

STENNESS LOCAL PLACE PLAN

Stenness Community Association

May 2025

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COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

These community-led aspirations for the Stenness Place Plan have emerged from extensive and ongoing engagement with our community. Rooted in the issues and priorities identified by residents, they encompass a mix of smaller improvements, larger projects, and new ways of working with our partners. Intentionally ambitious, these aspirations reflect the strength of community mobilisation in Stenness and the collective desire to build on that momentum. They also embrace the hopes of our youngest residents, ensuring that Stenness grows and evolves for them and their future.

THEME 1 - CONNECTING PLACES IN THE COMMUNITY

- Safer, Calmer Roads** – Reduce traffic speeds and impacts on the A965.
- Connected Pathways** – Develop new footways linking key community locations.
- Safe Routes to School** – Create safe walking, wheeling and cycling routes for school children.
- Rest & Enjoy** – Install benches along key routes.
- Clear & Welcoming Signage** – Enhance signage for both residents and visitors.

THEME 2 - HOUSING AND PLANNING

- Community Housing Provision** – Explore potential for additional, affordable housing cluster on the village fringe.
- Stronger Planning Partnership** – Work with the local authority on housing solutions.
- Lifetime Homes** – Ensure accessible housing for all ages and needs.
- Housing Growth & Renewal** – Identify locations for new and expanded community and private housing.
- Sustainable Homes Initiative** – Upgrade housing with renewables, insulation, and smart tech for a greener future.

THEME 3 - PLAY AND RECREATION

- Safe Areas for Children** – Develop and deliver a new playpark and create opportunities for play in Stenness.
- Wellbeing & Enhanced Environment** – Develop further outdoor space including seating and family-friendly areas, and securing facilities for football in Stenness.
- Community Growing & Intergenerational Opportunities** – Create a community growing space.

THEME 4 - NURTURING STENNESS' NATURAL AND HERITAGE CAPITAL

Accessible Leisure Pathways Network – Develop well-maintained, inclusive, circular routes with seating and interpretation, building upon the core paths and trails.

Collaborative Heritage Approach – Work with partners to shape a community-driven vision.

Stenness Landscape & Heritage Partnership – Secure funding to protect and promote the parish's natural and cultural assets.

THEME 5 - BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Village Enhancement Scheme – Improve amenities with funding for facades, planting, seating, and maintenance.

Bringing Spaces Back to Life – Engage with owners of abandoned buildings and land.

Parish Signage Strategy – Showcase Stenness' history through signage and interpretation.

Better Roads & Transport – Explore improvements to roads, junctions, pavements, and public transport infrastructure.

Flood & Coastal Resilience – Ensure Stenness is included in future flood risk and adaptation planning.

THEME 6 - ECONOMY AND TOURISM

Stenness Business Network – Establish a collaborative group to support local businesses.

Enterprise Hub – Develop shared workspace, business units, cycle parking and facilities, electric vehicle (EV) charging and facilities for local enterprises.

Pop-Up & Market Spaces – Enable food vans, farmers' markets, and vendor opportunities.

Heritage Tourism Links – Identify community benefits from World Heritage partnerships.

THEME 7 - BUILDING STENNESS CAPACITY

Stenness Capacity – Establish a resourced team to drive the vision forward.

Community at the heart – Ensure Stenness plays a central role in shaping the future of the Heart of Neolithic Orkney, e.g. strengthening ties with Orkney's World Heritage Site Programme.

Community Ownership & Stewardship – Explore opportunities to manage key local assets for community benefit.

SETTING THE SCENE

THE PARISH OF STENNESS

Stenness is a vibrant parish located in the heart of Orkney's Mainland, steeped in history and surrounded by breathtaking natural beauty. It is home to the Heart of Neolithic Orkney, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as well as rich agricultural landscapes and a close-knit community. Positioned between Stromness and Kirkwall, the village and parish of Stenness is home to the Ring of Brodgar, Stones of Stenness and Maeshowe and a key part of Orkney's cultural and economic fabric. This unique combination of heritage, community, and location makes Stenness a special place with tremendous potential for growth and attainable development.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STENNESS PLACE PLAN

Different parts of the parish face challenges that require thoughtful planning and collaboration. Traffic dominance and road safety are key concerns, with high volumes of vehicles passing through the village en route to Stromness or Kirkwall, often without stopping. This main road acts as a barrier, making it difficult to connect different parts of the village for pedestrians and cyclists, highlighting the need for improved infrastructure and safer travel options.

Connectivity and access are recurring themes, with the community expressing a desire for better pedestrian pathways and improved walkability to

link key assets. This ties into the strong sense of community spirit in Stenness, where residents are engaged and active through groups such as the Community Association, Parent and Carers Council, and the school. Despite an ageing demographic and perceived planning constraints around building new family homes, Stenness remains a welcoming and safe place to live, with the school acting as a central hub. Ensuring the needs of all residents is a priority as the parish looks to the future.

Stenness' proximity to significant natural and cultural heritage sites offers a wealth of opportunities for the community. Celebrating and integrating these assets as part of the Place Plan strengthens community ties with the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site. This is also a key aim of the World Heritage Site Management Plan, which sets out how the site will be managed over the next decade, and the World Heritage Site Programme, a developing suite of proposals to enhance and sustain these unique assets over time.

Addressing issues identified from across the community as part of the development of the Place Plan, and building on the parish's strengths, the Stenness Place Plan can help create a thriving, connected, and resilient community for generations to come.



A - Ring of Brodgar

B - View over Stenness Loch towards the Hoy Hills

Stenness, a predominantly rural area spanning 14 square miles, has a population across 218 households, with a concentration living in the Village of Stenness, and the remainder dispersed throughout the surrounding landscape.

The demographic in Stenness is considered fragile, having seen a slight decline (counted with neighbouring Sandwick) of 1.7 per cent in population between 2011 and 2021, in stark contrast to the 8 per cent growth seen across Orkney as a whole during this period.

The area (again with Sandwick) has a lower proportion of children, with only 11% under the age of 16, compared to 17% in Stromness for example. In contrast, the area has a notably higher proportion of older residents, with 30% aged 65 or over, compared to just 25% in Stromness.

While the school roll in Stenness remains healthy, with 31 pupils of primary age, and 8 in the nursery, the broader demographic picture highlights the challenges of a smaller, ageing population.

This demographic overview provides important context for planning the future of Stenness, as the community faces the complexities of a growing older population as well as lots of young families in the parish occupied with the busyness of active family lives.

(Source: Small Area Population Estimates 2021 and Stenness Community Association's own data)

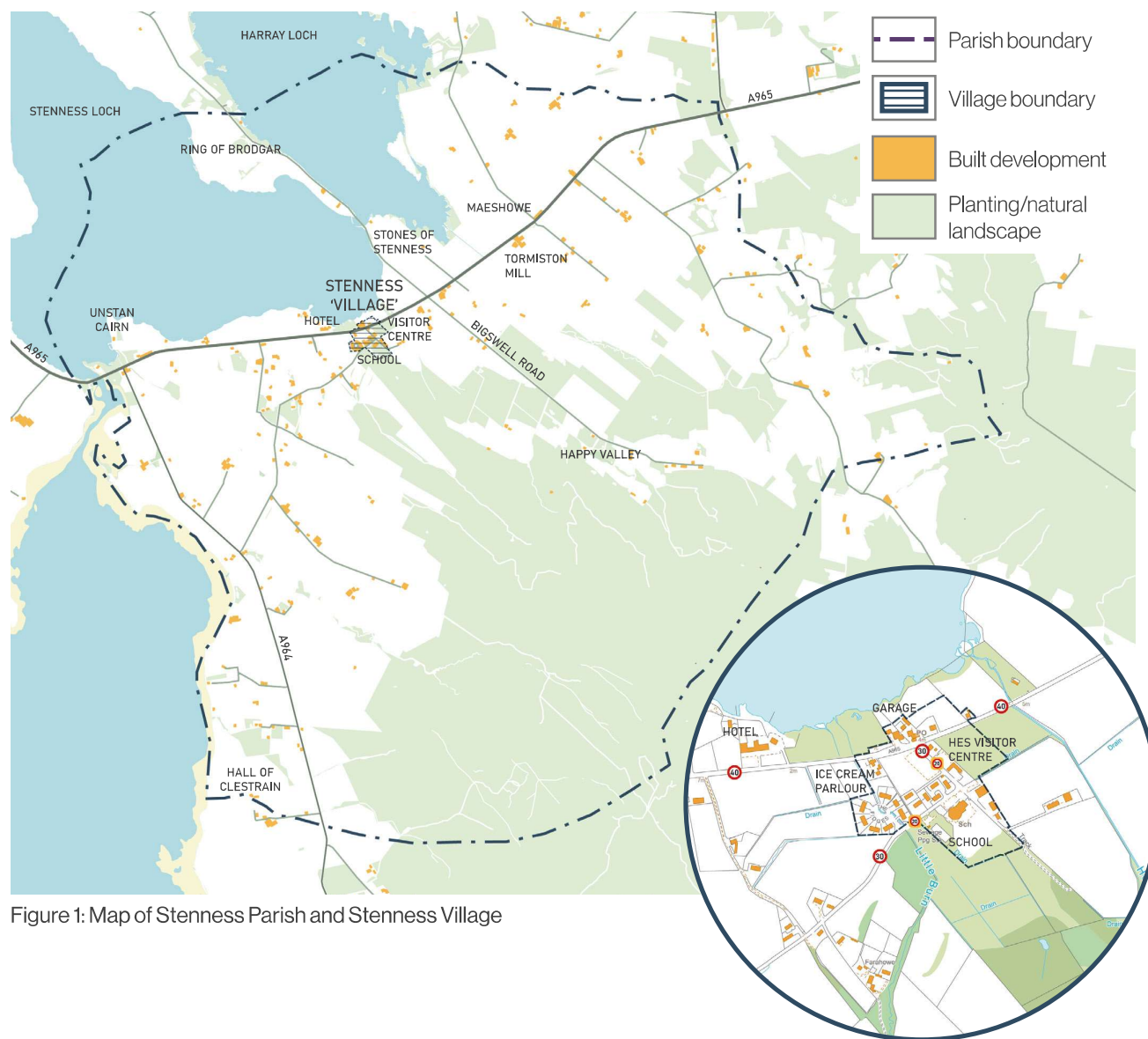


Figure 1: Map of Stenness Parish and Stenness Village

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

THE FOUNDATION OF THE STENNESS PLACE PLAN

The Stenness Place Plan is a testament to the power of community-led development, built on extensive engagement and genuine participation. The process has been guided by the people of Stenness, ensuring that the Plan reflects their priorities, aspirations, and unique local knowledge. While the initiative has been led by the Stenness Community Association, its success lies in the collaboration of a diverse range of groups and individuals, each contributing valuable insights and ideas.

A strong and committed steering group has been central to the success of this process. Comprising dedicated members from the community and supported by the consultant team preparing the Plan, the steering group has worked to coordinate engagement efforts, identify key themes, and ensure the process remained inclusive and transparent. Their passion and persistence have provided a solid foundation for the Plan, enabling it to respond effectively to the needs and aspirations of the Stenness community.

A range of engagement methods was used to ensure the Stenness Place Plan was informed by as many voices as possible. A community survey was conducted, promoted through the Stenness Community Association's strong social media

presence, which helped to gather around 50 responses through a mix of online submissions and completed hard copies. Face-to-face engagement was also prioritised, with conversations held at the popular Winter Fayre, providing an opportunity to reach a wide audience. Further input was gathered through attendance at various community group meetings and a dedicated session with the primary school, allowing children to share their unique perspectives. Key community groups included Firth and Stenness Community Council, the Over 60s Group, and the Parent and Carers Council. Local residents and businesses brought their lived experiences to the discussion, while Friends of Happy Valley and representatives from the World Heritage Site Programme and Historic Environment Scotland offered insights into the area's natural and cultural assets. Support from external organisations such as Destination Orkney, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), various sections of Orkney Islands Council, and Sustrans further enriched the process. Together, this collaborative effort has created a comprehensive, community-driven roadmap to capture the goals for the sustainable development of Stenness.



Copies of children's ideas from school engagement event



A - Mapping exercise at Winter Fayre event
B - Session at Stenness Community School
C - Engagement at Winter Fayre event

The radar chart provides an overview of community perceptions across key aspects of life in Stenness, drawn from our Place Plan survey, which the community has embraced and actively contributed to. The key aspects measured—such as transport, housing, social interaction, and the natural environment—were taken from the Place Plan Toolkit, a standard approach used to develop a well-rounded understanding of the factors that shape a place.

On a scale of 1 meaning poor, to 7 meaning good, the survey responses highlight strengths, such as safety (6.13), identity (5.43), and social interaction (5.26), reflecting a strong sense of place and connection among residents. At the same time, it identifies areas for improvement, with moving around (2.52) emerging as a key challenge, pointing to concerns about transport and accessibility.

By capturing community priorities in this way, the survey has played a crucial role in shaping the Stenness Place Plan, ensuring that the ambitions set out reflect real needs and aspirations. These data have provided a foundation for targeted action, helping to build on what already works well while addressing areas that need investment and improvement.

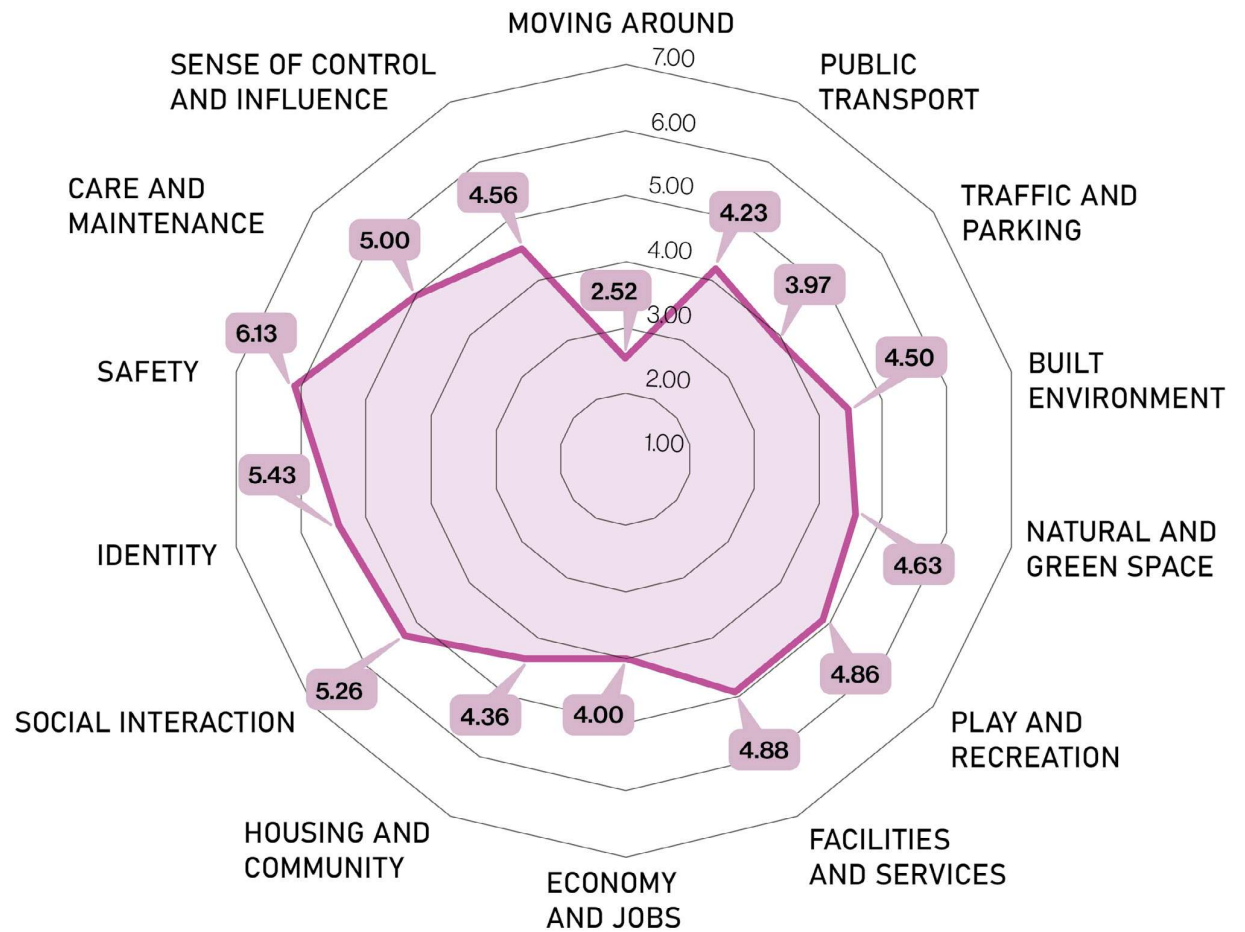


Figure 2: Radar chart of perceptions

The Stenness Place Plan has been carefully structured to align with the community's priorities, alongside professional judgement on the key requirements and opportunities for success. The areas identified as needing the most attention are prominently featured, including the crucial ambition

to improve the ability and safety of getting about on foot. Additionally, theme 7 highlights the opportunity to strengthen the community's capacity to deliver on the ambitions they have expressed, ensuring that the community's vision for the future is achievable and sustainable.

ABOUT PLACE PLANS

LOCAL PLACE PLAN FOR STENNESS

Local Place Plans (LPPs) provide a unique opportunity for communities to come together to shape their future. Introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, LPPs give communities like Stenness the right to develop a plan as part of the Scottish planning system. The community's vision for land use and development is at the heart of LPPs, and once approved, these plans must be considered by Orkney Islands Council when developing the Local Development Plan, which is a core document used when making planning decisions.

LPPs are rooted in the aspirations, priorities, and projects of the community. The LPP process encourages open dialogue, allowing the community to express what matters most to Stenness and to work together to create a shared vision for the future.

Having a Local Place Plan for Stenness:

- Provides residents of Stenness the opportunity to look ahead and create a vision for where we live, work, and connect.
- Helps the Stenness Community Association, Orkney Islands Council, Historic Environment Scotland, and other bodies consider the impact of future planning applications and development decisions in the area.
- Supports local organisations such as the Firth and Stenness Community Council, fostering a sense of collaboration and community development.
- Informs Orkney Islands Council's new Local Development Plan, ensuring that the unique needs of Stenness are considered in wider planning efforts.
- Influences funding and investment from the Scottish Government, Orkney Islands Council, other public bodies, funders, landowners, and businesses, helping to secure resources that better support our local community.



A - Drone photo along Ireland Road around School and Maeshowe Visitor Centre

STENNESS PLACE PLAN VISION

STENNESS: A CONNECTED AND WELCOMING COMMUNITY CELEBRATING HERITAGE AND SUPPORTING WELLBEING

The vision for Stenness is one of a connected, thriving, and inclusive community where every resident can feel safe, engaged, and supported. At its core, this vision focuses on enhancing both physical and social connections within the parish, creating a vibrant environment that celebrates its heritage while prioritising the needs of today and future generations.

Central to this vision is the commitment to improving infrastructure, particularly helping to create a more walkable and connected place, enabling easier access to key areas and ensuring safety for all. Embracing Stenness' rich proximity to natural and cultural heritage sites, the vision seeks to celebrate and integrate these treasures into the fabric of daily life, helping to strengthen the unique sense of identity and place.

Housing and sustainable development are key priorities, with a focus on fostering growth that supports families, while respecting heritage constraints. The vision also emphasises community health and wellbeing by creating spaces and activities that engage all demographics, ensuring inclusivity and fostering connections across generations. By integrating Stenness with the evolving World Heritage Site Programme, the community can benefit from local employment opportunities and positive economic growth. Lastly, addressing transportation challenges with sustainable solutions will help improve accessibility and mobility. Through these efforts, the vision for Stenness is one of a flourishing, connected, and resilient community.

- **CONNECTED AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY.**
- **ENHANCING INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESSIBILITY.**
- **CELEBRATING HERITAGE AND IDENTITY.**
- **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING.**
- **COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES.**



Photos showing the strong community spirit of Stenness

THEME 1: CONNECTING PLACES IN THE COMMUNITY

Stenness has good infrastructure, especially in the village centre, with well-maintained footpaths and street lighting around the school and community centre. Public transport is easy to access, with the X1 bus route passing through the village. There are also scenic walking routes around the Ring of Brodgar, Barnhouse Village, Happy Valley, and the peat hill tracks.

However, outside the village centre, the infrastructure is lacking, with many areas missing footpaths and cycle paths, and key locations like the Standing Stones Hotel, Brodgar Road and Happy Valley being hard to access.

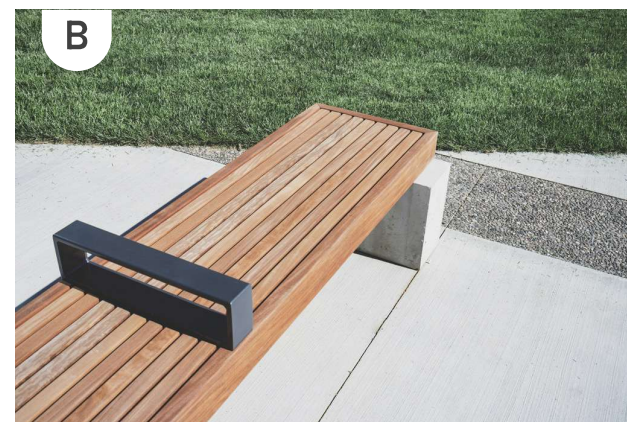
The main Stromness-Kirkwall road is a particular concern. It has heavy, fast-moving traffic and inadequate crossing points. Many survey respondents expressed safety concerns, especially for children walking to school. Without footpaths beyond the village, people are often forced to walk on the road, and there's no provision for cyclists. To address these issues, respondents suggested extending footpaths / cycleways to important locations, such as the Standing Stones Hotel, Brodgar Road, and Bigswell Road and creating walking and cycling paths along the main road.

The survey results clearly show a need for better active travel infrastructure. With an average score of just 2.52 out of 7, 'moving about' ranked the lowest of all 14 themes, indicating strong concerns about the current state of active travel in the area.

Improvements are needed to make Stenness more cohesive, safe, accessible, and attractive for all ages, providing better opportunities for the community to move around without relying on cars. Respondents specifically called for improvements in road safety, such as reduced speed limits and safer crossing points. Many mentioned the need for better lighting on routes outside the village and improved maintenance, and the need to provide seating along routes. Improving these aspects would make Stenness safer and encourage more walking and cycling to key destinations, helping to support Scotland's sustainable transport goals.

“TRAFFIC IS FAR TOO QUICK AND THERE IS NO SAFE WALKING ROUTE

THERE ARE NO
PAVEMENTS AND
BUMPY ROADS



A - View along A965

B - Photo by Scott Webb of a bench design




	Village boundary		40 mph speed sign
	Built development		30 mph speed sign
	Planting/natural landscape		20 mph school zone
	Severance through village caused by 40 mph main road		Issues raised about poor active travel infrastructure

Better footpaths, safer crossings, and dedicated cycle routes will make it easier and safer to walk and cycle between key places in Stenness – connecting the community and encouraging active travel.

ASPIRATIONS

- Safer, Calmer Roads** – Reduce traffic speeds and impacts on the A965.
- Connected Pathways** – Develop new routes linking key community locations.
- Safe Routes to School** – Create safe walking, wheeling and cycling routes for school children.
- Rest & Enjoy** – Install benches along key routes.
- Clear & Welcoming Signage** – Enhance signage for both residents and visitors.

Figure 3: Village connection plan



THEME 2: HOUSING AND PLANNING

Stenness offers a variety of house sizes and types, with a mix of traditional and modern homes – a diversity that caters to different needs and preferences, making Stenness an attractive place to live whether for families, individuals or those seeking social housing – a strong sense of community is present with new residents welcomed and supported by their neighbours.

However, there is a critical shortage of housing across Orkney. House prices are incredibly high, which is a real barrier for young people looking to move onto and up the property ladder.

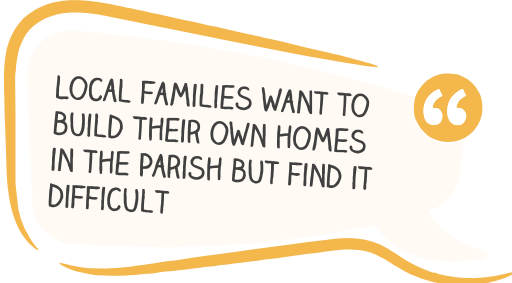
Planning houses in rural areas is generally complex; more so in Stenness, located within the environs of a UNESCO World Heritage site. There is a strong view within the community that planning decisions in Stenness restrict and complicate their ability to respond to their housing needs.

More starter and affordable homes are seen as essential to meet local needs for people who want to remain or return to Stenness; there is also a need to tailor housing to attract families that will in turn sustain the school, and to provide more accessible and assisted housing for people with mobility challenges or those in need of support.

Innovation is needed in siting, design and delivery to develop the right kind of housing for the community so that it can grow and be sustainable for the future.






Pertinent considerations include:

- Where should new houses be constructed and how many?
- Developing housing within walking distances of key facilities?
- Opportunities for the community to develop and deliver its own housing strategy and local policy for allocation?



LOCAL FAMILIES WANT TO BUILD THEIR OWN HOMES IN THE PARISH BUT FIND IT DIFFICULT

ASPIRATIONS

-  **Community Housing Provision** – Explore potential for additional, affordable housing cluster on the village fringe.
-  **Stronger Planning Partnership** – Work with the local authority on housing solutions.
-  **Lifetime Homes** – Ensure accessible housing for all ages and needs.
-  **Housing Growth & Renewal** – Identify locations for new and expanded community and private housing.
-  **Sustainable Homes Initiative** – Upgrade housing with renewables, insulation, and smart tech for a greener future.

CASE STUDY: SMART CLACHAN RURAL HOUSING

The project aims to combat depopulation by creating affordable, sustainable live/work spaces, supporting the Gaelic language and culture while encouraging repopulation. Inspired by traditional 'clachan' townships,

Smart Clachan will integrate cooperative housing models, shared services, and a community work hub, fostering sustainability and enabling local businesses or remote work.

“

YOUNG BLOOD IS THE CORE TO THE FUTURE ON ANY RURAL AREA. SO MANY WANT TO BUILD, AS THEY CAN'T AFFORD THE PRICES OF PROPERTIES FOR SALE.

SOME FORM OF PREFERENCE SHOULD BE GIVEN TO YOUNG LOCALS IN THE ALLOCATION OF RENTED PROPERTIES, OVER PEOPLE THAT HAVE JUST ARRIVED ON THE ISLANDS.



A - Render of Rural Housing Scotland's proposed housing in Uist: Image source — G+GA/Modular West

B - Render of proposed housing in Portree on the Isle of Skye: Image source — Olli Blair Architect

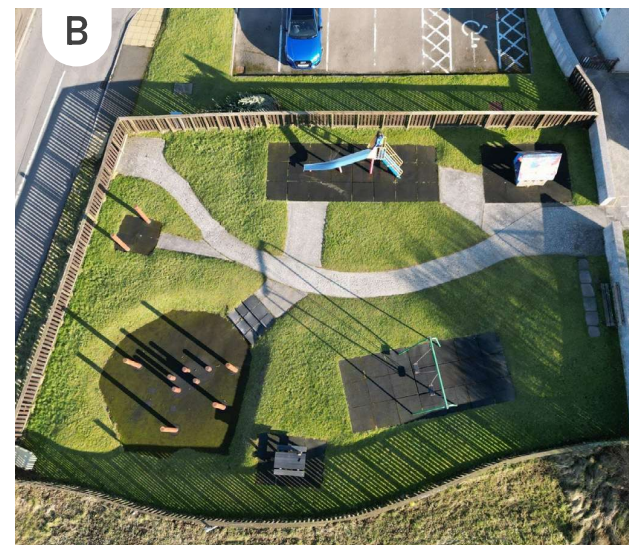
THEME 3: PLAY AND RECREATION

The Stenness community is committed to enhancing the local environment for its residents, and the development of the Stenness Outdoor Community Space (SOCS) project is the next step in building a stronger, more connected village. Since the play park's initial opening in 1996, there has been a steady progression in maintaining and improving the space, but it's clear that more work is needed to meet the current needs and expectations of the community.

The recent creation of the Stenness Outdoor Community Space project, which officially launched in January 2023, reflects the growing desire for an upgraded and more inclusive area that serves both children and adults alike. The vision for this new community space extends far beyond simply updating the existing play park. There's a demand to create a vibrant hub for all residents—a space that combines outdoor fun with opportunities for socialisation, exercise, and relaxation. By expanding the play park and creating more green spaces for socialising and community events, the project aims to foster a sense of belonging and pride for both young and old. These improvements will not only serve as a hub for leisure but will also contribute to the local economy by attracting more visitors to the area, benefiting nearby businesses.

The community's commitment has also been reflected in the resurgence and success of the parish football team, which reached the final of the parish cup competition in August 2023 for the first time in 86 years. This success has brought about a renewed sense of pride and spirit in the community, further highlighting the importance of creating spaces that support physical activity and community connections. By expanding opportunities for sport and outdoor recreation, the Stenness Outdoor Community Space will help to promote health, wellness, and a stronger community spirit, benefiting all ages and abilities.

**“ SOCS DESIRED OUTCOME:
A COMMUNITY SPACE WHERE
PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND AT
ALL STAGES OF LIFE CAN COME
TO PLAY, LEARN, SOCIALISE AND
PARTICIPATE IN THE OUTDOOR
ENVIRONMENT.**



A - View from school recreation area looking south-east
B - Aerial of existing play area

The Stenness Outdoor Community Space aims to provide a more inclusive and accessible environment, fostering positive interactions between individuals and families, as well as offering a space for learning and play. The goal is to create a hub where everyone, regardless of age or ability, feels welcomed and valued. By improving the current play park and adding new facilities, this project will create a place that brings the entire community together, enhancing the quality of life for all who call Stenness home.

The play park design has been finalised and a good deal of funding already secured. It is hoped that the play park will be developed in 2025. The outdoor space remains a priority for the Stenness Community with feasibility and key surveys complete and an aim to undertake this work in the next couple of years.



Figure 4: SOCS Phase 2 Concept Drawing

ASPIRATIONS

- **Safe Areas for Children** – Develop and deliver a new play park and create opportunities for play in Stenness.
- **Wellbeing & Enhanced Environment** – Develop further outdoor space including seating and family-friendly areas, and securing facilities for football in Stenness.
- **Community Growing & Intergenerational Opportunities** – Create a community growing space.

THEME 4: NURTURING STENNESS' NATURAL AND HERITAGE CAPITAL

Stenness boasts a diverse tapestry of landscapes and green spaces, from heathland and peat banks to fields, lochs, and beaches. The community and visitors alike enjoy outdoor gems such as Happy Valley and the area's rich array of heritage sites and monuments, from the popular and the well-known, to the lesser known and more hidden assets. This rich environment also holds significant natural value through its local wildlife and ecosystems.

As proud custodians, the community is committed to protecting and nurturing its natural and cultural heritage. This includes ensuring sustainable and safe access, preserving and enhancing existing outdoor spaces, and bringing greater recognition to Stenness' lesser-known landscapes and heritage for future generations.

Expanding opportunities to explore these green and outdoor spaces and assets will promote health, wellbeing, and community spirit, further enriching Stenness as a desirable place to live, raise families, and visit. Encouraging visitors from both Orkney and beyond to spend more time in Stenness, exploring beyond the well-known sites, offers the chance to showcase the area's hidden gems, including

peaceful walking routes, unique landscapes, and vibrant local culture. Enhancing access to all that Stenness has to offer will create a more immersive and rewarding experience, supporting sustainable tourism while benefiting the local economy. By encouraging visitors to explore beyond the well-known sites, there is potential to support the growth of local businesses, particularly in line with the Economy and Tourism theme's aspiration to create an enterprise hub. This could help open up opportunities for future businesses while building a stronger connection between visitors and the community, contributing to a more resilient and sustainable local economy.

As the living heart of Neolithic Orkney, the community have the opportunity to be an integral part of the World Heritage Site Programme, playing a key role in shaping the access and management of these globally significant sites.

“HAPPY VALLEY VOLUNTEERS ARE DOING WELL TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF THIS SPACE, FUNDING TO FURTHER IMPROVE IT WOULD BE REALLY GOOD TO SEE. IMPROVED PATHWAYS FOR WALKS SUCH AS CIRCULAR FROM THE SCHOOL UP IRELAND ROAD AND BACK OR UP TO THE OLD HILLSIDE QUARRY AND OVER THE HILL TO THE OTHER SIDE OF STENNESS WOULD BE GREAT.”



A - Happy Valley © Alan Bowmer

“ WE ARE IN THE HEART OF NEOLITHIC ORKNEY, AN SSSI AND NEIGHBOURS TO A RARE, WOODED AREA BUT WE CAN'T WALK OR CYCLE TO ANY OF IT



B - Standing Stones of Stenness

CASE STUDY: HEART OF ROUSAY BOARDWALK

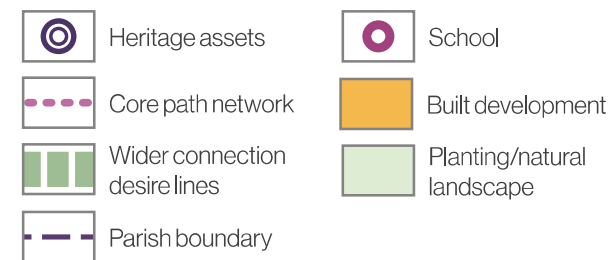
Across Orkney, community land ownership has enabled local communities to take control of important natural and heritage assets. Rousay, Egilsay, and Wyre Development Trust, a community-led trust and SCIO with a staff base funded from a variety of sources, secured £260,000 from the Scottish Land Fund to purchase the Trumland Estate—1,700 acres of peatland, pasture, and archaeological remains—ensuring its preservation and enhancement for both residents and visitors. This funding also supported the employment of a Ranger, who developed and implemented the

Boardwalk project, funded by the Trust alongside a grant from the Healthy Living Fund.

The Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust worked closely with the island's community to deliver a path that would open up the Trumland Estate. Accessible for all, the path was built out of durable maintenance-free recycled plastic. Along the boardwalk are 'living wall' planters with built in seating where the extensive views can be enjoyed. This initiative has improved access while promoting conservation and community wellbeing.



C - Photo source: Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust website



ASPIRATIONS




-  **Accessible Leisure Pathways Network** – Develop well-maintained, inclusive, circular routes with seating and interpretation building upon the core paths and trails.
-  **Collaborative Heritage Approach** – Work with partners to shape a community-driven vision.
-  **Stenness Landscape & Heritage Partnership** – Secure funding to protect and promote the parish's natural and cultural assets.

Figure 5: Plan of key heritage and natural capital locations around Stenness

THEME 5: BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Nestled within a rich tapestry of farmed land, heath and heritage, the built environment of Stenness serves the community well.

The community highlighted the importance of having essential resources such as a well-stocked shop, post office, the hotel, the ice cream parlour, and a bustling community hall and school, all of which contribute to a strong and supportive local infrastructure. Family-friendly spaces like Happy Valley, the new play park, and a community growing space are also seen as crucial for providing safe and engaging areas for children and families.

Being part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site is another key asset, enhancing Stenness' appeal, and giving it a unique identity. The community also values the rural charm and welcoming spirit of the community. To build on these strengths, enhancing the built environment is seen as vital for making the community a safer, more attractive, and sustainable place to live, work, and visit, ensuring it continues to thrive for future generations.

Maintaining and improving road infrastructure, junctions, paths, creating pedestrian crossings, bus stops, parking and signage can enhance safety and accessibility for all – and for future generations.

“THERE IS SOME RUN DOWN LOOKING PLACES IN THE VILLAGE

Revitalisation through simple acts of tidying up verges, facades and abandoned spaces; designing local spaces for the community and visitors to enjoy: incorporating seating, murals and shelter from the weather.

Enhancing and improving key buildings in the village is essential for the community and to encourage visitors to stay longer in Stenness.

Now is the time to understand future impacts relating to sea level rises and to what extent flood risk poses a key concern.

ASPIRATIONS

- Village Enhancement Scheme** – Improve amenities with funding for facades, planting, seating, and maintenance.
- Bringing Spaces Back to Life** – Engage with owners of abandoned buildings and land.
- Parish Signage Strategy** – Showcase Stenness' history through signage and interpretation.
- Better Roads & Transport** – Explore improvements to roads, junctions, pavements, and public transport infrastructure.
- Flood & Coastal Resilience** – Ensure Stenness is included in future flood risk and adaptation planning.



A - Photo along edge of the Loch of Stenness

THEME 6: ECONOMY AND TOURISM

Enhancing the economic profile of Stenness

There is a thriving, modest business base right across Stenness, across key economic sectors such as agriculture, construction, retail, food and drink and tourism, offering local employment opportunities in small and typically micro enterprises.

Many people commute out of Stenness given its close proximity to Stromness and Kirkwall, with a short journey in either direction, either by car or the regular bus service, which serves only the main A965 route.

With investment in facilities like business units, home working spaces, meeting areas, storage, and places to showcase local products, Stenness could encourage more businesses and economic activity to develop.

While many areas in Stenness benefit from super-fast internet, there are still pockets where connectivity falls short. Ensuring a full roll-out of high-speed internet across the parish is essential to support both businesses and home working, ensuring no one is left behind.



“ I WORK FOR THE COUNCIL, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO ROUTINELY WORK IN STENNESS RATHER THAN ALWAYS TRAVELLING TO KIRKWALL - COULD WE HAVE AN OFFICE BASE IN OR AT THE SCHOOL/COMMUNITY ROOMS? ”



A - Photo of Maeshowe Visitor Centre in Stenness village

B - Photo of food-truck (Stock photo by RDNE)

C - Photo of farmers market by Ryan Morris

UNESCO World Heritage Site – catalyst for economic growth in Stenness

At the heart of Orkney's tourism economy is the Heart of Neolithic Orkney, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that includes globally significant monuments such as Skara Brae, the Ring of Brodgar, the Stones of Stenness, and the Maeshowe chambered cairn.

The World Heritage Site Programme aims to provide a world-class, innovative solution to heritage management and sustainable tourism at the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site enabling exceptional engagement with and connection to the sites and their history for visitors and residents and protecting the outstanding value of the heritage for generations to come. There is a strong focus on bringing tangible benefits to the Stenness Community.

The Place Plan is committed to broader tourism goals, not necessarily focused on increasing visitor numbers, but on ensuring that visitors have high-quality experiences. It aims to support the dispersal of visitors across Orkney, showcasing the full range of attractions and opportunities the islands offer. Stenness, with its mix of well-known landmarks and hidden gems, has much to offer in this context, and the community has a unique opportunity to highlight both its iconic heritage sites and lesser-known treasures.



D - Ring of Brodgar



ASPIRATIONS

- Stenness Business Network** – Establish a collaborative group to support local businesses.
- Enterprise Hub** – Develop shared workspace, business units, cycle parking and facilities, electric vehicle (EV) charging and facilities for local enterprises.
- Pop-Up & Market Spaces** – Enable food vans, farmers' markets, and vendor opportunities.
- Heritage Tourism Links** – Identify community benefits from World Heritage partnerships.

THEME 7: BUILDING STENNESS CAPACITY

Stenness community spirit: key driver for its future

The people of Stenness are committed to improving local facilities, services, and opportunities. They want to be involved in decisions and take action to make Stenness a great place to live, work, and visit. Building strong resources, capacity, and resilience is key to supporting these ambitions and making the aspirations of this Local Place Plan a reality.

Stenness has a vibrant and proactive community that consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to creating opportunities for residents through a wide range of events and activities. From local gatherings to special events, the people of Stenness are actively shaping the future of their area. This Place Plan captures the collective ambitions for Stenness, highlighting key projects and aspirations for the future. Achieving these ambitions will require building on the existing enthusiasm and momentum, strengthening and expanding the community's capacity to drive these initiatives forward. With continued support and collaboration, the parish can ensure that the energy and spirit of Stenness remains a driving force in realising the exciting opportunities set out in the Place Plan.

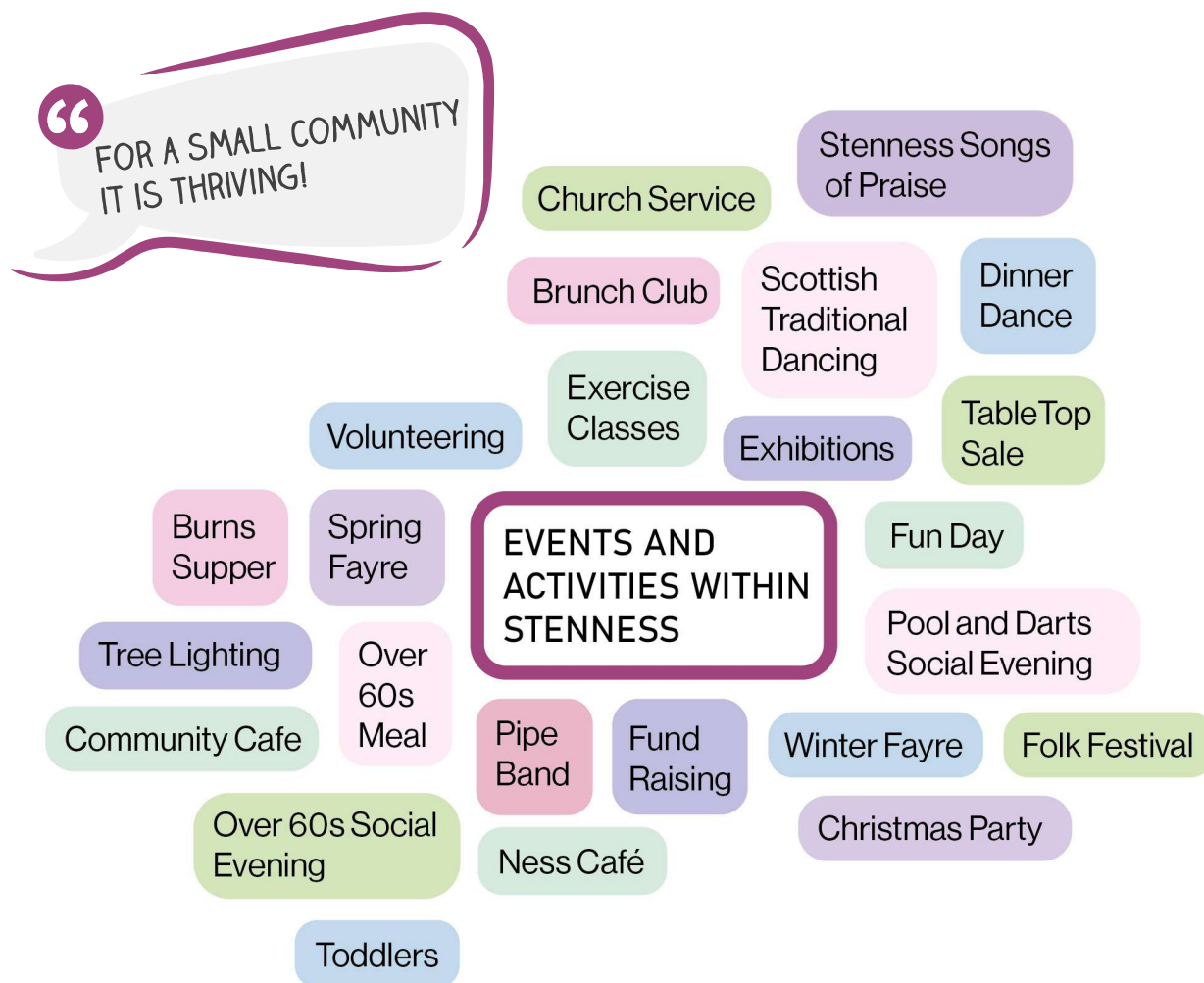


Figure 6: Events going on within Stenness

STENNESS IS THE
BEST PLACE IN THE
WORLD TO LIVE!



“

A GOOD COMMUNITY SPIRIT
EXISTS IN STENNESS, WITH
LOTS OF LOCAL ACTIVITIES
AND EVENTS ORGANISED
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.



A - Aerial view of Community School

The people of Stenness are passionate and committed to improving facilities, services, and opportunities for their community. They are eager to participate in decision-making and take actions that can enhance Stenness as a place to live, work, and visit. To achieve these goals—both now and for future generations—building strong resources, capacity, and resilience is vital.

ASPIRATIONS

- **Stenness Capacity** – Establish a resourced team to drive the vision forward.
- **Community at the heart** – Ensure Stenness plays a central role in shaping the future of the Heart of Neolithic Orkney e.g. strengthening ties with Orkney's World Heritage Site Programme.
- **Community Ownership & Stewardship** – Explore opportunities to manage key local assets for community benefit.

CASE STUDY: DELIVERING THE STENNESS OUTDOOR COMMUNITY SPACE

A committed and energetic steering group, supported by professional expertise, is the driving force behind a successful project. Transformational community projects take time, requiring patience, persistence, and careful planning at every stage. From securing initial funding to detailed feasibility studies and design development, each milestone is a crucial step toward delivering a project that meets community needs and aspirations.

Below are the key milestones achieved in Phase 1 of the SOCS Project:

- **End of January 2023** – Project officially launched.
- **March 2023** – Fundraising efforts began at the Spring Fayre, marking a strong first-year focus on generating funds.
- **March – June 2023** – Initial community consultations conducted.
- **Summer 2023** – Benchmarking activities undertaken.
- **Late Summer 2023** – Consultation findings reviewed and completed.
- **October 2023 – Early 2024** – Quotes obtained for feasibility studies and funding applications submitted.
- **April 2024** – First funding awarded for feasibility work.
- **May 2024** – Consultants procured to carry out feasibility study.
- **May – October 2024** – Feasibility study conducted, along with two initial surveys.
- **From October 2024** – Further development of play park plans based on feasibility findings.
- **November 2024** – Final feasibility report received.
- **End of 2024** – Total funds raised approaching £45,000.
- **January 2025** – Finalised design completed by the project team.
- Last two surveys pending completion.
- Installation timeline to be confirmed.



A - Current Play Park

B - Surveying work as part of SOCS project

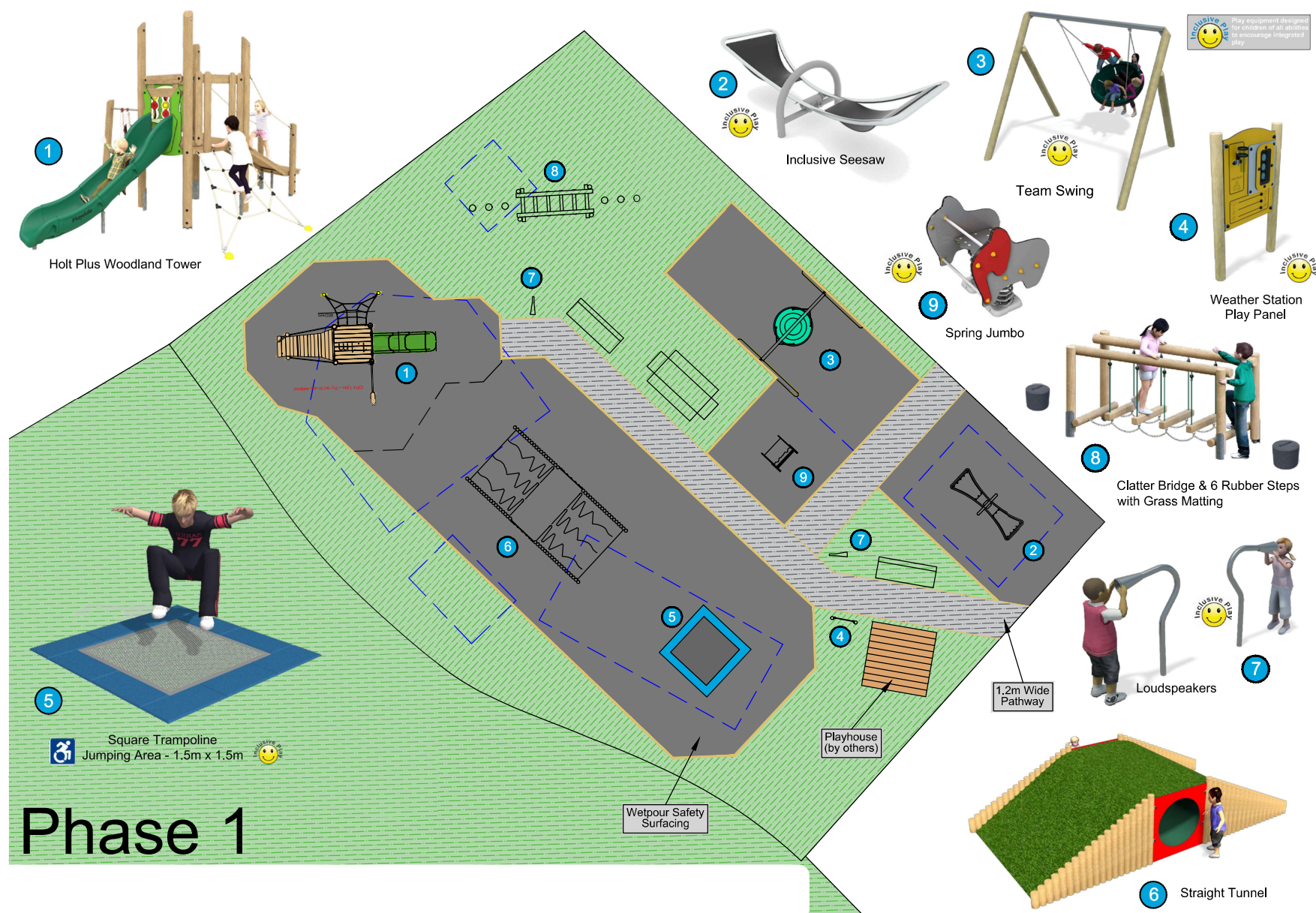


Figure 7: Plan of Phase 1

NEXT STEPS

NEXT STEPS FOR THE STENNESS PLACE PLAN:

The Stenness Place Plan represents a clear and ambitious vision for the future of the community, shaped by the people who call it home. It has been informed by an extensive and ongoing process of community engagement, ensuring that voices have been heard, and every aspiration reflected. The Place Plan is a roadmap for a thriving, connected, and resilient Stenness, where heritage, community spirit, and sustainable development go hand in hand.

Looking ahead, the success of this Place Plan relies on continued collaboration and support from our stakeholders. While the community of Stenness has driven this vision, the commitment of external organisations, including Orkney Islands Council, Historic Environment Scotland, Sustrans, and the World Heritage Site Programme, will be crucial in bringing these aspirations to life. Together, we can transform the aspirations in this Place Plan into tangible improvements that will benefit current and future generations.

As a community we will focus on ensuring that Stenness remains at the heart of Orkney's growth, not just as a destination for visitors but as a vibrant place to live, work, and connect. From improving infrastructure to celebrating our rich heritage and promoting sustainable development, the next steps



will involve action on a number of fronts: reducing the impact of traffic, connecting pathways, influencing planning policies to balance community needs with heritage protection, nurturing local businesses, and creating spaces and opportunities that bring the community together.

Through building capacity we aim to, coordinate efforts and build momentum, ensuring that key projects are prioritised and effectively resourced. Additionally, we will actively seek to harness the opportunities of 'community benefits' from current and future major development and projects, ensuring that these benefits are reinvested into the local

community to support sustainable growth, improve infrastructure, and enhance the quality of life for residents. By aligning development opportunities with community needs, we can create long-term positive impacts for Stenness.

This Place Plan is a living document—dynamic and flexible, ready to evolve as new challenges and opportunities arise. The community of Stenness has shown its strength and dedication, and with external support, we are confident that we can realise our vision and secure a prosperous and sustainable future for Stenness.



COMMUNITY IN STENNESS IS ABOUT MORE THAN JUST BEING PART OF SOMETHING - IT'S ABOUT COMING TOGETHER TO CREATE SOMETHING THAT MAKES US ALL FEEL CONNECTED AND PROUD.

