

Wick and Thurso Charrettes: Written Feedback			
LOCATION COMMENTS RELATE TO	SESSION(S) COMMENTS RELATE TO	Q1. DID YOU FIND THE SESSIONS USEFUL?	Q2. ANY FURTHER COMMENTS?
Wick		Very interesting; needs more local engagement in economic development	Branding: Wick positioning: Green Town; renewable energy, self-sufficiency from local generation
Thurso		Good interpretation of the community's ideas. Well presented. Excellent piece of work in a short space of time	We would like to push forward with plans to reconstruct an Iron-Age broch in Caithness, hopefully near Thurso. We would appreciate your support in this project as we believe it holds massive potential to be an economic boost and cultural highlight for Thurso and the community
Thurso	Whole charrette	I attended all sessions and was very impressed at the dynamism which forced people out of sometimes static/negative postures. I think there was a curious sense of anti-climax on Monday night but I guess folk's expectation and hopes were lifted by the process, and the contemplation of the need for a finite result needed foregrounding! I think people will feel need fairly dealt with, and the openness of the process was inspiring. Folk needed a lift and a reason to concentrate on what's to come.	Even more live input from young people would be good. It was a loss that the older young people (college) was reported back rather than interactive.
Wick	Tuesday 26th Feb - Report Back	Excellent report back - visual interpretation of town encompassing all ideas put forward. Not sufficient cross section of public attending only those with vested interest - 20 to 50s not involved or willing to participate	Ref last statement. This age group needs to be encouraged to take up the baton once oldest experienced inhabitants are gone or alas history is lost yet again. A school project/consultation needs to be commenced to involve high school and encourage creative thinking for the future and instil in them their importance as custodians of the town.
Wick	Saturday 23rd Feb - Wick Tomorrow & Way Forward	Again numbers low resulting in getting poor cross-section of views. Need to put this whole exercise into the schools - designing buildings, roads bridges etc. so you have the parents involved. Essential-morning session fine but groups had only one or two in it to work ideas	As before. Involve the parents to come to a presentation of the children's work and then get their views. High School pupils - Wick is a town nowadays that does not like incomers telling them what to do.
Thurso	Saturday 23rd Feb	Great presentation - sound of mic distorted at times	

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Wick		Yes. Meeting and working with the bright people from JTP. The poor turnout diluted diversity and it was in danger of being hi-jacked by a minority interest (paths project).	As a chartered surveyor I knew what a charrette was, I doubt anyone else in the town did! To get more people attending call the process "the people's planning event" or something like that. Also local councillors and enterprise body officials should phone local businesses and other organisations to encourage them to attend and contribute. The Council and HIE also need to commit a sum of money to develop and bring forward some of the proposals to encourage wider development.
Thurso		I hope that some successful fruition can be achieved. However, this has to be maintained, the ball need to continue rolling. To allow it to fizzle out like a damp squib would be a disservice to the community, the town + the visitor. Thurso has so much to offer, agendas need to be put aside and everyone work for the greater good rather than their own particular field or opinion.	I have a number of ideas regarding town wayout, increasing interest, tourism in to Thurso + County, more than happy to discuss
Thurso	Wednesday 27th Feb - Report Back	Having been at all the days events I found the final presentation good in parts: many of the ideas proposed have indeed already been put forward from time to time over a number of years by the local community. Without leadership and financial input I fear that it may all go the way it has before I really hope I am wrong though!	As to the whole event process I found this extremely useful and exciting although many of the views expressed by folk were from a point of some ignorance of the community, the heritage and history of the town and importantly who was what there in
Thurso		YES enjoyed vision of future or at least the aspiration well done. Hope to see action in future	Just more involvement in future. For sessions advertised as 'drop in' however would have preferred times of workshop specific to plan in advance to allow more time
Thurso		Interesting and well presented	
Thurso		Yes all of it	Now you started the ball rolling how do we keep it rolling
Thurso	Monday 25th Feb - Emerging Options	Yes good to see the previous sessions group work coming together	Ideas on how to keep the impetus

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Thurso		Very useful/Most went well/Well Presented. Introduction by school children was a good beginning	
Wick	Thursday 21st Feb - Wick Today/Young People's Session	Yes great to have young people involved and confident to share their ideas	Further ideas sought from peers within school - perhaps workshop in school setting?
Wick	Thursday 21st Feb - Wick Today/Young People's Session	Yes that we were confident speaking	I would do it again
Wick	Thursday 21st Feb - Wick Today/Young People's Session	Yes I did. That we were very confident speaking	That I would come again
Wick	Thursday 21st Feb - Wick Today/Young People's Session	Yes. That we were confident speaking	I would like to come again
Wick	Thursday 21st Feb - Wick Today/Young People's Session	Yes. That we were confident speaking in front of people we don't know	I would come again
Wick	Thursday 21st Feb	Particularly good as an older man I am still very much learning more and more. A great benefit for Wick	Will wait towards the last session next week
Wick		I found it immense, as a reasonably new Councillor I couldn't find any fault, in fact Workshops could have lasted longer. A lot of faces/figures - enjoyed the stories/history	It was good to just keep instilling the positive views, think it will be to an area i.e. Caithness & Sutherland benefit to work as one to deliver the targets
Wick		Met people with local knowledge who thought Wick should be tidier and made presentable to tourists and locals	Photos in local paper of derelict parts - have been some but need more. Bit beside Telford House and buildings in River Street falling in or looking deserted. Husband thinking of making seals (2 of) for harbour area
Wick		I am so very much impressed with the actual presentation - what is possible with computer technology today - compared with when I worked as a architect in the 1950s	Please ** ** *(?) perhaps still with the help of your goodselves to **(?). Keep up public concerns and enthusiasm for our delightful town of Wick.

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Wick		Very interesting and positive. Great to see Council being proactive and open minded	Keep going
Thurso		Seeing the bones for a place making session to be implemented for both Wick and Thurso and a positive step forward in generating a dedicated post or teacher in Caithness to take forwards ideas, dreams and solutions for the future of our county	A follow up session possibly with all the artists/craftsmen in the county in ways to develop these places and other tourist destinations.
Wick	Thursday 21st Feb	I did feel the initial sticker discussion could have been more interactive with the public putting the stickers on the areas then a team leader identifying sub categories quicker for discussion. Rest went well but totally bad seating (uncomfortable) especially as public had to sit for over an hour on occasions	Very little response from public possibly due to many working and unable to attend at these times. Likewise a lot of people not aware this was on or else scared to come or cynical. Seen too many similar events and nothing coming out of it or public view respected - no community councillors attended
Wick	Thursday 21st Feb	3.45 session 5.15 session 6.00 session 7-8 session	Pity so few Wickers came: Perhaps they're tired of consultations and their ideas being ignored. Would like to know how hard our Caithness Councillors are working to promote Caithness
Wick		Very much so	Ask everyone to smile - when they get the "messages" in Wick town - money(?)
Wick		I found the session interesting and informative. What went well: the pace of workshops and presentations. What went less well: people coming in late and perhaps not understanding the purpose of the sessions	I thoroughly believe the concept of Charettes is good and should be done more times to ensure a good cross section of ideas. I felt that the limited number of people who attended were not truly representative of the towns people/views
Wick		Considering the lack of town people it went with a good positive feedback from the various groups and some very good ideas in relation to Wick's future. I think everything went well. I think the ideas about the harbour and Library for future use was excellent as the harbour is the heart of Wick. Get that moving and the rest will fall into place.	Clean up the main streets buildings with power wash and the shops do their part with fresh paint on their frontage. The town hall desperately needs the above as it is a depressing looking building. Make the most of the Telford name and historical sights. Get them signposted in where they can be seen. Hopefully we will be kept informed about the future of Wick

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Wick		Yes. The overall atmosphere was very encouraging. Nice to be able to vent all your moans and groans and suggest improvements. The hands-on sessions in small groups were excellent	
Wick		It went very well. I think after the group session one of the team leaders should have read the group's ideas. They are used to reading in public and would have got our ideas across better. I was disappointed that very few people from Wick turned up. Overall this is a very good idea and can only do Wick some good if only a small part gets done	

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Thurso	Whole charrette	<p>I congratulate you on your Report Back Newsletter produced following the planning event in Thurso. I was aware that the Charrettes were to be forthcoming but unfortunately I was not aware of fixed dates and times or I would have been there. However, I forward a few comments.</p>	<p>Ref: Illustrative Town Centre Map No.13 Marine Sports/Retail Village - Any vertical development here could obliterate the castle views on varying approaches to the beach whereas any sunken alternative is restricted by moving foundations on reclaimed ground.</p> <p>The Sailing Clubhouse is in Scrabster and is locked most of the time ie when not in use, the Canoe Clubhouse in Thurso Bay similarly.</p> <p>New Public Toilets (also locked for more hours than they're open) were recently installed at the Riverside costing £198,000 (ref: December issue "Working together for the Highlands"). Given the vast floor space and generous height allowance this building could surely accommodate the installation of showers as a quick-fix remedy for the surfers who are on the water every day; also for lorry-drivers who are parked up with regularity overnight as they await ferry crossings.</p> <p>No. 5 The Pond area -</p> <p>With Health & Safety issues rating highly it surprises me that this pond is allowed to exist, especially so with a footpath around its circumference. Equally of concern to me is the wildlife which is overfed by a diet which is totally alien to its nature and with the ensuing effects.</p> <p>As we have water in abundance, I offer two suggestions both perhaps in the quick-fix category!</p> <p>a) empty the pond - sculpt the area to form a facility for wheels - a roller arena - roller skates, blades, scooters, skateboards - freely available to serve young and old.</p> <p>b) fill in the pond - pave over to form a social and activity area - petanque, quoits, draughts, chess (on the ground) table-tennis tables (all-weather slate/stone) - again for young and old - but especially as a, possibly sheltered, focal point for those around during the daytime - adults!</p> <p>Not only are the 16-25 year olds denied "hang-out" space, so are the</p>

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Thurso			<p>I was unable to attend but someone gave me this form. If Thurso had an ice rink it would attract people to the town. If not a real ice rink then there is a portable kind which is no water and no ice. It is a solid flat piece of a substance which fits together like a jigsaw whenever required. Regular ice skate boots are used to skate on this artificial rink. It is placed on a flat surface like an indoor floor. It can be transported between venues in a lorry.</p> <p>A different issue, someone told me about is that there is nowhere for visitors to Thurso to leave luggage if they arrive by train and want to look around or want to go on a day trip to elsewhere</p> <p>A design was developed for a new sport, arts and recreation facility to be built on the View Firth site but it didnt progress. Pentland Housing have the details of that. It sounded fantastic and also included holiday flats.</p>

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Caithness			<p>Bus services - these are limited, e.g. buses do not run on Sundays, nor the evenings. There are some local services which stop running every day at 2.35pm! The circular town service which is a boon to the local people are well run and the drivers skilled and excellent.</p> <p>We go shopping in Wick about once a month by bus. However, the journey to Wick is now via Halkirk instead of via Castletown which is the route we favour. The route via Castletown is rural and scenic. One thing the bus windows are invariably clattered in muck and we can't see the scenery.</p> <p>Years ago, every Sunday afternoon in summer time a bus would go to John O Groats and leave again 3 hours later.</p> <p>In future a special bus could run to the Castle of Mey but the bus could take them down to the Castle and not leave them to walk down and up from the main road.</p> <p>Passengers arriving at Thurso railway station for the day need somewhere to store their luggage as there are none available at present.</p> <p>If you do not own a car in Caithness your activities are limited.</p> <p>I like walking the shoreline in Thurso and many others do likewise. I would like to see the mouth of the Wolf Burn bridged. Materials are already there to form a bridge except for the deck. Could this be accomplished?</p> <p>One of the speakers praised the buildings in Thurso. One would have to agree with that. However, the relocation of business in Thurso</p>

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Thurso		On the whole, some excellent ideas but several over the top, e.g. the walk to Loch More; businesses to be relocated; viewing platform behind fish mart (would not survive for long). Good ideas however are reviving St Peter's Church and making use of derelict areas.	Requirements: a replacement for our Town Hall which is now a museum - an excellent one I must say! But no room for large gatherings which many folk miss; improving areas around the riverside - if thinking about tourism, e.g. 1) bus tours on certain days and well advertised, ie buses right to or near to the entrance door of the Castle of Mey. 2) A place in town to leave heavy luggage to allow folk to see the town etc without trailing their luggage around. 3) Some youngsters would like a skating rink. 4) Bus time-tables improved so that there are later running ones around the estates (last one is 2:35pm at moment). 5) More country walks / picnic areas like the one on the farm by the river near Glengolly.

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Thurso		<p>Generally it was ok but some suggestions from the floor which helped form the 'new vision for Thurso' were not really scrutinised critically. For example a marine sports centre is a possibility but not a 'retail village' With town centre shops closing— and a declining population, there is no way a peripheral retail village would be viable.</p> <p>The suggested Millbank studio workshops are a nice idea but, realistically, I doubt whether there would be any great demand for them particularly if they had to be rented.</p>	<p>What is really needed is a centrally situated public 'hall' to replace the lost town hall. Not just a 'cultural centre where artists could meet', but a modern centre for performance : drama and all forms of music. It would also serve for meetings of all kinds. The best Thurso has to offer are two hotels: The Pentland where the Charrette exposed its limitations for a largish meeting and the equally indifferent Park Hotel which the Highland Council has to resort to for local meetings.</p> <p>To indicate how poorly served the town really is, compare it with elsewhere. Thurso is the third largest town in the Highland Region after Fort William (pop 10,000), Nairn (pop 8,500) with 7750 inhabitants yet has no hall or meeting place of any kind. Even Wick with a similar population has the Assembly Rooms seating 500 or 180 if tiered seating is used. It also has the excellent new PPP facility with several small meeting rooms plus a larger room which can accommodate 114 with tiered seating. Next year with a lift installed in the old town hall the upper chamber will be restored to public use seating 80 plus. If that is not enough for Wick's needs the two new primary schools and high school will share their halls with the community at large.</p> <p>Sorry to labour the point but all the villages around Thurso are much better served than the town itself. Halkirk (pop 900), Castletown (pop 500), Watten (pop 350) and Reay all have good general purpose public halls.</p> <p>I feel this compelling need for Thurso should have greater emphasis in the Charrette recommendations.</p>

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			<p>Having read Morris Pottinger's letter of Friday, March 1, in the Groat ("Tourism supports 2205 jobs? I don't believe it!"), I felt I must respond with my own feelings towards Caithness Horizons. My, my, oh my, what a bad move the council made by turning our town hall into an archive of yesterday! In my day, the town hall was the hub of the town. Music festivals, which I took part in singing in two choirs, and Scottish country dancing in the Girl Guides were held there.</p> <p>I can remember Wick and Thurso took year about holding such events. There were pantomimes held by Thurso Players and Friday night or Saturday night dances (alcohol free). Many organisations held successful coffee mornings. Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother visited the great shows displayed by local artists every year.</p> <p>Caithness Horizons sure is the limit of the council's understanding of what folk require. Should I wish to spend a penny, which would probably cost 50p in Caithness Horizons, I would be hard-pressed to find the convenience. The former upstairs hall could have been used as a night-time hall for sports organisations and ought to have been free of charge!</p> <p>Guide and Scout organisations have formerly made use of cramped church halls and the space in the upstairs hall would have provided them with more than enough. The former hall could have provided games nights for the youth of the town; table tennis, pool, darts, etc, and the size of the hall would have enabled basketball teams to play.</p> <p>The ideas are never-ending! So I propose a new hall for the citizens of the town and outlying areas. A site is available at the old Hamilton's auction mart! Senior citizens could hold all manner of events and a</p>

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Thurso			<p>By far the most important problem facing Thurso in particular and Caithness in general is the rundown of Dounreay. Employment for the population is of paramount importance. Modern eco friendly energy systems do not require a high level of manpower therefore we must exploit our natural environment to turn Caithness into a Mecca for tourists interested in the natural beauty of the county. We must however be careful not to destroy this, our greatest asset.</p> <p>SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR THURSO</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A new old folk's home, could be built on the site of the former livestock market. 2. Additional car parking at the railway station. 3. Traffic lights/ pedestrian crossing at the junction of Ormlie Road/Castlegreen Road/Lovers Lane. 4. Assembly Rooms/Townhall for use of the whole community. A superfluous local primary school could be converted. 5. Accommodation for terminally ill patients has to be maintained in town. 6. East and west sides of the Thurso river to be improved from the harbour right up to the salmon pool, both for the benefit of local users and tourists. (The east side below the road bridge is particularly disgraceful.) 7. Use 'Paths for All' to establish walking routes around west Caithness. 8. Further promote weekend/week long events such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country and Western music. • Caithness walking week • Surfing events • Bird watching week • Walking holidays

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Thurso	Wednesday 27th Feb - Report Back	Where is 14 on Town Centre Masterplan? HRC, local councillors, businesses have known for a few years Dounreay was finishing but nothing as yet has been done.	Changing rooms, showers etc at the harbour NOW for surfers. Thurso needs to work harder at encouraging and keeping visitors, e.g. more entertainment, cleaner town, more information. Mini bus to transport visitors from road (bus stop in Mey) to Castle of Mey. Only a dedicated walker will walk to Loch More and back. Will the woodlands be native trees that will survive wind and salt? It doesn't take 4 hours by train to Inverness. Better connections and transport.