

# Lochindaal Way Evaluation Summary Report



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## 1.1 The Lochindaal Way

This report provides a summary of the full evaluation and monitoring report conducted for the Lochindaal Way, a Places for Everyone funded project. For access to the full report please contact [ewan.smith@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:ewan.smith@sustrans.org.uk)<sup>1</sup>.

### Project Background

The villages of Port Charlotte and Bruichladdich on the Isle of Islay (Scottish west coast) are just 2 miles apart but were previously only connected by a 60mph road with no provision for pedestrians or cyclists. The Lochindaal Way is a newly constructed segregated active travel route which provides a safe, accessible traffic-free route for residents (including school children and commuters) and visitors travelling between the two communities.



**The Lochindaal Way (in red) between Port Charlotte and Bruichladdich.**

The Lochindaal Way received the majority of its £1.4 million in funding from the Places for Everyone (formerly Community Links) programme during the 2017–2018 grant iteration<sup>2</sup>. The project was managed by Islay Community Access Group (ICAG) and Argyll and Bute Council. Construction began in 2019, with the 2.5km path formally opened to the public in March 2022.

### Project aims

The aims of this project were to achieve improved connectivity and enhance visitor experience and road safety along the popular coastline of Islay by linking the village of Port Charlotte and the employment and visitor destination of Bruichladdich.

### Delivery of the project

The new 2.5km path is separated from the main road and has a sealed surface which was designed to be accessible for a wide range of users. Along the route 5 bridges and one access ramp were constructed.

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<sup>1</sup> Or contact our Scotland office: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/contact-us/sustrans-offices/>

<sup>2</sup> Other funding organisations included: The LEADER/CLLD programme run by the European Network for Rural Development and Bruichladdich Distillery which was also involved in the promotion of the project.

## 1.2 Evaluating the project's impact

Sustrans' Research and Monitoring Unit undertook monitoring before and after creation of the new path. This involved counting the number of active travel trips, surveying the speed and volume of vehicles, interviewing path users and conducting focus groups and depth interviews with stakeholders and local residents. Table 1 shows the full list of monitoring tools used and their respective timings.

**Table 1.** Range of monitoring tools used over the course of the monitoring and evaluation of the Lochindaal Way including the dates of delivery. \* Follow-up dates include dates from 2021 when people were able to use the path but the formal opening was delayed due to covid.

Monitoring Tool	Baseline Date(s)	Construction (May 2019 – September 2021)	Follow-up Date(s) *
Focus Group with the Islay Community Access Group (ICAG)	-		June 22
Interviews with local residents and project stakeholders	-		June 22
Interviews with distillery employees	-		July 21 / July 22
Route User Intercept Survey (RUIS)	-		June 22
Traffic, Speed and Volume (TSV)	March 19		May 22
Video Manual Count (VMC)	March 19		May 22
Hands Up Scotland Survey (HUSS)	2019, 2020		2021

### Transport Scotland Active Travel Outcomes

The project was evaluated against the following of Transport Scotland's Active Travel Outcomes<sup>3</sup>:

- **Outcome 1:** Increase the number of people choosing walking, cycling and wheeling<sup>4</sup> in Scotland.
- **Outcome 2:** High quality walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure is available to all.
- **Outcome 3:** Walking, cycling and wheeling is safer for all.
- **Outcome 5:** Delivery of walking, cycling and wheeling is promoted and supported by a range of partners.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/active-travel-framework-1/>

<sup>4</sup> Wheeling refers to using a wheelchair or mobility scooter, here and throughout the report.

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## 1.3 Project Outcomes

Highlights from the project's Evaluation report are presented below.

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### **Outcome 1: Increase the number of people choosing walking, cycling and wheeling**

The level of active travel between Port Charlotte and Bruichladdich has increased since the construction of the Lochindaal Way. **Since completion, the number of active travel trips taken annually has increased by 557% (from an annual usage estimate of 6,100 trips in 2019 to 34,000 in 2022<sup>5</sup>).**

Almost all (95%) path users<sup>6</sup> either agreed or strongly agreed that the path encourages them to walk and cycle more, suggesting that the increase in active travel is due to the new path. Residents reported that people were now making this journey (between Port Charlotte and Bruichladdich) by foot or by cycle instead of driving.

**“There’s quite a few locals using it, from Port Charlotte...now, instead of driving, they’ll maybe walk and walk back.”**

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### **Outcome 2: High quality walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure is available to all**

The quality of the path is perceived to be very high, with 100% of path users either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the path is fit for purpose and well maintained. Additionally, 90% of path users either agreed or strongly agreed that the path is easily accessible<sup>7</sup>. The overall impression from qualitative interviews was that users thought the path was of a high quality, and users were particularly impressed by the quality of the surface and the dry-stone walling.

**“The quality is brilliant actually, I think it's really, really well done. The dry-stone walling is amazing, they took so much care over it.”**

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<sup>5</sup> Based on 93 active travel users counted before construction and 634 counted after construction.

<sup>6</sup> Based on 21 route users surveyed after construction.

<sup>7</sup> The remaining 10% were neutral.

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One of five bridges located along the Lochindaal Way. Image Capture: Dec 2021, © 2023 Google

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### Outcome 3: Walking, cycling and wheeling is safer for all

Prior to the path's construction, pedestrians sometimes used the A847 – a busy 60mph road – to travel between the two villages. Interviewees' main expectation of the path was that it would improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly for distillery visitors. All stakeholders (ICAG, Bruichladdich Distillery and Argyll and Bute Council) felt that by providing a traffic-free accessible path this objective had been met.

Among route-user survey respondents, 90% either agreed or strongly agreed that the path feels safe<sup>8</sup>.

Improved safety from traffic was often the first topic mentioned in interviews, and was highly valued by local residents. One interviewee suggested that this was encouraging people who would previously not have considered making any journeys by foot to walk.

**“It’s great and we’ve got kids who’ve got a variety of different needs and they’re all able to use it as well; it’s good for everyone.”**

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<sup>8</sup> The remaining 10% were neutral.



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## Outcome 5: Delivery of walking, cycling and wheeling is promoted and supported by a range of partners



The Lochindaal Way after project completion.  
Credit: Sustrans

The Lochindaal Way differs from other projects funded by Sustrans through Places for Everyone as ICAG had also obtained funding from a local business, the Bruichladdich Distillery. The distillery contributed £50,000 during the first stage of the project. They also contributed staff time in the form of volunteer days, purchased signage and have taken on some ongoing maintenance of the path.

Although the financial contribution from the distillery represented a small proportion of the overall project cost, ICAG valued this early funding at a stage when it was otherwise hard to attract financial support. The community group appreciated that the distillery trusted ICAG with project management and planning and took a hands-off approach.

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## 1.4 Remaining challenges

Overall, the path is perceived as a good asset to the local community. However, some issues were highlighted. Interview participants noted that the speed limit where the path crosses the road outside Port Charlotte remains 60mph. They also noted a lack of lighting on the path, the camber of the path being too great on some sections, weeds growing through the path surface and that the lip of the bridges can be uncomfortable for cyclists.

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## Note of appreciation

Thank you to all interview and survey participants who participated in the data collection for this evaluation report. Thank you especially to Islay Community Accessibility Group (ICAG) for assisting us on Sustrans' Research and Monitoring Unit's site visit in June of 2022 and to Bruichladdich Distillery for participating in stakeholder interviews.