

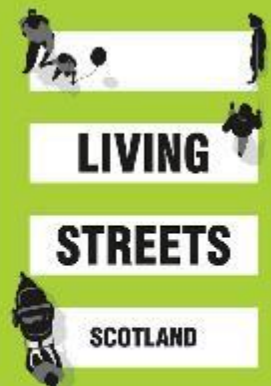
Living Streets

Community Street Audit Report

Banchory
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 Banchory as part of a larger suite of work taking in Stonehaven, 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 Banchory audit

The Community Street Audit in Banchory followed on from a workshop with representatives from Aberdeenshire Council Transport Team and Community Learning and Development, Banchory Community Council; Alzheimer Scotland; and Aberdeenshire Access Panel. The workshop attendees identified assets and barriers to walking around Banchory and their top priorities for change. This information was used to identify an audit route, which included Kinneskie Road from the Library to the High Street and the High Street from Town Hall to Bellfield Park.

Barriers to walking on this route include:

- The High Street is a busy main road, route to Aberdeen: this is often congested. There are often vehicles parked on double yellow lines.
- Parking layout at the Burnett Arms and Stag Hotel: vehicles drive across the footway to access the parking spaces.
- The pedestrian crossing on Dee Street does not provide enough time to cross for vulnerable pedestrians, this is a busy and wide junction and can feel intimidating.
- Crossing Mount Street due to lack of dropped kerb, poor sight lines and taxi's using the junction for U turns.
- Many advertising boards along the length of the High Street causing obstructions or trip hazard for the visually impaired.

Recommendations for improvements include:

- Ensuring business owners are aware of best practice and Aberdeenshire Council guidelines for display boards.
- Enforcing the parking restrictions in addition to working to change the culture around parking.
- Increasing the crossing time of the Dee Street pedestrian crossing.
- Installing dropped kerb on Mount Street.
- Investigating alternative parking layout at Burnett Arms and Stag Hotel.

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

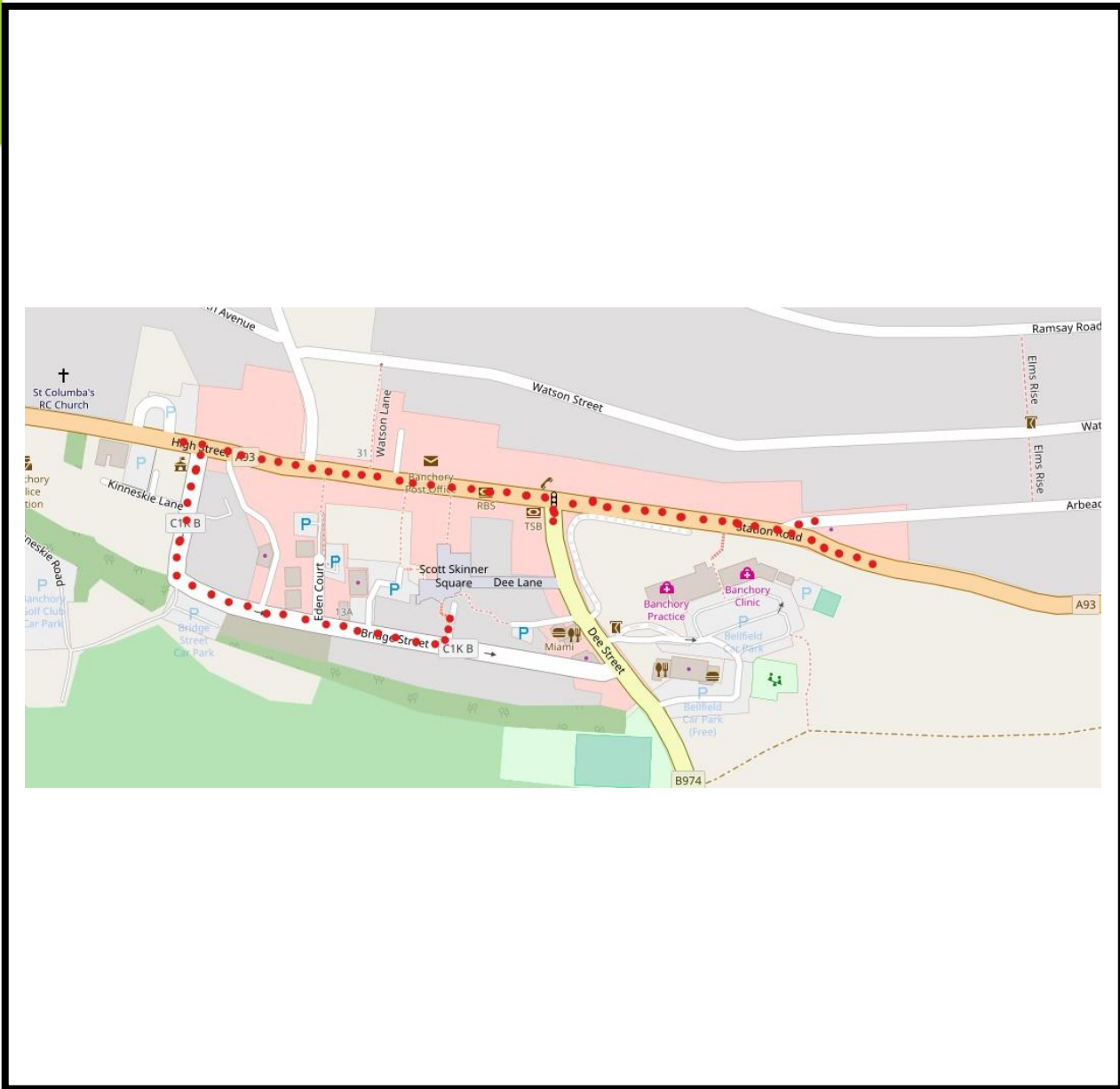
Living Streets Scotland, LSS, was initially asked to speak to local communities in Aberdeenshire to gather evidence for their Integrated Travel Town Masterplan, being developed by Aberdeenshire Council. The Masterplan considers different aspects of active travel and public transport across Aberdeenshire, 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 27th November 2017, with 10 people in attendance. These included Aberdeenshire Council representatives from the Transport team, and Community Planning Partnership, as well as members from Aberdeenshire Access Panel and Alzheimer Scotland. Assets and barriers were identified and priorities were discussed. A route along the High Street was identified to audit.

The Community Street Audit was conducted in January 8th 2018. There were 5 people in attendance for the full length of the route;

- 1 representative from Aberdeenshire Council Transport Team
- 1 member of the Banchory Community Council
- 1 local residents
- 1 representative from Aberdeenshire Council Community Planning Partnership
- 1 representative from LSS

Map of area



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The red route indicates the route reviewed

Banchory & Area profile

The town of Banchory is situated approximately 18 miles west of Aberdeen. The A93 runs through Banchory, along the High Street. This brings a lot of traffic including heavy goods vehicles into the heart of the town, causing congestion, noise and pollution.

The North side of Banchory is on a fairly steep incline and this can cause access issues to the High Street for less the physically able.

The population of Banchory is approximately 7200, with nearly half over the age of 45 years. There has been a lot of development to the East side of the town including schools, Leisure facilities, community centre and supermarkets. This has led to residents feeling like there are two separate towns, the old town and the new town.

There are several areas of historical interest and natural beauty nearby which attract visitors to the town especially in the summer months.

Area findings

What Works Well

Well maintained with good signage

The High Street is a wide, inviting space, and there is a lot of local information for both local residents and tourists. There are new artistic maps and finger signs as well as seating and litterbins. Planters add to the attraction of the High Street.



Scott Skinner Square

The Square has been refurbished with a small amphitheatre, sail shading, lighting and a few seats and tables. There is a ramp access for wheelchair and pushchair access. The space could provide a focal point for civic and community activities.



Access ramp from library to Square



Entrance to the Square

What Doesn't Work So Well

1 – Road layout and space allocation

Busy High Street

The High Street is a main route to Aberdeen. The road is often very busy, and there is some parking along both sides of the road. Many of these parking spaces are taken up by local Taxis, as we completed the audit in winter the taxis were idling in order for the drivers to stay warm. In addition, there were a lot of cars parked on double yellow lines. All this leads to a noisy and polluted space that could be improved by enforcing the double yellow lines and idling; reducing the number of High Street parking spaces; and encouraging drivers to use the many legal spaces a short distance from the High Street. There may be a need to work with the community and taxi drivers to change the culture of 'the need to park outside the shop for a couple of minutes'.



Parking spaces at Burnett Arms and Stag Hotel

These spaces can only be accessed by vehicles driving across the footway, causing a danger to pedestrians. Audit participants stated that there have been several accidents and near misses. Street Audit participants felt there should be some work done to look at solutions to reduce the danger to pedestrians before there is a serious incident.

The land is privately owned by the hotel, and is used by hotel customers. Removing these spaces would be unpopular with the business owners, and there is no obvious parking route that does not cross the footway. It may be worth bringing the business owners, community council and roads team together to look at possible solutions to increase safety for pedestrians.



Parking spaces at Burnett Arms hotel

2 – Crossing points and desire lines

Pedestrian crossing at Dee Street

This is a wide and busy main road, and the crossing time given is very short. On the audit, walking at 'normal' pace the audible alert stopped before we were half way across the road. The crossing is the newer Puffin type that lasts until the crossing is clear, even though the audible signal cuts off earlier. The crossing is well maintained with good dropped kerbs.



Desire line near Town Hall

High Street near Town Hall and car park. There is a small car park beside the Town Hall but the larger one on the opposite side of the High Street is most often used during the day. There is no formal crossing here but people often cross to/from the town hall and car park.



Crossing Mount Street

It is difficult to cross Mount Street as only one side has a dropped kerb. There are poor sight lines for crossing. The steep slope to the junction often leads to cars approaching the junction at speed. In addition, taxis use the junction to perform U turns, indeed whilst we waited at the crossing 2 taxis completed U turns and a minibus cut the corner and drove over the pavement. The dominance of the traffic in this area makes it an intimidating space to cross or to walk up Mount Street, for pedestrians.



Crossing Ardbeadie Terrace

Arbeadie Terrace has a badly maintained surface and is on a steep camber and bend. One side has a high kerb and there is only a footway on one side of the road so pedestrians are forced to either cross the road or walk along the road.



3 – Footway surfaces and obstructions

- Footway maintenance needed at the top of the steps from the Bellfield car park. The poor condition of the steps could be a trip hazard for pedestrians.



- High Street outside Taylors and Kinneskie Road. Poor maintenance and uneven covers could be a trip hazard.



- Bins and A boards can cause an obstruction to the footway on the High Street, especially on bin days.



- One way sign at top of Kinneskie Road beside the Town Hall is in the middle of the dropped kerb. This is an obstruction particularly for wheelchair and pushchair users.



- Bus stop and sign badly placed on High Street, between Dee Street and Arbeadie Terrace. Narrows the footway further at a pinch point.



- Tables outside the Burnett Arms are encroaching onto the painted pedestrian area, further reducing the small walking area even further on a difficult junction.



3 – Maintenance and enforcement

- The area around the Derbar Indian Restaurant is untidy and there is a bin in the middle of the pavement which is due for replacement. There is an empty shop front that adds to the run down feeling of the space. On the kerbside there are bollards that are meant to stop double yellow parking at the restaurant as it is near to the Dee Street crossing. In the main these do not obstruct pedestrians apart from the 2 bollards nearest to the bottom of the steps where the footway is narrowed.



- No regular enforcement of double yellow parking; improper use of disabled bays; idling whilst parked or using the bottom of Mount street as a turning circle.



4 – Traffic

- Busy main road/route to Aberdeen
- Could reduce amount of parked cars on High Street
- Pollution from idling taxi's parked on High Street

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 - Obstructions	1 – Speak to business owners about advertising board guidelines and the potential difficulties they pose for the less able. 2 – Wheelie bins blocking footways, ensure these are left not blocking the footway. 3 – Move the one way sign at the top of Kinneskie Road, to stop it obstructing the dropped kerb. 4 – Move the traffic sign and bus stop, on High Street between Ardbeadie Terrace and Dee Street, further apart. 5 – Ensure that the picnic tables outside Burnetts Hotel are kept within the lines and don't encroach on the pedestrian area.	1 – Quick win 2 – Quick win 3 – Medium term 4 – Medium term 5 – Quick win	Aberdeenshire Council and local business owners
2 – Footway Surfaces	1 – Repair the footway surface between Taylors and the Royal Bank of Scotland on the High Street. 2 – Repair the footway surface along Kinneskie Road, between the High Street and Bridge Street. 3 – Repair the footway surface along Bridge Street between Kinneskie Road and the Library. 4 – Repair the area at the top of the steps from the car park up to the High Street. 5 – Add dropped kerb at Mount Street junction with High Street. 6 – Repair the footway and carriageway surfaces at Ardbeadie Terrace, adding dropped kerbs.	1 – Long term 2 – Long term 3 – Long term 4 – Long term 5 – Medium term 6 – Long term	Aberdeenshire Council
3 – Crossing Points	1 – Increase the crossing the pedestrian time of the Dee street crossing.	1 – Quick win	Aberdeenshire Council

Area/Issue	Recommended Action	Level of Action Quick Win/ long Term	Responsibility/ Involvement
	2 – Look at the road layout and vehicle behaviour at the Mount Street and High Street junction. 3 – Look at the feasibility of adding a crossing on the High Street at the Town Hall.	2 – Long term 3 – Long term	
4 – Maintenance	1 – Tidy the area outside the Derbar Restaurant, make the area more appealing by adding planters. 2 – Move the litterbin nearer to the building or the wall near the bench.	1 – Medium term 2 – Quick win	Aberdeenshire Council

Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
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
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
Move the one-way road sign from the top of Kineskie Road so that it no longer obstructs the dropped kerb	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	Next financial year
Move the traffic sign and bus stop on, the High Street between Ardbeadie Terrace and Dee Street, further apart.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	Next financial year
Ensure picnic tables outside Burnetts Hotel are kept within the lines and don't encroach on the pedestrian area	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	This financial year
Repair the footway surface between Taylors and the Royal Bank of Scotland on the High Street.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	Next financial year

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Repair the footway surface along Kinneskie Road, between the High Street and Bridge Street.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	Next financial year
Repair the footway surface along Bridge Street between Kinneskie Road and the library.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	Next financial year
Repair the area at the top of the steps from the car park up to the High Street.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	Next financial year
Add dropped kerb at Mount Street junction with the High Street.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	Next financial year
Repair the footway and carriageway surfaces at Ardbeadie Terrace, adding dropped kerbs.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	Awaiting funding source
Increase the pedestrian crossing time of the Dee Street crossing.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	This financial year
Look at the road layout and vehicle behaviour at the Mount Street and High Street junction.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	Awaiting funding source
Feasibility study to add a crossing on the High Street between the Town Hall and car park.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team.	Awaiting funding source
Tidy the area outside the Derbar Restaurant, add planters.	Aberdeenshire Council roads team	Next financial year



Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Move the litterbin nearer to the building or to the wall near the bench.	Aberdeenshire Council roads 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
	Bridge Street	Uneven pavement surfaces, also narrow width	Difficult for older people, wheelchairs, buggies to use.		
	Kinneskie Road	Pavement narrow and uneven in places, bad camber	Difficult for older people, wheelchairs, buggies to use.		




Map Ref	Location	Findings	Effect on walking	Heading	Priority/solution
	Kinneskie Road	Entry to car park for flats not wheelchair friendly.	Difficult for older people, wheelchairs, buggies to use.		
	High Street	Parking on Double Yellow Lines & Parking facing the wrong way	Increases congestion and blocks sight lines for pedestrians crossing. Poor visibility when crossing, limits access to shops.		
	High St and Mount Street junction	Kerb not lowered on one side, poor surface	Difficult for older people, wheelchairs, buggies to use.		
	High St and Mount Street junction	Difficult junction to cross, poor site lines,			


Map Ref	Location	Findings	Effect on walking	Heading	Priority/solution
	High St and Mount Street junction	Cars parked in front of Burnett Arms, reverse out over the pavement.	Poses danger to pedestrians as cars drive across pavement when coming and going. Esp visual/hearing impaired.		
	High Street in front of the Stag Hotel	Cars parked in front of Stag hotel, reverse out over the pavement	Poses danger to pedestrians as cars drive across pavement when coming and going		
	High St and Mount Street junction	Taxis frequently do U-turns in the junction, often driving over pavement			
	High Street, outside Taylors	Man hole covers badly fitted	Trip hazard		

Map Ref	Location	Findings	Effect on walking	Heading	Priority/solution
	High Street	Lack of crossing (near town hall)	People cross informally and are in danger of being knocked down		
	High Street (outside Indian restaurant)	Area untidy, bin in middle of pavement, uneven pavement.	Trip hazard		planters would improve the look.
	Ardbeadie Terrace	Road surface uneven, kerb too high and on a steep camber, no pavement at bottom of road.	Difficult for wheelchair and buggy users. Have to walk up road - dangerous		

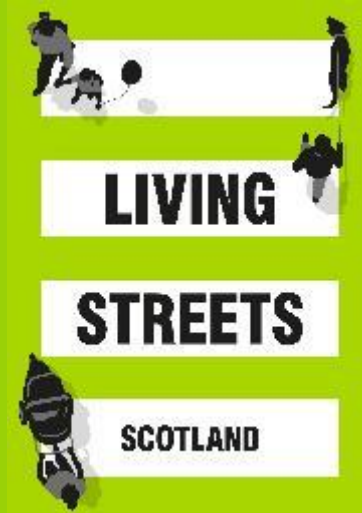
Map Ref	Location	Findings	Effect on walking	Heading	Priority/solution
					
	High Street	Disabled bays are often misused	Puts disabled pedestrians off going into town		
	High Street/Station Rd, East End	Parking along road at corner can cause traffic jams and congestion if two large vehicles try to pass each other or at busy times.	Congestion unpleasant when walking, intimidating and polluting		
	High Street/station rd	Smaller path width	Unpleasant to walk next to busy road, noise, pollution and feeling of danger.		

Map Ref	Location	Findings	Effect on walking	Heading	Priority/solution
	Scott Skinner Square	Wheelchair/pushchair ramp to Library level is narrow and windy			
	Steps up from carpark to High Street	Very badly maintained	Difficult to navigate if you have poor mobility/balance		
	High Street, Outside Burnett	Picnic tables encroaching footpath/street	Difficult to walk down Mount Street as no pavement. Hard for those with visual/hearing impairment.		

Map Ref	Location	Findings	Effect on walking	Heading	Priority/solution
	<p>Bus stop at High Street/Ardbeadie Tce</p>	<p>Pavement narrow at bus stop</p>	<p>If busy queue, can force pedestrians on to road. Cause obstruction for passing pedestrians.</p>		
	<p>Pedestrian crossing Dee Street</p>	<p>Pedestrian cycle too short for people with limited mobility to cross (audible stops before half way across road)</p>	<p>Intimidating to cross this busy main road.</p>		
	<p>Signs on High Street</p>	<p>Sign and bus stop obstruct the sign</p>			

Map Ref	Location	Findings	Effect on walking	Heading	Priority/solution
	Top of Kinneskie Rd at Town Hall	One way sign is placed in the middle of the dropped kerb for disabled crossing			





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Funded by

