

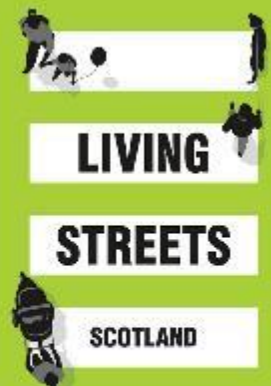
Living Streets

Community Street Audit Report

Stonehaven
March 2018



We are Living Streets Scotland, part of the UK charity for everyday walking. We want to create a walking nation where people of all generations enjoy the benefits that this simple act brings, on streets fit for walking.



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Executive Summary

We are Living Streets Scotland, (LSS), a part of the UK charity for everyday walking. We are working with Aberdeenshire Council Transport team, to help develop the Integrated Travel Town Masterplan, (ITTM), specifically looking at walking. We have previously worked with residents, groups and organisations in Inverurie. This year we have been working in Stonehaven as part of a larger suite of work taking in Banchory, Banff, Macduff, Oldmeldrum and Westhill.

The Transport team are working to produce an ITTM and LSS is supporting this work by looking at barriers and assets to walking, especially for the more vulnerable pedestrian. We have considered routes to key local trip generators within a town including amenities such as shops, schools, post office and GP. We considered the ease of access to public transport links on foot, e.g. bus stops and Rail stations where applicable.

Background to Stonehaven audit

The Community Street Audit in Stonehaven followed on from a workshop with representatives from Aberdeenshire Council Transport Team and Community Learning and Development, Stonehaven Community Council, Alzheimer Scotland and Aberdeenshire Access Panel. The workshop attendees identified assets and barriers to walking around Stonehaven and their top priorities for change. This information was used to identify an audit route, this included The Market Square and Allardice Street.

Barriers to walking on this route include:

- The poor repair and maintenance of the footways around the Market Square and along Allardice Street.
- Lack of dropped kerbs at crossing points on Market Square and Allardice Street.
- Advertising boards and bins on the footway.
- Parking on double yellow lines near junctions blocking sightlines.

Recommendations for improvements include:

- Repairing the footway surfaces.
- Installing or repairing dropped kerbs at crossing points.
- Making business owners aware of best practice and guidelines for display boards.
- Enforcing the parking restrictions in the town centre.

Living Streets Scotland

We are Living Streets Scotland, part of the UK charity for everyday walking. We want to create a walking nation, free from congested roads and pollution, reducing the risk of preventable illness and social isolation and making walking the natural choice. We believe that a walking nation means progress for everyone. Our ambition is to enable people of all generations to enjoy the benefits that this simple act brings and to ensure all our streets are fit for walking.

Introduction

Living Streets Scotland, LSS, was initially asked to speak to local communities in Aberdeenshire to gather evidence for their ITTM Integrated Travel Town Masterplan (ITTM). The Masterplan considers different aspects of active travel and public transport across Aberdeenshire.

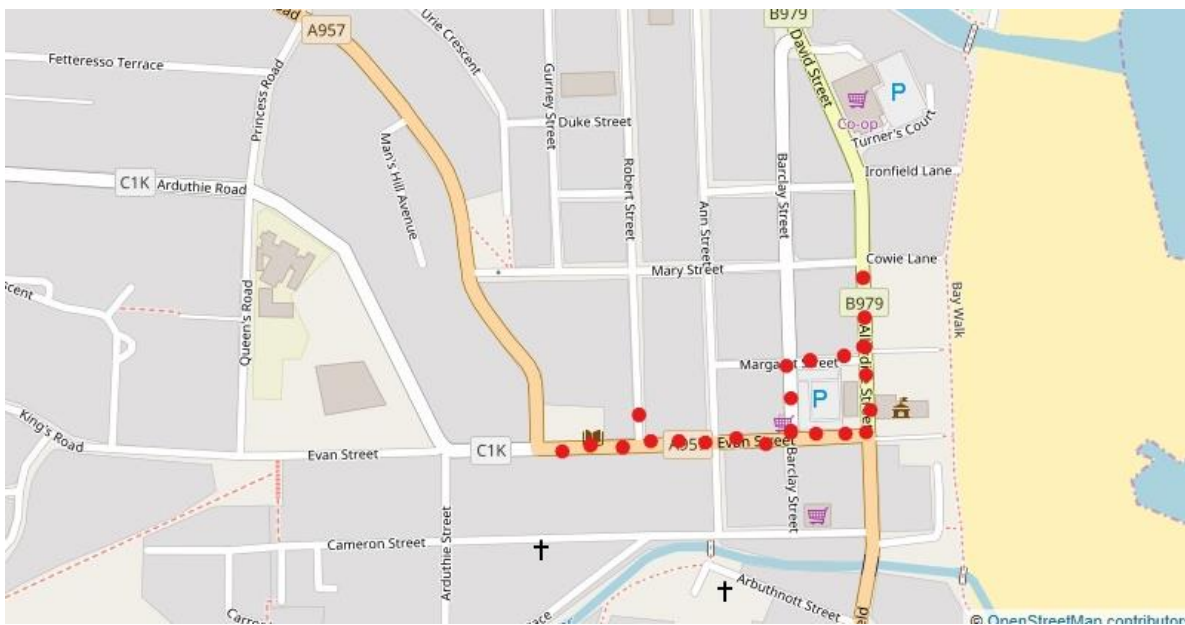
The Masterplan considers different aspects of active travel and public transport across Aberdeenshire, identifying actions to improve access to these travel choices and ensure they are better integrated, with the aim of encouraging fewer local journeys by car and an increase in journeys undertaken sustainably. Walking is the most popular active travel mode, and is always a stage in any journey undertaken by public transport. For this reason, Aberdeenshire Council asked LSS to take forward a small number of Community Street Audits examining barriers and assets for walking journeys on key routes in each community. Ensuring all members of a community are able to walk on local streets is a priority for both LSS and Aberdeenshire Council, and as such we focused much of our activity on engaging more vulnerable groups the elderly, the young and those with physical and/or sensory impairments.

A work shop was carried out on 28th November 2017, with 10 people in attendance. These included representatives from the Transport team and Community Engagement, Community Health in Partnership, Aberdeenshire Access Panel and Alzheimer Scotland. Assets and barriers were identified and priorities were discussed. A route around the Market Square was identified to audit.

The Community Street Audit was conducted in January 9th 2018. There were 6 people in attendance for the full length of the route;

- 1 representative from Aberdeenshire Council Transport Team
- 1 member of the Stonehaven Community Council
- 2 members of the access panel
- 1 representative from Aberdeenshire Council Community Engagement team
- 1 representative from LSS

Map of area



© OpenStreetMap contributors

The red route indicates the route reviewed

Stonehaven & Area profile

The town of Stonehaven is situated on the coast approximately 18 miles south of Aberdeen, and to the east of the A90. It rises quite steeply from the harbour and coast and has grown in size since the oil boom with new estates being built inland to the west.

It has a population of approximately 11500 with a large proportion that are over 45 years. Stonehaven has a good selection of shops, access to banks and post office. There is also a community hospital, community centre and GP service. Residents from nearby villages come to Stonehaven for shopping and other services and the population grows in the summer with holidaymakers visiting the leisure facilities, Dunnottar Castle, Beach and Harbour.

The hilly topography is a barrier for many people walking around the town as are some of the narrow or cobbled streets near the harbour.

Area findings

What Works Well

Stonehaven Market Square has good facilities which include signage, seating, litterbins and planters. Close by there are public toilets and 30 minutes free parking. There is a pedestrian crossing at the corner of the Square with Allardice Street, this has tactile paving and a dropped kerb.

Facilities on the Market Square



What Doesn't Work So Well

1 – Road layout and space allocation

Narrow footways

There are narrow footways along Evan Street this exacerbates difficulties for wheelchair users who already have to contend with an adverse camber on the footway. Footways along Allardice Street can also be narrow in places and clutter in the form of A boards and wheelie bins, along with poor surface maintenance, contribute to difficulties for pedestrians.



2 – Crossing points and desire lines

Desire Line at the Library on Evan Street

There is a desire line crossing from the library to the bus stop, unfortunately there is no dropped kerb to allow crossing for people in wheelchairs or using mobility scooters.

Crossing at Anne Street and Evan Street

There are good build outs to narrow the carriageway and dropped kerbs to aid crossing. The main issue is the parked cars along Evan Street that can obstruct sight lines of oncoming and turning traffic for pedestrians.



Crossing Evan street near Barclay Street

Many people cross here to reach the Coop and Boots, particularly elderly and parents with small children. There is a build out to narrow the carriageway and dropped kerbs and tactile paving to aid pedestrians. This is still a difficult crossing with fast moving traffic coming down Evan Street and traffic entering and exiting from the Market Square often driving round badly parked vehicles. Although there is a crossing at the junction with Allardice Street this is a long detour from the natural desire line.

The Community council did a survey and petition for installation of a controlled crossing at this location with 800 signatures after complaints of near misses. This was passed to Mark Skilling (strategy).

Crossing at the Coop, Evan street and Market Square

This has some of the same issues for pedestrians as crossing Evan Street, with traffic entering and exiting to the Market Square parking.

It may be worth considering the space in the Market Square and the priorities given to its use. As many of the issues around the Market Square are due to the dominance of cars, entering or exiting the parking space. Is there a desire for improved civic or social space in the town centre and options to move the parking to an alternative location nearby?



Crossing Allardice Street near Mary St

There is a pedestrian crossing outside M&Co which has dropped kerbs fitted. Unfortunately, these dropped kerbs are not flush and are hard to access in a wheelchair. Whilst on the audit one participant who using a self-propelled wheelchair, ended up stranded on the carriageway as she couldn't mount the kerb.



3 – Footway surfaces and obstructions

- Footway maintenance – uneven flagstones, loose kerbstones, adverse cambers, missing or poorly fitted dropped kerbs and tactile paving. On the audit issues were seen along the majority of the route taken and were especially bad along Barclay Street between Evan Street and Margaret Street and at crossing points with damaged or poorly fitting tactile paving and dropped kerbs.



Outside Coop.
Market Sq and Mary St)



Barclay Street



Allardice Street (West side)



Michies on Margaret St



Evan St and Barclay St jctn



Anne St tactile paving



Barclay St



Barclay St tactile paving



Margaret St tactile paving

- Bins and Advertising boards causing an obstruction to the footway at various places around the Market Square. This leaves very little space for wheelchair users and pedestrians to move around the town centre easily.



Disabled entrance to Michies.



Wheelie bins on Margaret Street



A Board Allardice St



A board Evan St



Street furniture Evan St



Wheelie bin Allardice St

4 – Maintenance and enforcement

- There are issues with double parking around the Market Square. Although auditors did feel that parking in general was easier since the free 30 minutes parking was introduced. There is also some pavement parking around the town.



5 – Traffic

- The roads and junctions around the Market Square are very busy making the area quite noisy and polluted. This is an issue not just for the Market Square but the town centre in general. The volume of traffic also has a visual impact and amenity of the space. Poor parking practices also make some of the traffic move erratically around stationary vehicles and obstruct sight lines at crossing points. This can make the space intimidating to navigate especially for the less mobile or sensory impaired.
- Evan Street is busy, especially at peak times, this can become congested if there are cars parked on both sides of the road. Exiting Anne Street onto Evan Street can be difficult due to volume of traffic. Auditors felt that this could be improved by only having parking on one side of the street or making the street one way.
- The workshop participants said there was a desire for a 20mph speed limit in Stonehaven town centre.

Wider transport issues raised at the workshop

1 - Access to the Railway station

People felt that it was good that there are rail links to and from Stonehaven but frequency of trains (e.g. to nearby places like Portlethen) and accessibility are not great. As there is only stepped access between station platforms, access for those reliant on wheelchairs or mobility aids between platforms is restricted to a route along the main road. Ensuring this route is well maintained, and that dropped kerbs, tactile paving, and other access features are provided where necessary should be a priority. Further suggestions to improve the experience of station users include provision of a taxi rank, toilet access, and a public phone.

2 – Access to Viewmount Council Building

The council building is very difficult for disabled people, that are reliant on driving, to access. Although there are 2 marked disabled bays at the facility they are too narrow for easy wheelchair access. One of the parking spaces forces the user to use a short path behind the building bins. Access from the other bay is via a very steep driveway or stairs.

Inside the offices there is only access to the ground floor as there is no lift.

3 – Access to harbour area

There is a lack of dropped kerbs between car park and hotel. The route is also cobbled, which makes it difficult for people with poor mobility, those using wheelchairs or mobility aids, and those with pushchairs. Food and drink is served outside in the summer, taking up available space and forcing people on to the cobbles. People with limited mobility say they avoid the area in the summer and during festivals as it is too busy. A path with an accessible surface, which is kept clear at all times, would allow more users access to the harbour area and participate in important community and civic events.

4 – Access to Invercarron Resource Centre

There is no parking at the centre, as it has its own bus to pick up service users. There is no public bus service from the town. Often people park on the access road and block access for the bus.

5 – Kincardine Community Hospital, parking and access

There is a lack of parking at the hospital, there is also only single track road access to the hospital. As there is no direct bus to the Hospital, for some there is no alternative to the car.

6 – PAMIS big ideas workshop feedback

PAMIS is the only organisation in Scotland that works solely with people with profound and multiple learning disabilities and their families for a better life. They held a workshop and some of the feedback on getting around is below.

Big Ideas workshop feedback PAMIS, some of the paths were difficult for wheelchair users as they don't have a solid/even surface. Mineralwell Park Paths, path from war memorial to Dunnottar castle, Path from Dunnottar castle car park to area where castle becomes visible, beachfront in the grand promenade. Uneven, gravel surfaces difficult for wheelchair, buggy users and less able to use.

There is a summary of the workshop findings in the appendix.

7 - Access to the Library

Disabled access to the library is not well signposted and doesn't feel welcoming. 'It feels like going into a storage area'. Better signage and a more welcoming look to the side entrance would aid access.

Recommendations

Quick win – to be completed this financial year, Medium term – to be completed next financial year, Long term – awaiting funding source before action can be taken

Area/Issue	Recommended Action	Level of Action Quick Win/ long Term	Responsibility/ Involvement
1 – Road Layout	1 – Look at the space allocation along Evan Street, reduce parking near junctions at Robert Street and Ann Street. 2 – Look at the disabled parking layout and access at Viewmount Council Offices, consulting with disabled users as to how it can be improved.	1 – Long term 2 – Medium term	Aberdeenshire Council
2 – Obstructions	1 – Removal of badly placed advertising boards, giving guidelines to business owners. 2 – Removal of badly placed street furniture outside shops. 3 – Work with refuse collection teams to ensure bins aren't left blocking footways.	1 – Quick win 2 – Quick win 3 – Medium term	Aberdeenshire Council and business owners.
3 – Footway Surfaces	1 – Poor camber on Evan Street needs to be levelled. 2 – Repair and maintenance of footway on Barclay Street between Coop and Nikki's. 3 – Repair and maintenance of footway on Market Square, between Margaret Street and Allardice Street (North side of Market Square). 4 – Repair and maintenance of footway between Mary Street and Market Lane. 5 – Repair footway on the corner of Margaret Street near the disabled entrance to Michies. 6 – Repair the tactile paving on Evan street crossing between Boots and Coop. 7 – Repair the tactile paving on Barclay Street crossing from Coop to Market Square. 8 - Repair the tactile paving on Ann Street, crossing on the North side of Evan Street. 9 - Repair the tactile paving on Margaret Street, outside Nikki's.	1 – Long term 2 – Quick win 3 – Medium term 4 – Medium term 5 – Quick win 6 – Quick win 7 – Quick win 8 – Quick win 9 – Quick win	Aberdeenshire Council
4 – Crossing Points	1 – The pedestrian crossing on Allardice Street outside M&Co. This needs to have the dropped kerb lowered. 2 - Look at adding a more formal crossing point between the Coop and Boots on Evan St. 3 – Add a dropped kerb on Evan Street between the library and the bus stop.	1 – Quick win 2 – Long term 3 – Quick win	Aberdeenshire Council

5 – Maintenance and enforcement	1 – Enforce the double yellow lines on Market Square. 2 – Enforce the 'no parking' on the access road to the Invercarron Resource Centre	1 – Quick win	Aberdeenshire Council
6 - Traffic	1 – Look at introducing a 20mph speed limit in the town centre.	1 – Medium term	Aberdeenshire Council
7 - Signage	1 – Improve the disabled access signage at the Library.	1 – Quick win	Aberdeenshire Council

Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Reduce car parking space on Evan Street adjacent to junctions with Robert Street and Ann Street.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	Next financial year
Consult with Stonehaven Access panel on disabled parking and access to Viewmount Council Offices	Aberdeenshire Council estates team	This financial year
Removal of badly placed advertising boards and street furniture, giving guidelines and information to business owners. (Perth and Kinross Council have created a tri fold information sheet for their local businesses may be worth looking at something similar)	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	This financial year
Work with refuse collection teams to educate staff to ensure bins aren't left blocking footways.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team and refuse team	This financial year
Level camber on Evan Street.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	Awaiting funding source
Repair of footway on Barclay Street between Coop and Nikki's.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	This financial year
Repair of footway on Market Square, between Margaret Street and Allardice Street. (North side)	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	Next financial year
Repair of footway on Allardice Street between Mary Street and Market Lane.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	Next financial year
Repair footway at Michies disabled entrance on Margaret Street	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	This financial year
Repair tactile paving and dropped kerbs on Evan Street crossing between Coop and Boots.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	This financial year

Repair tactile paving and dropped kerbs on Barclay Street crossing from Coop to Market Square.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	This financial year
Repair tactile paving and dropped kerbs on Ann Street, crossing on north side of Evan Street.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	This financial year
Repair tactile paving, dropped kerbs and footway surface on Margaret Street outside Nikki's	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	This financial year
The pedestrian crossing on Allardice Street outside M&Co, Lower the dropped kerbs to be flush with the carriageway.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	This financial year
Add a signalised crossing point at the end of Evan Street, between Coop and Boots.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	Awaiting funding source
Install dropped kerbs on Evan Street between Library and bus stop.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	Next financial year
Enforce the double yellow lines on Market Square.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	This financial year
Enforce "No Parking" on access road to the Invercarron Resource Centre to allow the bus access.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	This financial year
Consult with community about introducing a 20mph speed limit in the town centre.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team and Community engagement team.	Next financial year
Improve disabled access signage at the library	Aberdeenshire Council Libraries team.	This financial year

Contacts

This report is being submitted to:



- Aberdeenshire Council Transport team
- Local Councillors and workshop participants



Contacts:



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Appendix




Community Street Audit Findings




Map Ref	Location	Findings	Effect on walking	Heading	Priority/solution
	Evan St/Ann St junction	Difficult to exit from Ann St, cars parked on both sides mean it is difficult for 2-way traffic flow.	Dangerous to cross the road	Road layout	Parking on 1 side of the road only or 1 way traffic.
	Evan Street - Library	There is a disabled entrance to the library but there is no signage to show where it is. Sign for disabled parking bay.	Confusion for disabled visitors to the library		Add disabled entrance signage




Map Ref	Location	Findings	Effect on walking	Heading	Priority/solution
					
	Evan Street	Poorly maintained footways many with adverse camber down towards road.	Difficult for wheelchair users to navigate.	Footway surfaces and obstructions	Level camber on footway
	Evan street library	No dropped kerb to cross road from and to bus stop	Wheelchair users would have to make a long detour to access the bus stop/library	Footway surfaces and obstructions	Add dropped kerb
	Evan Street bookseller	Level access to enter but have to pull the door	Difficult to access for wheelchair or pushchair users		
	Ally Bali Jewellery	Step access to the shop	Difficult to access for wheelchair or pushchair users		



Map Ref	Location	Findings	Effect on walking	Heading	Priority/solution
	CO-OP corner	Busy junction with no pedestrian crossing. Dropped kerbs but not all flush. Coop side sits out further than car park side making sightlines difficult up Evan Street	Difficult for pedestrians/cyclists and drivers to navigate corner/crossing.	Crossing points	Level dropped kerbs, add a crossing point
	Barclay St outside CO-OP	Missing flagstone and edging kerb stones coming away.	Trip hazard for pedestrians	Footway surfaces and obstructions	Repair footway surface, resit kerb stone



Map Ref	Location	Findings	Effect on walking	Heading	Priority/solution
 	<p>Corner of Barclay St and Margaret St, Michies Chemist</p>	<p>Bins blocking pavement outside the disabled entrance on Margaret St. This is up a slight hill with adverse camber. No canopy/cover whilst waiting at entrance for assistance.</p>	<p>Difficult for wheelchair users to access the disabled entrance of the Chemist</p>	<p>Footway surfaces and obstructions</p>	<p>Level footway, remove bins from entranceway</p>
	<p>Michies entrance on Barclay St</p>	<p>Steps to enter shop.</p>			
	<p>Nikki's coffee shop</p>	<p>Large red waste bin outside blocks footway. Dropped kerbs too high</p>	<p>Difficult to pass with wheelchair or buggy</p>	<p>Footway surfaces and obstructions</p>	<p>Level the dropped kerbs and remove bins from footway</p>

Map Ref	Location	Findings	Effect on walking	Heading	Priority/solution
					
	Market St, Bank of Scotland	Automatic door but is only just wide enough for a wheelchair			
	Evan Street, Charles McHardy Butcher	Good disabled entrance and helpful staff.			
	Ann St/Evan st junction	Built out corners have moved dropped kerbs further along street and make poor visibility	Difficult to cross street especially if poor mobility	Crossing point	
	Waldies Newsagent	Sandwich board on pavement			
	RBS bank	Loose kerb stone	Trip hazard for pedestrians	Footway surfaces and obstructions	Resit kerb stone

Map Ref	Location	Findings	Effect on walking	Heading	Priority/solution
	Market Square exit	Cars park at junction blocking visibility and causing cars to swerve wide.	Dangerous for pedestrians crossing the road	Crossing point	Enforce double yellow lines
	Allardice Street, crossing at Mackays	Raised dropped kerb at Mackay's side makes it difficult to get on pavement in wheelchair (– one auditor had cars driving around her a she tried to get up kerb.)	Dangerous for wheelchair/pushchair users who may struggle to mount the footway after crossing the road	Crossing point	Level the dropped kerb
	Nabs Takeaway	Slab loose, loose drain cover	Trip hazard for pedestrians	Footway surfaces and obstructions	Repair the footway surface

Map Ref	Location	Findings	Effect on walking	Heading	Priority/solution
	Waterfront cafe	Sandwich board on pavement, bins on street	Obstructions reduce the footway width, trip hazard especially for the visually impaired.	Footway surfaces and obstructions	Remove Advertising boards and bins from footway
	Housing office on Allardice street	Loose kerb stone at corner of crossing.	Trip hazard for pedestrians	Footway surfaces and obstructions	Repair kerb at the crossing
	Robert Street junction	Dropped kerbs only 1 way, not across to bus stop.	Difficult to cross the road if a wheelchair or pushchair user	Footway surfaces and obstructions	Install dropped kerbs at junction
	Evan/Barclay street crossing	Difficult crossing, uneven flags	Trip hazard for pedestrians	Footway surfaces and obstructions	Repair uneven flags

Map Ref	Location	Findings	Effect on walking	Heading	Priority/solution
	Exit from carpark	Blocked by people parking on double yellow lines	Pedestrians can't see to cross the road, making it dangerous to cross	Crossing point	Enforce double yellow lines
	Public toilets	Disabled toilet needs radar key but there is no signage to say so. Entrance ramp to ladies toilets are slippy and steep, difficult to exit in wheelchair	Steep ramp and slippery surface is hard to access in a wheelchair, slip hazard to less able users	Personal safety	Surface the ramp with a less slippery top
	Allardice Street, Town Hall	Disabled entrance down side – dark and narrow not welcoming	Intimidating for disabled access users, auditors said it made them feel like second class citizens	Personal safety	Add lighting to the entrance

Map Ref	Location	Findings	Effect on walking	Heading	Priority/solution
	Gionotti's ice cream, Evan St	A board on street narrows pavement	Can block footway making it difficult for wheelchair/pushchair users to pass	Footway surfaces and obstructions	Remove obstruction from footway
	Wine shop	Barrel outside shop half on the pavement	Can block pavement making it hard to pass with buggy or wheelchair	Footway surfaces and obstructions	Remove obstruction from footway

Summary of PAMIS Big ideas workshop

Toilets

It was generally agreed that accessible toilet facilities in Stonehaven are inadequate. More ambulant disabled people using the Town can manage better, even though in many cases it is not ideal if an adult needs help with toileting a disabled loo isn't a large space but those requiring weight-bearing support in seeing to personal care needs describe provision as "rubbish". These individuals require a larger room to manoeuvre with carers, specialist equipment such as a tracker hoist and a height adjustable changing bench to go to the loo safely and with dignity. PAMIS is the main Scotland member of the Changing Places Consortium.

<http://pamis.org.uk/campaigns/changing-places-toilet>



Families and carers felt that they wanted toilet and leisure facilities on the front near the sea and other attractions, rather than “hidden away” and which was therefore less inclusive.

A popular request was for a Changing Place for the centre of town. It was suggested that the nearby Caravan Park or somewhere near the play park may be a suitable location if there was buy in from relevant stakeholders.

Action: Explore the feasibility of getting a Changing Place for Stonehaven Town Centre

Pavements and Pathways


Parents and carers of those supporting wheelchair users feedback that they face difficulties in accessing the town, due to a lack of dropped pavements, difficult path surfaces and few shops, hotels and restaurants that they could physically access. One Mum said “we don’t go out because we can’t but would do if facilities were on offer”. The additionality to Stonehaven’s tourist offer from greater accessibility is obvious. Families would spend more time and money there and a well-planned approach to accessibility would put Stonehaven on the map for visitors.

Paths covered with gravel or chuckies, such as in Mineralwell Park are very difficult for someone pushing a wheelchair. There were suggestions to make the following paths wheelchair accessible i.e. give them a hard and even permanent surface, such as tar-mac or other suitable alternative.

- Mineralwell Park paths
- From the War memorial to Dunnottar Castle
- From Dunnottar Castle Car Park to the area where the castle becomes visible
- Beachfront in the Grand Promenade work

Action: Explore how paths could be made more accessible to wheelchair users

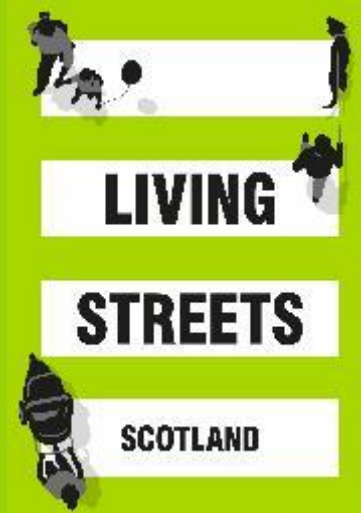
We also had a suggestion for the creation of an ‘accessibility map’ with colour coded maps for walks around town of different levels of difficulty. Green could be easy, amber, medium, and red for hard. It was noted that Stonehaven is on a gradient and not all streets



have adequate wheelchair-friendly pavements. This resource could also be used to help visitors navigate the town and could be linked up to walks around Dunnottar Woods and the coastal path. Signposting would also be necessary for this to work.

Action: Ascertain the possibilities of maps and signage in Stonehaven to express the level of gradient and ease of access.

A ramp for the Leisure centre was also requested.



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