parking.	34.25% 25
▼ There should be portable toilet facilities reinstated on the Links.	67.12% 49
▼ The closure of the Links has increased parking difficulties in the town.	43.84% 32
▼ The closure of the Links has had an economic impact on the town.	45.21% 33
▼ The closure of the Links has improved the area for local residents.	36.89% 27

Total Respondents: 73

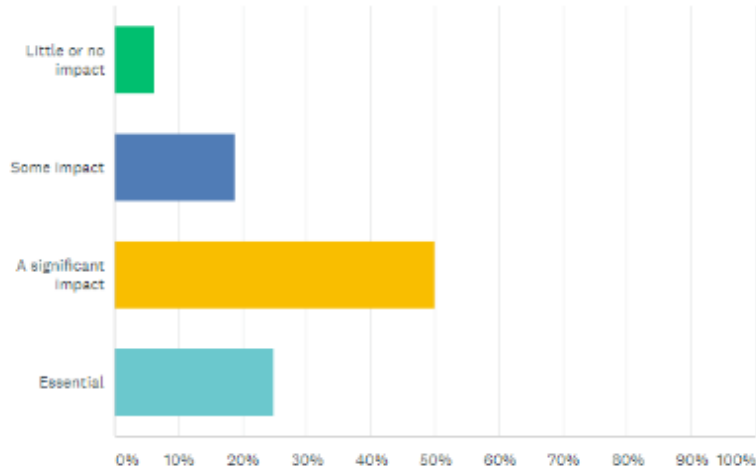


Campervans on the links – Good or Bad?

Actually a bit of positive and negative - bringing in visitors/tourists obviously brings in trade and word of mouth reviews has a knock-on effect to attract more folk - all good. But the small streets, lack of parking and lack of campsite facilities is a big issue and the community get sick of the chaos that ensues, particularly with restricted use on the Links as a result.

How important is the Cromarty to Nigg ferry service to your business?

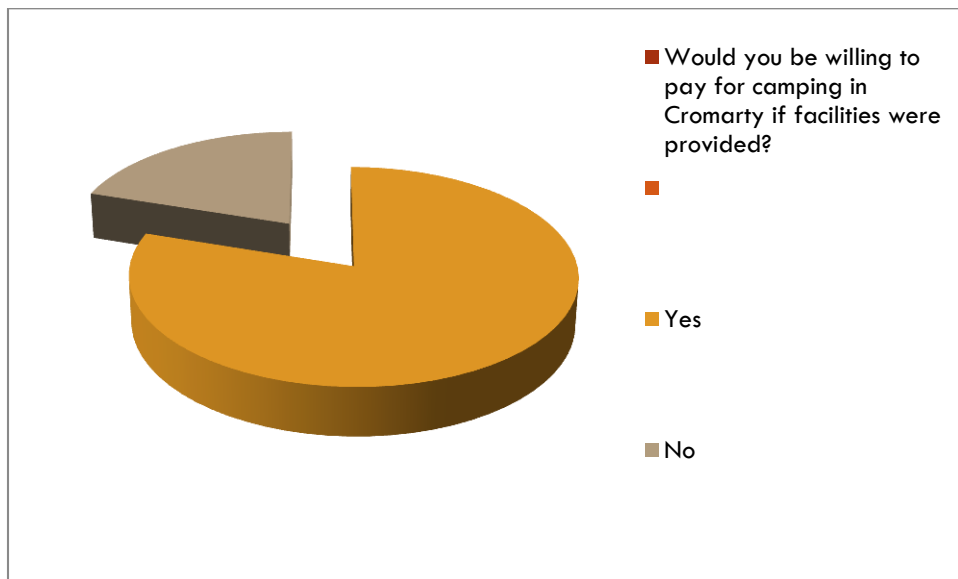
Answered: 16 Skipped: 1



As you can see, 50% of local business who responded to the survey believe that the ferry service has a significant impact on their business and a further 25% believe it is essential to their business. Cromarty depends on a busy tourist season and the ferry plays a huge part in bringing tourists from the NC500 to the town. The ferry, as the last car ferry on the east coast of Scotland and being part of the Kings Route made famous by James 1V more than 500 years ago, is a real draw for tourists. It also provides a vital link to service for local people on the Nigg side, all good for local business.

(For further detail see community survey and business survey in attachments).

Feedback from campervan users, Summer 2018.



Our Product

“Cromarty Camping” will be a small camping area on the outskirts of Cromarty but within walking distance of all amenities. The campsite will provide modern facilities for campervans who stay overnight and also services for campervans passing through the town.



FACILITIES

- Hardstanding for 10-15 campervans – grass only pitches (no electric)
- Disabled toilets x 2
- Shower facilities
- Electric hook-up point
- Water top-up facilities
- Chemical waste and grey water disposal facilities
- Online booking service
- Information point including local business information
- Disabled access
- Direct route to the sea front and into the town centre
- Dog friendly
- Rubbish disposal facility including dog bin



OPERATING DETAILS

The site will be open all year round, although booking will be essential during the winter months to ensure the site is serviced appropriately. The site will be open for vans and monitored twice a day by the site manager who will collect fees and clean/maintain the site. There will be a limit of 2 weeks maximum per stay unless agreed in advance with the site manager. Guests will have the opportunity to pay on arrival or to book online.

EQUALITIES ACT 2010

The development will be built in partnership with a specialist contractor and will be fully compliant with the above Act. Facilities will be fully accessible and will include appropriate spacing, disabled access to all toilet and waste facilities, dropped kerbs particularly at entry and exit points. We will work closely with Highland Council and contractors to ensure needs are met.

OUR PRICING POLICY

Competitors in the local area have the following pricing policies:

COMPETITOR 1 - FORTROSE

High Season

July and August

Pitch with Electric Hookup	Per Night
Caravan/ Campervan/ Motorhome/ Tents ≤3m ²	£25
Each Extra Adult (More than 2)	£4
Only One Adult-Less	£3
No Electric Hookup-Less	£3
Wi-Fi/24 hrs.	£2.50
Wi-Fi/Week	£15

Low Season

April-June and September-October

Pitch with Electric Hookup	Per Night
Caravan/ Campervan/ Motorhome/ Tents ≤3m ²	£20
Each Extra Adult (More than 2)	£4
Only One Adult-Less	£3
No Electric Hookup-Less	£3
Wi-Fi/24 hrs.	£2.50
Wi-Fi/Week	£15

COMPETITOR 2 – ROSEMARKIE (CARAVAN CLUB MEMBERS ONLY)

SITE FEES 2019

Adult member price per person per night by price band

BAND	LOW		MID		HIGH	
	From	To	From	To	From	To
7	£9.40	£10.85	£11.40	£13.15	£13.65	£15.70
6	£8.65	£9.95	£10.50	£12.10	£12.65	£14.55

Our proposed fees would be:

Low Season	Per Night	High Season	Per Night
Campervan pitch	£10	Campervan pith	£15
No hookup		No hookup	

This is based on the fees offered by our competitors and in recognition of the additional facilities offered at these sites. Fees will be under review in the first operating period and further research will be carried out to ensure we are meeting the needs of visitors and doing so at an appropriate cost whilst allowing the site to be sustainable.

OUR LOCATION

Our location has been chosen for a variety of reasons



Current Links area

Town centre

Proposed campsite

Whitedykes

The proposed site is on the outskirts of the town allowing visitors to access the site without driving through the narrow streets.

The site is on the shore affording views over the Cromarty Firth – a feature of the existing site that is attractive to visitors.

The proposed site is currently unused but has access to the main road into Cromarty.

The proposed site has expansion possibilities should the campsite prove popular enough and generate enough income to allow further development.

OUR PROMOTION PLAN

ONLINE PRESENCE

We intend to develop an online presence. Cromarty has a number of website developers (<https://www.plexusmedia.co.uk/>) and domain providers (<https://www.cali.co.uk/>) and we will work in partnership with these companies to develop a website that will inform visitors and allow them to book their pitch online.

We will also develop a Facebook page and have direct links on the Cromarty Live website – a well-used and recognised site.

ADVERTISING

We will work in partnership with local businesses to advertise and share fliers and leaflets. There will be advertising material on the ferry and the ferry operator will highlight our facilities to campervans making the crossing to Cromarty. It is our intention to develop a logo that encapsulates all that Cromarty has to offer – a warm welcome, a wildlife experience like no other (Cromarty is home to the award-winning Ecoventures offering dolphin and seabird spotting boat trips) and a town that is a jewel in the Highlands, which too many have ignored in the past. This will be the face of our brand. We will work with Cromarty Primary School and involve the young people in some marketing artwork and use this on our website and possible display panels.

Signage will be erected on entry to Cromarty and at strategic points on the entry to the Black Isle. We will work with Highland Council to negotiate positioning of signage showing a campsite facility in Cromarty.

Although we will market our site, we currently have large numbers of campervans coming to Cromarty when there are no signs indicating a site, where there are no facilities. We believe that we will be able to fill the site on a regular basis throughout the summer even with limited marketing.

NC500

Although Cromarty is not on the NC500, it provides a very pleasing detour and we have encountered an increase in tourism in line with the development of the long distance driving route. The development of a campsite will allow us to further encourage NC500 tourists to come to Cromarty and enjoy our facilities. We will develop our links with other tourist bodies including Visit Scotland to promote not just our site but also the other services and facilities that the town has to offer.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Project will be overseen by the Board of Directors of the Cromarty Community Development Trust. Financials will be managed by the Treasurer, documentation handled by the Secretary, one Director will be appointed in a Tourist Improvement role and the overview will be taken by the Chair.

The day-to-day running of the campsite will be carried out by part time employees.

We will endeavour to employ a campsite manager – they will be employed by the Development Trust. Although the CCDT are currently not registered to be an employer, we do have the experience of being an employer and have employers' liability insurance in place.

JOB DESCRIPTION CAMPSITE MANAGER

TO ASSIST IN ENSURING THAT ALL CAMPERS ENJOY THEIR STAY IN CROMARTY CAMPING SITE IN SAFETY AND TO PROMOTE THE GOOD NAME OF CROMARTY CAMPING AT ALL TIMES.

The post will be a part-time post. The manager will visit the site twice a day, morning and evening to check facilities and collect fees where necessary. Additional time will be required to carry out maintenance if and when this is necessary although this may be outsourced if it proves to be more efficient to do so.

Hours of work will be approximately 20 hours per week (dependent on the time of year and negotiated with the successful applicant) at a rate of £12 per hour. We envisage the employment of a cleaning assistant during the months of June – August, this position being approximately 10 hours per week for the rate of £10 per hour.

The manager will be responsible for:

- Managing online bookings and taking fees from those who have not booked online
- Daily cleaning of the facilities
- Organisation of waste removal including bin emptying in partnership with Highland Council
- Ground maintenance and small DIY jobs
- Gardening tasks where appropriate
- Stocking up of resources in toilets and information area
- Reporting concerns to CCDT board link
- Managing assistant during the summer months

Cromarty Community Development Trust will be an Equal Opportunities Employer. All applicants will be considered for employment without attention to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, veteran or disability status. We will comply with all relevant UK and Scottish legislation including areas such as contract of employment, disciplinary procedures, national minimum wage, working time regulations, pensions, data protection and health and safety.

OUR SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Reputation of Cromarty – known as the jewel in the highlands, coverage in the press – in the top 10 places to stay in the UK according to the times
- Location – close to the NC500 route and on the historic Kings Route
- Seaside location
- Resident dolphin population
- Quality local businesses for tourists including historic sites, wildlife tours, restaurants and shops
- Only ferry on the east coast of Scotland
- Committed trust members
- Support of the local community and local businesses
- Existing target market – already large numbers of campervans come to Cromarty and return over and over again
- Whitedykes location is quieter than the Links
- Whitekyes location gives amenity land back to local people and reduces conflict with visitors
- Provision of services for campervan owners means they don't have to travel 12 miles to nearest site and will reduce fly dumping of waste
- Facilities may mean people stay in the town longer
- Economy benefits and employment created
- Reliability of ferry crossing ensuring users are not disappointed
- Reduced congestion in narrow streets
- Campsite that is accessible for all users
- Better toilet facilities for visitors

WEAKNESSES

- Change of location may not please regular visitors who like the location of the links
- New site is slightly further away from the harbour and the town centre
- New site is limited in space and cannot accommodate the same number of vans as the links
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OPPORTUNITIES

- Possible expansion of campsite in the future on adjacent available land
- Larger ferry increasing capacity from 2 cars to 16 cars and larger vans/lorries
- Reduced ferry queues and reduced waiting time for visitors
- Increased visitor numbers mean increased opportunities for local businesses including increased number of workers and possible expansion

THREATS

- Competition from local campsites in Fortrose and Rosemarkie although these sites can often be full and direct campers to Cromarty if they are
- Poor weather reducing the number of visitors
- Campervans still attempting to park on the links or in other areas around the town causing congestion

From June 2020	Pre start	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	Total
Money in (£)														
Startup funding RTIF		2,000.00												2,000.00
														0.00
Number of Vans		224	310	310	224	168	56	56	28	56	168	168	224	1,992
Income from Vans		3,360.00	4,650.00	4,650.00	3,360.00	1,680.00	560.00	560.00	280.00	560.00	1,680.00	1,680.00	2,240.00	25,260.00
Income from use of services		100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	560.00
Income from Ferry lease		3,390.00												3,390.00
														0.00
Total money in (£)	0.00	9,074.00	5,060.00	5,060.00	3,684.00	1,868.00	636.00	636.00	328.00	636.00	1,868.00	1,868.00	2,484.00	33,202.00
Money out (£)														
														0.00
Wages - Camp Manager		960.00	960.00	960.00	960.00	720.00	720.00	720.00	720.00	720.00	720.00	960.00	960.00	10,080.00
Wages - Assistant Cleaner		400.00	400.00	400.00	400.00								400.00	1,600.00
Direct Overheads		272.00	272.00	272.00	192.00	144.00	144.00	144.00	144.00	144.00	144.00	192.00	272.00	2,336.00
Website hosting		25.00												25.00
Website Building		100.00												100.00
Cleaning Materials		15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	180.00
Gardening materials		15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	180.00
Rates to HC		150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	1,800.00
Sundry costs/repairs		40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	480.00
Printing costs - marketing		200.00												200.00
Running costs electricity		100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	1,075.00
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Total money out (£)	0.00	2,277.00	1,952.00	1,952.00	1,472.00	1,159.00	1,159.00	1,159.00	1,159.00	1,159.00	1,184.00	1,472.00	1,952.00	18,056.00
Balance (£)	0.00	6,797.00	3,108.00	3,108.00	2,212.00	709.00	-523.00	-523.00	-831.00	-523.00	684.00	396.00	532.00	15,146.00
Opening balance	0.00	0.00	6,797.00	9,905.00	13,013.00	15,225.00	15,934.00	15,411.00	14,888.00	14,057.00	13,534.00	14,218.00	14,614.00	
Closing balance	0.00	6,797.00	9,905.00	13,013.00	15,225.00	15,934.00	15,411.00	14,888.00	14,057.00	13,534.00	14,218.00	14,614.00	15,146.00	

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From June 2020	Pre start	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	Total
Money in (£)														
Start Up Funding RTIF		2,000.00												2,000.00
														0.00
Number of Vans		224	280	280	224	168	56	56	28	56	168	168	224	1,932
Income from Vans		3,360.00	4,200.00	4,200.00	3,360.00	1,680.00	560.00	560.00	280.00	560.00	1,680.00	1,680.00	2,240.00	24,360.00
Income from use of services		100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	560.00
Income from Ferry lease		3,390.00												3,390.00
														0.00
Total money in (£)	0.00	9,074.00	4,580.00	4,580.00	3,684.00	1,868.00	636.00	636.00	328.00	636.00	1,868.00	1,868.00	2,484.00	32,242.00
Money out (£)														
														0.00
Wages - Camp Manager		240.00	240.00	240.00	240.00	180.00	180.00	180.00	180.00	180.00	180.00	240.00	240.00	2,520.00
Wages - Assistant Cleaner		100.00	100.00	100.00										300.00
Direct Overheads		68.00	68.00	68.00	48.00	36.00	36.00	36.00	36.00	36.00	36.00	48.00	48.00	564.00
Website hosting		25.00												25.00
Website Building		100.00												100.00
Cleaning Materials		15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	180.00
Gardening materials		15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	180.00
Rates to HC		150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	1,800.00
Sundry costs/repairs		20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	240.00
Printing costs - marketing		200.00												200.00
Electricity Costs		100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	1,075.00
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Total money out (£)	0.00	1,033.00	708.00	708.00	588.00	491.00	491.00	491.00	491.00	491.00	516.00	588.00	588.00	7,184.00
Balance (£)	0.00	8,041.00	3,872.00	3,872.00	3,096.00	1,377.00	145.00	145.00	-163.00	145.00	1,352.00	1,280.00	1,896.00	25,058.00
Opening balance	0.00	0.00	8,041.00	11,913.00	15,785.00	18,881.00	20,258.00	20,403.00	20,548.00	20,385.00	20,530.00	21,882.00	23,162.00	
Closing balance	0.00	8,041.00	11,913.00	15,785.00	18,881.00	20,258.00	20,403.00	20,548.00	20,385.00	20,530.00	21,882.00	23,162.00	25,058.00	