

## **SGOIL AN IOCHDAIR AGUS A'CHOIMHEARSNACHD**

### **RESULTS OF COMMUNITY SURVEY**

#### **BACKGROUND**

Sgoil an Iochdar agus a' Choimhearsnachd is a community group set up in partnership with several local groups and the school. The aims of the group are to promote development of sports facilities and their use and maintenance in the Iochdar area. The perceived need for facilities in and around Iochdar was the catalyst for the formation of the group.

Iochdar School serves an area from Peninerine in South Uist, to Griminish in Benbecula. Lionacleit secondary school lies in the northern part of the catchment area, in Benbecula. It has excellent sports facilities, available outside school hours to other groups. However, the primary school has had difficulty in arranging access within school hours, and has no suitable outdoor facilities of its own. The Iochdar Saints football-team is the pinnacle of the local interest in football, but at present their home ground is unusable because of water logging and ruts.

We felt that there were problems of access to Lionacleit, particularly for some groups of the population. In addition, we did not know what interest there was in the Iochdar area for other sports, and whether new sports clubs might be formed.

#### **METHODS**

In order to assess how people in the catchment area of the school felt about local sports facilities, we circulated a questionnaire to all households. A sample questionnaire is attached. The form was designed to find out a little about respondents, and in particular, their age and area of residence. We also sought information about car possession and driving skills, to ascertain respondent's ability to go to Lionacleit after school hours.

The second section of the form asked general questions about whether people were satisfied with the facilities and their accessibility. It also asked general questions about the outdoor environment, both around Iochdar, and around their own area of residence.

The third section sought details about particular sports. We asked for details of which sports people were interested in, and whether they felt they had the facilities they needed, either locally, or elsewhere.

Finally, we asked people to append their comments. We asked people to write to us separately so that the questionnaire replies were anonymous.

Forms were distributed to all households on the electoral register in the postcode areas that represent Iochdar School's catchment area. 440 questionnaires were posted out. The number of households in the HS7 area slightly exceeded the number of households in the HS8 area. Forms could be returned by post, or to the school, doctor's surgery, or to the church. The forms were distributed just before Christmas, and were collected back in by Valentine's Day.

## RESULTS

### Part 1: demography

143 people responded to our survey, 94 (65.7% of respondents) from South Uist, and 49 (34.3%) from Benbecula- 64 (44.8%) were male, and 74 (51.7%) were female. 5 (3.5%) were too coy to state their gender.

The age range of respondents was as shown below:

No reply	Under 17	18-40	41-64	65 and over
44	34	33	30	2
30.8%	23.8%	23%	21%	1.4%

The age/sex analysis shows that the men were shy about their age on the form.

	No reply	Under 17	18-40	41-64	65 and over
F	17	23	18	14	2
M	22	11	15	16	0

Only one disabled person identified himself or herself on the form. The information from such small groups cannot therefore help us to extrapolate results to encompass all over 65yr olds, or all disabled people in the area.

56 (39%) did not answer the question about driving, 60 (42%) stated that they could drive, and 27 (18.9%) that they could not. The under 17's (23.8%) cannot drive by law.

75 respondents (52.4%) identified themselves as living within 3 miles of Iochdar School.

### Part 2: general information

110 people (76.9%) felt that Iochdar would benefit from an all-weather pitch. 29 (20.3%) were unsure or didn't reply, and 4 (2.8%) said no.

106 people (74.1%) would like to see more cycle/footpaths in their locality. 28 (19.6%) were unsure or didn't reply, and only 9 (6.3%) would not.

112 people (78.3%) thought that trees would improve their local environment, 27 (18.9%) were unsure or didn't reply, and 4 (2.8%) thought not.

In answer to the question about the adequacy of local recreation facilities, (Q.15) the overall replies are more evenly split. 50 (35%) were satisfied, 69 (48.3%) were not, and 24 (16.8%) were unsure or didn't reply.

Breaking this reply down by age, we found the following:

Q.15 "In your view are current local recreation facilities adequate for you?"

Age-group	Total in group	Yes	No	Unsure	No reply
<17	34(100)	6 (17.6%)	25 (73.5%)	0 (0)	3 (8.8)
18-40	33 (100)	12 (36.4)	19 (57.6)	1 (3)	1 (3)
41-64	30(100)	15 (50)	11 (36.7)	3 (10)	2 (6.7)
65+	2 (100)	0	0	0	2 (100)

(Numbers in brackets are percentages of each age group holding each opinion, not a percentage of total number of respondents)

Breaking the same question down by postcode, we found the following:

Post code	Total in group	Yes	No	Unsure	No reply
HS7	49(100)	19 (38.8)	15 (30.6)	4 (8.2)	11 (22.4)
HS8	94 (100)	31 (33)	54 (57.5)	2 (2.1)	7 (7.4)

(Numbers in brackets are percentages of respondents in each postcode area)

In answer to the question "Do you use Lionacleit sports facilities?" (Q9), 82 (57.3%) replied yes, and 40 (28%) said no.

By age:

Age-group	Total in group	Yes	No	No reply
<17	34(100)	29(85.3)	3(8.8)	2(5.9)
18-40	33 (100)	24(72.7)	8(24.3)	1(3)
41-64	30(100)	12(40)	14(46.7)	4(13.3)
65+	2 (100)	0	0	2 (100)

By postcode:

Post code	Total in group	Yes	No	No reply
HS7	49(100)	32(65)	9(18.4)	6(12.2)
HS8	94 (100)	50(53.2)	31(33)	13(13.8)

Question 10 asked how often did respondents use the facilities at Lionacleit.

The replies, by postcode, were:

	Total	1	2	3	4+
HS7	32(100)	18(56.4)	5(15.6)	7(21.9)	1(3.1)
HS8	50(100)	18(36)	19(38)	3(6)	0(0)

By age:

	Total	1	2	3	4+
<17	28	8	13	6	1
18-40	16	11	5	0	0
41-64	11	9	0	2	0

Question 11 asked if Lionacleit had suitable facilities for the respondent's favourite activity. 76 said yes, 25 said no, and 6 weren't sure. 40 did not reply.

By postcode:

	Total	Yes	No	Unsure	No reply
HS7	49(100)	26(53)	6(12.2)	2(4.1)	15(30.6)
HS8	94(100)	50(53.2)	19(20.2)	4(4.3)	21(22.3)

By age:

	Total	Yes	No	Unsure	No reply
<17	34(100)	25(73.5)	4(11.8)	2(5.9)	3(8.8)
18-40	33(100)	23(69.7)	7(21.2)	0	3(9.1)
41-64	30(100)	16(53.3)	2(6.7)	2(6.7)	10(33.3)
65+	2(100)	2(100)	0	0	0

Question 12 asked if the facilities at Lionacleit were of a suitable size for the activities of the respondent. 90 (62.9%) said they were. This exceeded the number of people saying that they used the facilities.

Question 13 asked if respondents could go to Lionacleit when they wished. 32 (22.4%) said no, 32 (22.4%) did not reply, and 78 (54.5%) said yes. No one was uncertain.

Breaking this down by age and by post code, we find the following:

By age:

	Total	Yes	No	No reply
<17	34(100)	20(58.7)	11(32.5)	3(8.8)
18-40	33(100)	23(69.7)	9(27.3)	1(3)
41-64	30(100)	20(66.7)	4(13.3)	6(20)
65+	2(100)	0	0	2(100)

By postcode:

Post code	Total	Yes	No	No reply
HS7	49(100)	31(63.3)	5(10.2)	13(26.5)
HS8	94 (100)	47 (50)	28(29.8)	19(20.2)

### Part 3: named sports and activities

Question 18 asked about specific -sports; were people interested in them, and whether they have suitable facilities, whether locally or on the Southern Isles.

In order to analyse the 30+ activities listed and suggested, first of all we noted all activities where an interest was shown, grouping the according to their nature. For the most popular activities, some further analysis of the figures was performed.

a. Sports requiring an outdoor pitch or field: Football (61 replies), shinty (30 replies), hockey (32), tennis (40), athletics (38), basketball (37), netball (25), golf (1), volleyball (1).

b. Indoor activities: Table tennis (33), martial arts (2) youth club (2) badminton (3) bowling (4) curling (1) swimming (58) squash (2)

c. Adventurous activities requiring facilities for storage of equipment, meeting and training areas: Canoeing (37), Diving (34), windsurfing (32), climbing (36), riding (33) shooting (2), surfing (3)

d. Outdoor recreation benefiting from some provision: Cycling (73), walking (80), ecology (28), bird watching (35), play parks (2)

16 activities attracted over 30 respondents. Some of these are outside the scope of our current planning, but never the less provide an insight into what clubs might form, and what facilities might be used.

The questionnaire also asked people about their opinion concerning the available facilities. The replies have been analysed by age and post code for the most popular activities.

Walking (80 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	23	57	13	29	21
Good locally	14	38	9	20	12
Poor locally	1	11	4	6	1
Good on Islands	8	8	-	3	8
Poor on islands	-	-	-	-	-
No facilities	-	-	-	-	-

Cycling (73 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	17	66	20	21	15
Good locally	4	31	10	8	5
Poor locally	6	19	9	9	5
Good on Islands	-	4	-	2	2
Poor on islands	3	1	-	1	1
No facilities	4	1	1	1	2

Football (61 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	14	47	15	14	12
Good locally	11	23	8	7	6
Poor locally	3	19	7	6	4
Good on Islands	-	4	-	-	2
Poor on islands	-	1	-	1	-
No facilities	-	-	-	-	-

Tennis (40 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	9	32	10	13	8
Good locally	3	12	5	3	1
Poor locally	-	12	4	4	4
Good on Islands	1	4	1	2	2
Poor on islands	2	1	-	-	-
No facilities	3	3	-	4	1

Athletics (38 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	8	30	14	12	6
Good locally	3	7	3	1	-
Poor locally	-	17	7	7	3
Good on Islands	5	2	3	3	1
Poor on islands	-	4	1	1	2
No facilities	-	-	-	-	-

Basketball (37 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	7	20	12	8	5
Good locally	5	17	8	4	-
Poor locally	1	2	2	-	1
Good on Islands	1	1	1	-	-
Poor on islands	-	9	1	4	4
No facilities	-	1	-	-	-

Canoeing (37 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	8	28	10	12	7
Good locally	4	6	5	3	1
Poor locally	-	1	-	-	-
Good on Islands	1	5	-	-	2
Poor on islands	2	14	5	6	3
No facilities	1	3	-	3	1

Climbing (36 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	5	32	10	11	8
Good locally	-	4	2	-	-
Poor locally	-	1	-	-	-
Good on Islands	2	6	-	4	4
Poor on islands	2	16	8	5	3
No facilities	1	4	-	2	1

Bird watching (35 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	6	29	5	9	13
Good locally	2	12	2	5	6
Poor locally	-	6	2	1	2
Good on Islands	2	5	-	1	2
Poor on islands	2	5	1	2	2
No facilities	-	1	-	-	1



Diving (34 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	7	27	28	21	22
Good locally	2	6	1	3	1
Poor locally	2	5	3	1	2
Good on Islands	-	4	-	1	1
Poor on islands	2	5	-	3	2
No facilities	1	7	2	4	2

Table tennis (33 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	2	29	6	12	6
Good locally	-	4	-	2	2
Poor locally	-	4	-	2	2
Good on Islands	-	5	1	2	2
Poor on islands	-	6	3	3	-
No facilities	-	1	-	-	-

Horse riding (33 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	7	26	8	9	9
Good locally	5	8	1	5	4
Poor locally	-	4	2	1	1
Good on Islands	-	5	2	-	2
Poor on islands	2	8	3	3	2
No facilities	-	1	-	-	-

Wind Surfing (32 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	7	25	7	13	7
Good locally	3	7	5	3	1
Poor locally	1	-	-	-	1
Good on Islands	-	8	-	2	1
Poor on islands	2	10	2	5	3
No facilities	1	5	-	3	1

Hockey (32 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	3	29	11	7	6
Good locally	1	9	5	2	1
Poor locally	-	4	3	-	1
Good on Islands	-	1	-	-	-
Poor on islands	2	4	1	1	2
No facilities	-	11	2	4	2

Shinty (30 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	6	24	8	11	5
Good locally	3	2	1	2	1
Poor locally	-	7	4	3	-
Good on Islands	-	-	-	-	-
Poor on islands	1	1	-	2	-
No facilities	2	14	3	4	4

Ecology (28 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	3	25	5	11	6
Good locally	3	2	1	2	-
Poor locally	-	4	2	1	1
Good on Islands	-	11	2	3	2
Poor on islands	-	4	-	2	2
No facilities	-	4	-	3	1

Netball (25 replies)

	HS7	HS8	<17	18-40	41-65
Total	6	19	3	7	4
Good locally	6	10	3	2	-
Poor locally	-	-	-	-	-
Good on Islands	-	-	-	-	-
Poor on islands	-	5	0	3	2
No facilities	-	4	-	2	2

## ANALYSIS

### Background and demography

The questionnaire was circulated as widely as possible. The replies show that the ages and gender of the respondents were fairly similar between Benbecula and South Uist. The number of households in Benbecula was marginally more than the number in South Uist. However, more people from South Uist replied (nearly 2/3 of all replies). This could either mean that people living in South Uist are more interested in sports and other out-door recreation, or that the perceived lack of facilities around Iochdar motivated them to reply. It is likely that both factors were operating.

About 1/4 of respondents (at least) were unable to drive, because of their age, and less than half confirmed that they could drive. 75 (over half of all respondents) said they lived within 3 miles of Iochdar School. This suggests that there is a reasonably large, interested population living within cycling or walking distance of Iochdar School, up to 1/2 of whom cannot drive, mostly because of their age.

### General information

A large majority of respondents wanted more footpaths, cycle paths (74.1%) and tree planting in their area of residence. Given the high levels of interest in walking (80 [56%]) and cycling (73 [51%]), this type of development seems likely to be well supported and well used.

A similar majority supported the development of an all weather playing field at Iochdar School. However, working out what kind of facility this should be was less clear-cut. Analysing replies by age and by postcode, we found that people under 17 were the group least satisfied by current provision (73.5% of that age group). Similarly, those living in the HS8 postcode area were the most dissatisfied geographical group (57.5%)

Lionacleit secondary school provides facilities to the population of the Uists, mostly outside school hours. It has already been noted elsewhere that this has made it awkward for pupils at Iochdar primary school to use the facilities there, because the changing facilities etc. Are in use by secondary school pupils. In addition, the full-size facilities are not always suitable for the younger pupils at the school. One exception to this has been the access to the swimming pool, which has been available to 2 classes each half term on a once per week basis.

We asked about the use of Lionacleit school facilities. Analysing the data, we found that those under 17 are most likely to use the facilities at Lionacleit, and in those over 40, least likely. By postcode, proportionately more people living in Benbecula use Lionacleit regularly, compared to those living South of the causeway in South Uist.

When we looked at access to Lionacleit, above and beyond access to a car, we found that over half (54.2%) of our respondents could not use the facilities at Lionacleit when they wanted to. Slightly more people from South Uist, and more under 17's felt their access was restricted.

When we looked at whether the facilities at Lionacleit suited people, we found that the number of happy people was similar between the 2 areas. The most

dissatisfied age group was the 18-40 yr. olds. The over 40's were a very Uncertain bunch. This supports the data that said this was the age group least likely to go to Lionacleit for sports.

For those people using Lionacleit sports facilities, we wanted to see how often people went. People in the HS7 area were more likely to attend more than twice a week, as were people under 17.

#### Named sports and activities

This part of the questionnaire turned up a few surprises, as well as identifying many areas for potential development.

##### a. Sports requiring an outdoor pitch or field.

The *most* popular activity in this group was football (67 replies), which was not a surprise. The Iochdar Saints football team has been using the pitch at Iochdar hall for many years, and has 22 members at present. They have reformed under the name 'North End'. There is also a summer under-12 team in the Iochdar area. Interest was spread across the age groups. More dissatisfaction with local facilities was expressed in the South Uist area, supporting the move to upgrade the pitch at the hall, and providing small-scale facilities at the school.

Tennis (41 replies) was next, with 32 replies from South Uist. Interest here was amongst those under 40. Those under 17 were more likely to have access to good facilities. Perhaps there are tennis courts at Lionacleit School that could be used more effectively?

Athletics (38 replies) was again well supported in the South Uist area and particularly in the under 40 age group. All of those dissatisfied with facilities live in South Uist.

Basketball (37 replies) was better supported in South Uist, mostly in the under 17s. Several of the members of the successful Lionacleit school squad are resident in Iochdar. By and large, those interested in Basketball were happy with the facilities provided. Those over 18 were more likely to be dissatisfied, again suggesting that the facilities at the secondary school could be used to meet this need.

Hockey data (32 replies) was unfortunately skewed because the question was accidentally inserted twice. We only analysed the first set of replies. Of those interested, the greater number live in South Uist aged under 17. Just under 1/2 were dissatisfied with facilities, including half of the under 17s.

Shinty (30 replies) again had proportionately more interest in South Uist, mostly in the 18-40 age group. 2/3 of those interested were not happy with the facilities currently available, either locally or further afield. This suggests that this could be further explored.

Netball attracted 25 replies, most of whom failed to state their age. Most of those interested were happy with their facilities.

For basketball, netball and tennis, the data suggests that Lionacleit School provides school age children with good facilities. The access for those over 18 seems less good. This may be multifactorial; certainly the school is keen to have full use made of the recreational facilities. Advertising might increase the

public's awareness of what is available. There may be scope for the formation of an adults' basketball club.

For football, shinty, hockey and athletics, there seems to be a demand for facilities in the Iochdar area itself, both for children and adults. This suggests that any developments in this area should look at pitches that can be used for more than one sport.

b. Indoor activities:

Swimming (58 replies) and table tennis (33 replies) were both popular. The swimming pool at Lionacleit School is very busy, with well publicised opening hours, learners' classes and fun sessions. The widely passed comment has been that for those good at swimming there is no club to coach them on out of school, both for higher level swimming badges, and also for competition.

Table tennis was the favourite activity for 29 people in South Uist. Most of them were 18-40, but there were still several children and over 40's interested as well. There was a wide range of opinions concerning the suitability of facilities available. This seems an area fruitful for further development, perhaps with the introduction of a table tennis night on a regular basis, either at Iochdar School, Iochdar hall, or West Gerinish Community centre.

Bowling was not mentioned on the original questionnaire, which may be why we had few replies on the subject. However, there is a thriving bowling club in Iochdar, and another at Lionacleit.

c. Adventurous activities;

These recreational pursuits are grouped together, because although the Uists provide outstanding natural opportunities to enjoy them, they require the acquisition of skills, equipment, and like-minded company. Most of these needs are usually provided through clubs, where experienced members teach novices, and organise expeditions.

Canoeing (37 replies) again is proportionately more popular in South Uist, with the under 40's being more interested. Most felt that the facilities were poor on the islands. It is not clear whether this is the view of the canoe club, which is based at Lionacleit school. It is worth consulting the club how they feel about their facilities.

Climbing (36 replies) is proportionately more popular in South Uist, with most respondents under 40. Most feel that facilities were poor in the islands as a whole. The outdoor centre in Lochmaddy offers some climbing. It is worth exploring the possibility of setting up a climbing club.

Diving (34 replies) is proportionately more popular in South Uist. The interest is spread across the age groups. 16 thought there were no facilities on the islands, and the majority thought facilities were poor. There are 2 dive clubs in the Uists, one being based in Benbecula. Both clubs are active. These results suggest that the clubs should publicise their activities better. They should be consulted if any further developments seem likely to benefit them.

Horse riding (33 replies) is proportionately more popular in South Uist. Interest is equally spread across the age groups. There seems to be no clear consensus about the facilities on the islands. There is a riding school in Benbecula, but

although it is very popular, especially with schoolchildren at the weekend, the buildings are scheduled for demolition. In addition, the fencing and cattle grids in many of the townships have restricted access for riders. It seems likely that the grazings committees in all townships and the riding club will need to work closely together to improve access for riders, and to use the grazings sensitively.

Windsurfing (32 replies) is popular in both geographical areas, slightly more so in South Uist. The main age group showing an interest is the 18- 40yr. olds. The facilities are widely held, to be poor. There is scope for setting up a windsurfing club.

Windsurfing, canoeing, and diving all have similar needs. As well as a club meeting and teaching axes', they need a place to wash down and store wet- and dry-suits, as well as boats, canoes and surfboards. The equipment needs to be transported to the water, necessitating a boat trailer or similar, particularly for larger expeditions. It might be worth considering the needs of these 3 groups, and possibly climbers too, together.

d. Other outdoor recreation:

Walking (80 replies) is by far and away the most popular activity. It is equally popular in Benbecula and South Uist, and across all ages. Most people are satisfied with current facilities, although 11 people in South Uist are unhappy (about 1/5th of South Uist walkers).

Cycling (73 replies) is the second most popular activity overall- It is proportionately more popular in South Uist, and popular with all ages. 28.9% of cyclists in South Uist were unhappy with local facilities, compared to over 34% of Benbecula cyclists.

Bird watching (35 replies) is proportionately more popular amongst South Uist respondents. Slightly more over 40's expressed an interest, and most felt that facilities were good locally.

Ecology (28 replies) is very popular as an interest in South Uist. Interest was spread across the age groups, with more 18-40 yr. olds being interested. Most felt that facilities were good locally and on the islands as a whole. This reflects the presence of the SNH office in Stilligarry, and the Reserve at Loch Druidibeg.

These results suggest that any development that includes walking and cycle paths, with interpretative signs explaining environmental features and wildlife, would be widely supported.

## SUMMARY

The questionnaire succeeded in eliciting a wide range of responses. The results have been illuminating, and have suggested a number of ideas. Some of the results will be helpful in supporting proposals for upgrading the recreational facilities in Iochdar. Other results suggest further developments and new ways of working. There is potential for the formation of several clubs. In addition, the results also suggest areas where facilities are underused, perhaps because of poor publicity and poor access.

With respect to the proposed developments, the questionnaire results support developing easy access facilities for children at Iochdar School. They suggest

that a mini-pitch at Iochdar School should allow football, athletics, and perhaps hockey and shinty. It supports the upgrade of the hall football pitch, and also suggests that this pitch might usefully accommodate shinty and hockey. There is widespread support for tree planting and a cycle/footpath.

The possible developments have yet to be decided upon, and the proposed footpath depends on the grazings committee, and the individuals whose grazing it is. However, it would be popular with many people.