

REPRESENTATIONS

NO	COMMENTS
01	<p>It has just been brought to my attention planning permission for a campsite in the dunes, I cannot object strongly enough. The local infrastructure would not support this proposal. The access to this site goes through the island which is single track which is already difficult enough in the summer months. But my main concern is erosion of the dunes in the proposed area. I understand the area in question is on or close to the conservation area? I also have concerns about outfall from septic tank and waste water problems. On Harris I understand there has been a problem with E Coli on the coast and in the sea. These are genuine concerns.</p> <p>Additional Comments – Received 10.01.2025</p> <p>I am responding to the amended planning application ref as above. I have already registered a previous objection on Mon 27 May 2024.</p> <p>Since my original objection the erosion has got considerably worse and any changes to the application would do nothing to change the situation.</p> <p>The original application stated the benefits to the island. In my opinion there are little or no benefits to the island or specifically Rushgarry residents. It appears to me the applicant who is not a resident on the island is trying to turn the island into a Holiday park to purely make money.</p> <p>Please do not let our beautiful island be turned into some kind of Holliday park. Please note I have no objection to sharing our beautiful home with visitors but not to the detriment of a very special island.</p> <p>I understand there is a new and very well placed camp site at Clachan Sands, so there is even less need for a developed campsite on Berneray.</p>
02	<p>I have become aware of the planning application, reference number 24/00182/PPD, made by Mr Ruraridh Nicholson of Lochmaddy for a campsite at the croft at 8 Rushgarry on Berneray.</p> <p>I have seen the drawings and proposals for the change of use to allow for 17 tent and 14 motorhome pitches as well as the construction of the infrastructure and facilities building and would like to register my objection to the application for the following reasons.</p> <p>This change of use has no benefit whatsoever to the immediate local area, the community or the island and is in fact detrimental to the environment and the quality of life of local residents.</p> <p>The roads through Berneray to the East Beach are already busy and the probability of 30 more vehicles together with existing visiting traffic on a daily basis would be excessive and potentially dangerous and make journeys difficult for locals.</p> <p>The East Beach around the point at 8 Rushgarry is already exhibiting worrying signs of erosion at the dunes and increasing foot traffic in that area will only make matters worse.</p> <p>The facilities building and other infrastructure will create a commercial campsite in a conservation area that is already recognised as being of outstanding natural beauty. The development is cynically exploiting the area for financial gain and I believe questionable as allowable crofting diversity recognised by the Crofting Commission.</p>

The East Beach at the moment currently caters for tourists who are welcome to visit on daily excursions . The attraction both to them and residents of the Rushgarry Township is that it is a peaceful and tranquil environment whose beauty can be enjoyed in relative solitude.

A commercial campsite with the prospect of scores of visitors with vehicles staying overnight destroys the very essence of what attracts people and residents in the first place and sets a precedent for future development that would drastically change the character of the island.

I hereby would like to register my strongest objection to the 24/00182 /PPD application.

Additional Comments – Received 10.01.2025

I have previously lodged an objection to this campsite development and everything I have mentioned before is in no way alleviated by the amendments most of which I consider superficial.

I would like to add that the erosion on that part of the East Beach in particular has greatly increased in the last year with over 8 metres of dune and grassland eaten away by the sea tides and the more prevalent Easterly and Northerly winds.

There is nothing in the planning application that addresses the need for significant bolstering or creation of defences and the suggestion that marram grass will suffice is not realistic especially with the proposed arrival of even more foot traffic and compression of the soil structures on the dune edges from vehicular traffic. Putting up fences and holding vehicles back from the dune edge will not combat the inevitable drag and bite of the currents and will not stop tourists from clambering over the sands and disturbing planted marram grasses that need a significant amount of time to root and bind.

My principal concern is that the creation and advertising of a commercial campsite on the East Beach will drive visitors and vehicle numbers up on a daily basis. A natural resource that is shared with locals and a beach and machair that are crofting lands belonging to others including my own croft at 5 Rushgarry is being exploited for the financial benefit of one individual.

The East Beach is not expansive and with other visitors parking outside the commercial campsite it will be in danger of becoming overwhelmed.

The 'visualisation 'photo of the campsite on the planning application shows 4 vehicles , one a camper van and the other a motorhome and two vans in the background. There are 4 tents, 3 of which are large family tents all of which would be carried in vans.

The application is for 17 Camper vans/motor homes and 14 tent pitches significantly more than the 'visualisation. A busy period could have 20 or so vehicles on the site and a potential population of over 40 people staying overnight for at least a day if not more. We do not have anywhere near this amount of traffic at the moment but if the site was openly advertised it would become a commercial entity which would only expand. A full site with 31 vehicles and 62 people staying overnight would be difficult to accept and potentially an invasion of privacy for local residents all of whom enjoy relative peace and tranquility in the current haven that is Rushgarry.

There is nothing in the planning application that addresses security on the site and with large numbers of visitors in close proximity there is an above average likelihood of confrontation especially over noise issues between different generations of holidaymakers with different

camping 'styles' and especially with alcohol involved. Noise issues in the quiet of the evening in Rushgarry would be extremely intrusive for residents.

There is also no mention of security lighting which I would think would be necessary around the proposed toilet block and shop and walkways. Any illumination from security lighting will be highly intrusive on this dark island.

The traffic situation has been well covered and it is obvious that the amount of traffic circulating the campsite would overload an already narrow and congested road with few passing places especially from Borve across to the Campsite. Traffic accidents involving motor home drivers are inevitable. The roads are not suitable for the proposed volume of traffic.

Positives that have been alluded to in the application and at the only public meeting between the applicant, his representatives and local residents are few. That meeting was witnessed by council officials and was controversial. A further meeting to discuss the application with the affected Rushgarry residents was refused by the applicant.

One factor mentioned was job creation on a campsite only open during the holiday season which I would expect to be minimal and most probably part time work only. The applicant's own bistro on the other side of the island is I believe closed between late September and April and I would expect the reception /shop and amenities to be on the same schedule. If so this could bring into question the WC arrangements which have been used as a principal requirement for the East Beach with wild campers having nowhere to toilet. Is the wc /shower section going to be open all year round for visitors to the beach?

I totally agree that a wc would be an asset on the East Beach but does it need a campsite? Motor homes are self contained units and there are arrangements at the harbour just now for campers. There seems to be some confusion on the definition of wild camping which I consider to be people hiking and pitching tents rather than driving in cars with camping gear. The 8 Rushgarry campsite is aimed at the latter as wild campers tend to avoid 'organised' spaces where they have to pay.

Another benefit mentioned is to the local island economy. It certainly doesn't benefit those offering Bed and Breakfast or Air B and B accommodation and apart from the Coral Box gift shop at the harbour and Birling Yarn woolens I am unaware of any business that benefits from all those motorhome occupants and campers other than the applicants own shop and bistro on the ferry side of the island.

I would like to say that my wife and I are planning to open a small cafe and part time restaurant at some point in the future and we would not welcome the volume of traffic both foot and vehicular that a commercial campsite on the East Beach would bring. That might seem illogical and counter intuitive and we recognise that tourism has local value and should be welcomed but, as has been seen on Skye and on the 500 route where locals now question the benefits of over exploitation of commercially driven tourism, opening up the East Beach as an advertised holiday camp site I believe would have a profoundly negative effect on Rushgarry where we live. Our small establishment is aimed to cater for locals and day trippers to the beach and will have toilet facilities available for customers. It will be open most of the year.

The current traffic at the beach is not as substantial as it is made out to be although there are days when it is particularly busy. Regulating numbers of vehicles and not allowing overnight stays is far more preferable and maintains the integrity of the East Beach. An advertised commercially run campsite will overwhelm the area and destroy the very magic that attracts visitors to the East Beach.

	<p>There is a balance to be found regarding tourism but the current application is very one sided and in favour of an individual who does not live on the island of Berneray never mind at the number 8 croft on Rushgarry.</p> <p>There is already a far more expansive campsite allegedly being opened at Clachan sands which is relatively isolated and has no residents to be concerned with. It is far more suitable for a North Uist/ Berneray campsite to cater for motorhomes and camping than on the East Beach which is surrounded by residents and has limited access.</p> <p>For all of the above reasons, most of which I mentioned in my previous objection and for which I'm sorry to be repeating here, I ask that the planning application for a permanent campsite at number 8 Rushgarry croft be rejected.</p>
<p>03</p>	<p>With reference to the above planning application for a campsite at 8 Rushgarry, Berneray, HS6 5QB my wife and i would like to take this opportunity to support the project fully.</p> <p>We believe this project will enhance the island in various ways. It will provide suitable facilities for visitors both campervans and tents. The local businesses will benefit also with what they offer the visitors.</p> <p>This has been needed in Berneray for a long time where there will be an organised and safe environment for everyone.</p> <p>I hope this letter will be considered fully.</p>
<p>04</p>	<p>We are witing to give our full support to the planning application as it is a much needed positive development to the Island Berneray.</p> <p>It will benefit both Berneray and the locals as a whole. The planned facilities building and infrastructure are designed to fit the area of Rushgarry and are situated low in the landscape towards the beach not affecting the surrounding views. The capacity of 17 tent pitches and 14 motorhome pitches matches the increased demand in visitor numbers over the years.</p> <p>The campsite will bring employment to the Island when it is built and operational for many years to come. The site has been well thought out and the design is built around the land, marram grass and original access routes. It has been designed to protect the Machair whilst providing sustainable tourism.</p> <p>Other islands such as North Uist and Barra show that campsites work well. These manage visitor numbers to the area, provide toilet/shower infrastructure, protect the environment of the area and boost the local economy.</p> <p>As full-time locals on the Island, we fully support the campsite planning application with our reasons mentioned above.</p>
<p>05</p>	<p>I am writing to give my full support of the above planning application. This change of use of land to campsite is much needed on the island of Berneray due to the current lack of facilities for motorhomes and tents.</p> <p>This area of land along the coast of Berneray has been positively used by both daily beach visitors and campers for over 45 years. Visitor numbers increased when the new Calmac ferry started in 1996, and then again with the new causeway link to North Uist in 1999. Over the last 25 years visitor numbers and tourism to both Berneray and across the entire Outer Hebrides has surged. This in turn has boosted the economy, created jobs etc.</p>

	<p>This change of use of land will be a positive addition to the area of Rushgarry and support the demand of increased visitor numbers while still allowing people to enjoy the area responsibly.</p> <p>The planned reception and facilities building has been designed in a way where it sits low in the landscape and will not have a detrimental impact to the area. The use of grass on the roof and surrounding larch decking will complement the National Scenic Area.</p> <p>Currently campers staying at the beach, unless in a self-contained van / motorhome have no access to toilets / shower facilities. These van and tent users use the public facilities at Berneray Harbour and also at Calmac pier. The new toilet facilities at the campsite will relieve the pressure on these well used facilities. The creation of bins and recycling points, alongside new laundry facilities will be a positive addition to Berneray.</p> <p>Both the construction of the Campsite and in the future, running of the campsite will provide and create much needed employment in the area. From local architects and building contractors, all the way through to campsite staff such as receptionists, cleaners, workers and more when the site is operational will bring much needed employment for all ages to the local area.</p> <p>Currently the camping area is unmanned and unregulated. I feel the addition of a formal campsite would benefit the island as the area will be managed through capped numbers of motorhomes / tents allowed to stay each night leading to no overcrowding. The use of designated parking spots and pitches for tents, alongside the use of rubber matting material and other erosion preventatives will also protect the Machair land and beach area. The campsite has been designed around the area taking into account the locations of marram grass, previous access routes and the sloping shape of the land to site the building / campers.</p> <p>Throughout the Outer Hebrides there are numerous examples of other campsites which are successful at being built and run in both areas of National Scenic Area and local croft land / beach areas. These include Balranald on North Uist. Borge on Barra, Kneep on Lewis and many other examples.</p> <p>Last year, when the land was owned by the previous owner, the camping area was shut down and closed off for a period of time. During this period, no visitors were allowed to stay overnight and easy access to the beach was hindered even for locals. The numbers of both day visitors and those wishing to stay overnight dropped dramatically as people were not able to easily visit. This negatively impacted small local businesses on Berneray and Uist who saw a fall in trade. The new planned campsite would boost these local businesses for years to come.</p> <p>As the East beach area of the island is currently used for camping, the campsite will not bring added volumes of traffic through the island. The main road is already used daily by locals living on the island, beach visitors and those who camp overnight. The new planned campsite will not increase traffic or have a negative impact on the roads.</p> <p>It is for all these reasons above that I support in full the proposed development of a campsite and associated infrastructure at 8 Rushgarry, Berneray, as both a business owner and full time local resident on the island.</p>
06	<p>As long-term residents of Rushgarry, we are horrified to hear of the plans to erect a campsite (i.e holiday camp) in our area. Our objections are as follows.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Berneray is a very small island with very narrow roads which are not designed to carry multiple vehicles such as caravans and mobile homes without causing obstacles to the

- local traffic and causing damage to already crumbling roads.
- 2) Erosion of the already threatened sand dunes and machair land, which has been caused partly by mobile homes crossing the land and camping.
 - 3) Spoiling of our beautiful peaceful environment as has happened in Skye and other Islands.

We note that a company called " Berneray Sands" is backing this project. The only benefit being profit to the company and none to the inhabitants of Berneray.

Any campsite should be situated away from local residences, (e.g. The West beach) and give to benefit Island Projects. We do not wish Berneray to become a sea-side mecca to benefit a money-making company.

No official notice has yet been given about these plans to give local inhabitants the chance to object. Surely this is wrong. These plans should be stopped as it will cause damage to our area and the Island as a whole, bringing benefit to non-one but the company involved.

We sincerely hope that our objections will be seriously considered, and these awful plans will be denied

Additional comments received 17.06.24

A meeting has been held in the Community hall regarding this project.

At the meeting new details of the site came to light, highlighting the damage which will be irreversibly caused to this area. The details being:

- 1) No notification advertised about the plans beforehand to allow for local consultation.
- 2) The building of a 60-foot construction with lighting, which will cause light pollution at night.
- 3) CCTV cameras, which have never before been necessary at the Island has always been crime free. Are we expecting crimes to be committed here.
- 4) The camp can house over 100 people plus children and dogs, this is almost doubling the inhabitants of the Island.
- 5) Erosion of the dunes, which has already lost 40m in 28 years that we have lived here.
- 6) The camp will be full on a booking system, what will happen to the extra campers? They will continue to park on the dunes, as they do now. Or will another campsite be built in Borve?
- 7) The company say that they will "manage" the campervan problem, surely there must be other methods e.g. prominent signs "No Camping" Large rocks blocking entry ways across the Machair.
- 8) If this project is allowed to go ahead, out house prices will inevitably decrease by a minimum of 10%.

All the residents in this area have invested a large amount of money and time to renovate their homes. Choosing to live in this area because of its beauty, peace and darkness at night, only to be spoilt by a few greedy businessmen, caring nothing for the environment and local residents. Do the council wish Berneray to become over run and spoilt like Skye.

Would you please inform us of the date of planning permission so we can consult a solicitor regarding an injunction. Would the injunction need to be previous to your decision or could it be after?

I hope you will deny this application as it will affect all of the residents of East Beach area.

Additional Comments – Received 10.01.2025

	<p>As long time residents of Rushgarry.Berneray,we are once again strongly objecting to the proposed camp site being planned to ruin the peace and beauty of our area..A number of buildings in this area are listed,and should not be within site of a camp site and buildings associated with it.Also there is the problem of light pollution,which at the moment is nil and will undoubtably change for the worse.Is this money making scheme really going to benefit the residents of Rushgarry or will it spoil our quality of life whilst enriching a few greedy bussiness men and women.Please consider our pleas and scrap this plan before its too late to save our beautiful area.</p>
07	<p>I am writing to give my full support to the above planning application on Berneray. The campsite design and layout has been well thought out and fits in well with the beach area. As a Berneray resident all my life, i feel the campsite would allow us to share the Island with people who appreciate it as much as I do and, also have proper toilet and shower facilities while staying here. People have stayed in the area for over 40 years, and it would be great to see it continue.</p> <p>The new campsite would provide employment to local people and help keep young people living on the Islands who would love to stay here but lack of work currently cannot.</p> <p>The applicants of the planning application have been wonderful help to the Island of Berneray with their other business, Berneray Shop and Bistro. They have improved the Islands grocery shopping and are so willing to help in any way. I am looking forward to seeing their new project of the campsite.</p> <p>I support the campsite planning application with my reasons above.</p>
08	<p>We have been travelling form Vatersay to Lewis in our motorhome for three weeks. We heard from a fellow traveller of the camping sport at East Beach Berneray. We are due to take the ferry to Leverburgh this afternoon so decided to come to Berneray a day before. We visited the shop and bistro for provisions for the night and will be going there for lunch before leaving the Island.</p> <p>The camping spot at East beach is absolutely stunning, we chose a spot tucked away behind the dunes to shelter us from the wind. Took walks along the beautiful beach and headland. We feel so lucky to have found this beautiful spot and would happily pay an overnight fee to contribute to the Islands economy. We are a self-contained unit, however if there were toilets/showers/laundry/washing up facilities then cyclists and campers would also benefit.</p>
09	<p>I am writing to view my concerns over the Berneray Sands Ltd proposal for a campsite at 8 Rushgarry.</p> <p>The dunes along the East Beach have receded a great deal since I became a resident in 2008. This is a natural procedure caused by wind and sea.</p> <p>Below the proposed campsite which doesn't appear terribly far from the beach, there has been a great deal of erosion. Where the beach could be reached from the dune there is now a high cliff of sand which is being pushed farther back on a regular basis by nature herself.</p> <p>I also feel that even if there were to be a licensed site wild camping would continue, as those who do so enjoy it.</p> <p>These campers like to visit unspoiled natural areas to appreciate the beauty and quiet. Being able to see nature as it is.</p> <p>If both wild and campsite users were present it would inevitably make the single-track road through the island even busier.</p>

	<p>Which could affect road surfaces.</p> <p>The safety of vehicular or pedestrian road users could become compromised.</p> <p>There has, I believe, been some leaking of bacteria from other campsites into surrounding waters, which affects people's enjoyment of swimming in supposedly crystal-clear waters? A danger to health?</p> <p>Could by any chance this project just be the beginning of a bigger or further project at this site? Which could well affect even further some of the points I have raised above.</p>
10	<p>I am writing in support of the Planning Application for a camp site at 8 Ruisgarry.</p> <p>Having lived on this lovely island for 56 years and seen a need arising for such as these facilities, I would hope this planning would receive the approval.</p>
11	<p>Herewith I strongly object the planning application on the croft at 8 Rushgarry, Berneray, North Uist.</p> <p>I believe building a campsite for 13 campervans and 17 tents with a commercial building facility on a croft does not support the local community in any way.</p> <p>Allowing this to happen would not only harm the community (huge traffic on single track roads, destroying the peace and quiet).</p> <p>Everyone who wants to come and see the East Beach expects peace, quiet and exceptional magical views.</p> <p>As a campsite will attract more young people who can't afford an RBnB on the Island, or renting a campervan, they would a) arrive in their cars, which could mean 17 cars and 14 motorhomes daily and if a tent takes two people and a motorhome 3 that would make 76 people on the East Beach and not to forget the tourists who come there to just have a look at the stunning view. It can also be foreseen that party nights, bonfires will happen which will in all likelihood lead to more noise, more waste and more damage to the already suffering dunes. Arguments between campers and motorhome tourists and the locals are a risk.</p> <p>The magic for what they come for would be replaced by a busy traffic on and around the beach. The high possibility that some of them bring their dog would lead to another concern of putting the sheep on the machair in danger. There were 6 incidents only recently I have heard where sheep were attacked by dogs and one dog was put down. The cows who just had their calf wouldn't let anyone between them and their young one and could dangerously attack tourists if they get too close.</p> <p>Who polices and regulates the numbers of tourists?</p> <p>I wonder is this even allowed? A croft should be worked and looked after and should be part of the community and this plan does definitely not this.</p> <p>No 8 is a croft and this is not diversification but exploitation of a scenic area for commercial gain.</p>
12	<p>I wish to register my objection to the planning application for a licensed campsite at 8 RushGarry, Berneray.</p>

NPF 4 states.

Environment: We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment

"To deliver sustainable places, Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans in this area should protect environmental assets and stimulate investment in natural and engineered solutions to climate change and nature restoration, whilst decarbonising transport and building resilient connections."

Annex D states

1. Healthy

environmentally positive places with improved air quality, reactivating derelict and brownfield land, removing known hazards and good use of green and blue infrastructure

2. Pleasant

protection from the elements to create attractive and welcoming surroundings, including provision for shade and shelter, **mitigating against noise, air, light pollution and undesirable features**, as well as ensuring **climate resilience**, including flood prevention and **mitigation against rising sea levels**

3. Sustainable

transition to net-zero including energy/carbon efficient solutions, retrofitting, reuse and repurposing and sharing of existing infrastructure and resources

Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan (LDP)

Appendix 1: Landscape Character Assessment Summary - Outer Hebrides

Table 1

Summary of key characteristics of landscape character types within the Western Isles LCA

(1) ALL CROFTING TYPES (further guidance specific to individual crofting types included below)

- The distinctiveness of a settlement typically arises from a unique combination of built elements and landscape management in relation to natural features. **It is important that new development does not change the balance of these elements within an area or at its distinct edges, or obstructs or divides key landscape features, such as key views passing between interior moorland and the coast.**

Policy 2B Touring Caravan and camping sites

Proposals for touring caravan and camping sites will be acceptable where all the following can be met:

- a) it is proportionate in scale to its location and setting, and will not result in an over concentration of sites in any one locality to the detriment of the landscape or residential amenity
- e) **coastal, machair or agricultural land, exposed sites or those susceptible to damage, consent will be limited to use between 01 April to 30 September;**

The proposed site is an area of natural beauty and has, and for some years been used as an informal campsite without any problems or any effect on the environment, and is a much loved wild camping site.

	<p>The planning application is to create a licensed site, with hard standings, and in effect to commercialise what is a beautiful site, with unnecessary hard standings and facilities.</p> <p>I fear this is a case of "build it and they will come" - the benefits of this will not outweigh the negative impacts it will have on the site.</p> <p>Policy 2 B states 6 conditions which must be met including. coastal, machair or agricultural land, exposed sites or those susceptible to damage, consent will be limited to use between 01 April to 30 September;</p> <p>The site states it will employ 2 persons. Given the coastal location, given the condition above, these will be seasonal positions and the site seasonal - denying use of what was a wild camping site between in the winter months.</p> <p>Motorhomes, (al am the owner of one) are not low emission vehicles, They run on diesel and as can be witnessed in many cities around the UK bringing in low emission zones, subject to these, and for many owners have become "no-go" areas.</p> <p>By creating a licensed campsite, not only will it have an irreversible impact on the natural beauty of Berneray, it will create increased traffic, and increased pollution, which goes against the NPF determination to reduce carbon emission and strive for carbon neutral.</p> <p>It will create increased traffic on the limited road network on Berneray, increasing carbon emission.</p> <p>In the construction statement, it stated hard standings will be created with rubber matting. This is a somewhat misleading statement , as it implies a natural product will be used, whereas in fact, this is synthetic, plastic mating which corrodes , breaks down and pollutes the soil and hard standing area with micro plastic particles.</p> <p>Whilst outside the conservation area. The negative impact of a licensed campsite will be greatly increased compared to the natural wild campsite that is currently enjoyed.</p> <p>As a motorhome owner, the beauty of Scotland is the freedom to wild camp, giving the flexibility to pitch up in appropriate places. I personally, given the choice between a licensed developed campsite and a natural free space, I would always chose the latter, and given the choice between a campsite on Berneray or another natural appropriate location, I would take the latter. And many of us would do the same. It is the natural choice of many who visit Berneray already.</p> <p>Crofting: the site is within a leased croft, and divides the key landscape features - key views passing between interior moorland and the coast.</p> <p>It will create increased traffic movements, increased erosion, deny public access, and remove a site of natural beauty with the cynical creation of an unsightly, unnecessary commercial business, increasing to the detriment of the environment, and thus unsustainable. It fails to. Meet the minimum requirements We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment</p> <p>I object to this one the above grounds, and urge that the application be rejected.</p>
13	<p>Our house sits on the single track road through which all traffic to the proposed campsite must pass.</p> <p>Our objections to the planning application for a campsite at 8 Rushgarry are simple. We are concerned about road safety and sewage pollution.</p>

The application speaks of providing “much-needed facilities for what is currently a popular wild camping destination.” It’s true that campers do come to East Beach but the establishment of a fixed campsite for 14 motor homes and 17 tents will only increase numbers. The fixed campsite will be especially attractive to those with larger vehicles who will now be able to enjoy pitches with electricity. The campers who want to pitch tents or drive smaller vehicles off-grid in the dunes won’t choose to go on an organised site. They’ll be able to move further down the beach to areas which aren’t part of the planning application. There is little doubt that this campsite and the attendant marketing of Berneray Sands will draw many more large vehicles - motor homes - to this very small island.

A surge in the number of motor homes has significant safety implications. Berneray has only narrow roads - single track with passing places. The standard for single track roads - the UK rural road criteria - is a width of 3.5m for safety reasons. In many places, the width of the road here is only 3m. Often the verge is hard against the ditch. There’ve been two cases this year when commercial vehicles driven by experienced drivers have toppled into the ditch at low speed. One was at the Borve junction, the other at Rushgarry close to the proposed campsite. It is surely only a matter of time before a large motor home - not driven by a commercial driver - rolls over into one of our ditches. The largest permitted motor homes allowed on a normal licence are 2.55m wide but they are permitted to have mirrors extending a further 20cm on each side. That takes them to 2.95m - a smidgeon away from filling the entire width of our road at the narrowest point. It means that walkers, parents with pushchairs, kids on bikes have to teeter on the brink of the ditch as the motor home - up to 3.5 tonnes of it - pushes through.

The more times motor homes tackle island roads which are already narrower than the single track safety standard the more chance of pedestrians and cyclists being hurt.

And this proposed campsite is near the end of the road at the east end of Berneray. It means vehicles coming from the ferry will have two miles to negotiate to the campsite and another two miles to come back. It’s not a through road. We would contend that large motor homes are already stretching road safety on Berneray. This application will bring even more of them. The road here cannot cope with them safely.

Our other concern is about sewage pollution. The application describes a sewage treatment tank with a soak away system. This might be adequate for a single house situated on sandy ground above a beach but there must surely be a question about the disposal of sewage and waste water from 5 toilets and five showers in use by 31 sets of campers - say 60 people - a day. The application does not mention the disposal of more sewage which is likely to be tipped out from the tanks of motor homes clearing their toilets in campsite facilities when they have the chance.

We believe the application glosses over the likely pollution from what would be the biggest toilet block on Berneray with accompanying mobile home tank disposal. And there’s no detailed explanation of the impact of a soakaway system in sandy soil so close to the beach. We note the lack of a drainage impact assessment.

The experience of South Harris offers some evidence of what may happen with concentrated sewage disposal above sandy beaches. Just last month, the outgoing South Harris councillor, Grant Fulton - a former fisheries officer - said he wouldn’t go into the waters around Seilebost and Luskentyre because e.coli levels were so high as a result of developments there.

Berneray’s beaches draw swimmers, kayakers, windsurfers, small children paddling. The warning from South Harris should be a warning to us all.

As presented, this application creates a real risk that ill-considered sewage disposal will seriously pollute the very asset which draws visitors here in the first place.

Additional Comments received 12.06.24

The island of Berneray has a population of approximately 128 people. Every second house on the island is a second home or rented out to tourists/visitors. The narrow road from the ferry pier to the proposed campsite is just over 2 miles long.

Currently, during the tourist months and increasingly beyond, motorhomes and campervans navigate this route to the detriment of islanders. Many of the drivers have never driven these 'three + tonne trucks' before embarking on their island tour. Many panic and are also totally unaccustomed to using passing places.

I, my family and many other walk and cycle along this road. It is almost always dangerous. The proposed campsite - which the investors assured the community would be for pre-booked vehicles and holiday makers - can only significantly increase the number of large vehicles on this road. The current 'so called wild campers' will continue to come.

When full the proposed campsite will double the population of this island. It is a well-established fact that motorhomes contribute little to the local economy. The vehicles also use valuable space on ferries which severely disadvantages the local community. During the past month I have been unable to book the Berneray/Levererburgh ferry in order to visit Stornoway - our island capital - on important business and return on the same day. Many people have health appointments which have to be cancelled or rearranged for a date when there is space available. This situation can only deteriorate. It is ludicrous that I cannot decide on any given day to visit Stornoway to access any of the provision paid for by my council tax.

These vehicles mostly run on diesel. The majority of Scotland's cities have banned them from their centres due to pollution. Why should we encourage more to travel to our islands? The proposed plans to deal with the massively increased amount of sewage the site will generate are woolly to say the least and attention must be paid to the situation regarding high levels of e-coli recently found in the waters of the south of Harris. Berneray is not very far away.

I must also question why it is necessary to despoil one of the two main beaches on this beautiful island. It is 9 miles round, it has a phenomenal bird population and bird breeding grounds. The beaches belong to everyone. Why would we want to destroy a large part of what people come here to experience and enjoy. The supposed two jobs to be created is not enough nor necessarily accurate.

If it is so importantly necessary to provide sites for people driving massive motorhomes and vans on our beautiful and special islands there are many more sites on neighbouring North Uist that would work and would not in any way be controversial. And I write as a native of North Uist.

As part of this submission I include pictures of the main Berneray road. I've also seen a good number of people fall into the ditches as I have myself. It is impossible to go anywhere else when these trucks come at you. I live in fear as to the price it may cost one day.

14

Berneray residents, businesses and visitors to the island could all benefit from a considered and integrated plan for island camping (wild or with car, caravan or motorhome).

To give camping visitors a good welcome to the island and clear guidance about their responsibilities in respect of Scottish Outdoor Access Code, where they can park during the

day and night, dispose of their waste etc. would do great things for both Berneray residents and visitors alike.

The recent community meeting held to discuss this application, 06/06/24, illustrated the strength of feeling within the community, where some 50 or so participants highlighted their support or concerns about the development. What was heartening was that almost everyone was passionate about something being resolved to safeguard against further disruption and damaged from campers and that income should flow from tourism to support local businesses and community.

The proposal as outlined in the planning application is well formed in response to much of the Local Plan planning guidance and offers much in terms of good practice. The context of the development is that the applicant wants to change the use of part of their newly acquired crofting tenancy into a tourism development and, along with their business partners (Berneray Sands Ltd), develop a wider crofting tourism business to support future associated activities, including support of their existing on-island shop and restaurant.

There is a need to develop new locally generated income streams on Berneray, making best and considered use of the available resources and which ensure the special qualities (nature, heritage, scenery, community) of the place are not damaged and disturbed. The right type of development could infuse a more vibrant culture and one which offers opportunities for residents, young and old, to grow and become more content within our mixed-origin island 'tribe'.

Historically, the machair and dune area along the East Beach has attracted many campers, wild and unlicensed. The area can feel like a 'romantic Hebridean island', with nature in full flow, a stunning white beach and blue waters to one side and the backdrop of historic building and peaceful crofting, to the other. This scenic location is very accessible for all ages/abilities of residents and tourists, and is greatly visited throughout the year. The area has for many years had few permanent residents, but more recently, with new crofters taking up tenancies, derelict houses being sold and renovated, the area could soon become more populated, economically active and prosperous.

Over the years, as camping plot demand has increased on Berneray, the neighbouring township of Borge has excluded vehicle based campers through enforcing the Access Code. They did explore their own campsite proposal, but ultimately disregarded it when put to the vote. Consequently, and counter to demand, camping plot availability has been reduced in Berneray over the years and therefore habitual use is focused to areas such as the ferry terminal, harbour and the favourite, East Beach.

Many residents and campers enjoy the apparent freedom and magic the East Beach location offers, largely in part due to its undeveloped character. However, for a few months in the year the tranquillity can be greatly diminished as a result of large numbers of vehicles being parked up, both day and night with the area quickly becoming trampled, some waste and litter issues, and the general clamour of people spreading out the contents of their vehicles to make camp etc.

Residents and crofters along the beach have had many incidents with campers over the years and after the Covid break, the area was signed and fenced to stop unlicensed camping and its associated waste and antisocial behaviour, dune erosion and general disturbance.

These locally initiated controls however have slipped back as pressures to allow some camping in this area have come to bear, partly to alleviate the possible associated economic decline in local shops.

All crofters on Berneray are aware they could host three campers per croft with landlord's / Crofting Commission permission. Most have not done so as the costs seem to outweigh the benefits.

Importantly, there is also a general assumption held by many resident crofters, that they don't want to upset their neighbours by imposing campers on them and in effect diminish the shared and highly regarded amenity value they all share and enjoy equally.

The development proposal is being held up as a response to the demand for a need for managed camping on the island. Borne have managed camping by excluding it, Rushgarry did have a similar system in place, but which has lapsed. Both these plans however have resulted in an unwelcoming approach to camping visitors and alleged, although likely, associated loss in incomes to local shops.

The proposed development will offer a very different camping experience from that experienced by visitors of the past. It will be very organised, have electrical hook-ups (which weren't available/needed before), have strong rules and security (cameras) and take advanced bookings based on marketing of the area. The development is likely to encourage a new and possibly additional camping fraternity.

The development is focused on a relatively small area, has the potential to host 31 plots (some using tents and some in motor homes). For the days in the season the site operates at maximum capacity there could be 124 people on site (assuming 4 people per plot). This potential doubling of the population of Berneray is significant, but unlikely to happen very often. The development, in a bid to host this capacity, could however definitely challenge what most residents and current visitors enjoy about the East Beach. But there are clearly issues with the current system too.

A further consideration is that each crofter along the East Beach, if minded, could choose to host an additional 3 vans, i.e. $7 \times 3 = 21$ vehicles with up to 4 people each, by using their existing permitted development rights.

The scale of the new development must therefore be assessed from a cumulative effects perspective, as the proposed and existing permissions for campers must be considered in the determination.

Other island communities have embraced the good that well managed and strategically organised tourism can bring. For example, on Tiree they have, for the past 10 years, had a very successful [community camping plan](#) which is managed by an island ranger. In this vein, some crofters adjacent to the East Beach have initiated a discussion with the applicant to see if a similar disbursement of activity could work. However, this discussion is at a very early stage and the planning application remains live without any amendments in respect of this crofter/neighbour discussion and thus must be considered as it stands.

Whatever the outcome of this planning application we encourage the developers to work and continue discussions with their neighbours and wider community, who have very relevant experience from actually living on Berneray.

Ultimately, Berneray must remain a welcoming place which benefits from the good that can flow from a positive visitors experience and one which doesn't spoil what most come to see and what most residents enjoy about living on the island.

Additional Comments - Received 10.01.2025

The Biodiversity Enhancement Statement associated with the application fails to acknowledge that the potential ecological damage caused by the development requires to be compensated through a process which makes good, or even improves on current circumstances. Biodiversity enhancements need to be at a scale and location proportionate to the potential losses in biodiversity and associated ecosystem services. Whether the applicant has land available and intent to deliver true biodiversity enhancement is not detailed in the application and no acknowledgement or quantification of losses are made. The proposed development with its rubber lattice matting running to all campervan and tent pitches is evidence of intent of vehicle access to all camping locations. Further, the described 'tent pitches' are each of an area of 45m² vs 35m² for campervans and illustrate a likely intent to also use 'tent pitches' for lighter campervans, tent trailers or vehicles with roof tents, which are the current most common camping activities at the site. It must be assumed that the campervan pitches will be for much larger vehicles, that currently cannot access the site. Over time the access-road rubber matting will degrade and likely be replaced with more permanent material. The development as proposed, therefore, remains significant in terms of the maximum potential number of people (4 per pitch = 124) and vehicles (up to 31), who will be using approximately 8000m². This number of people and vehicles, potentially changing on a nightly basis, has potential to cause damage and disturbance to the nature and associated ecosystem services within and adjacent to the development site. It is, therefore, highly probable that the development will not contribute to 'protection and enhancement of biodiversity' as claimed. Rushgarry is an agricultural area with a landscape far from being 'wild' on account of centuries of human habitation and crofting. However, even at the peak of population in the 1850s, the human footprint was very small, with many people per household and no significant vehicles or road cover. Nature in Rushgarry was under pressure in the 1850s, and many families were near to starvation despite their foraging, 'scraping shellfish off the rocks', before they were cleared or sought fortunes elsewhere. Since then, small scale arable and grazing practice along the East Beach has likely led to improvements in the local ecosystem, which has become an important draw for many visiting the island and many residents who walk and enjoy this nature and tranquillity throughout the year. The ecosystem services provided by the East Beach machair and dunes are enjoyed by many Berneray residents as well as most of the current tourists coming to the island. Changing the character of Baile area through this development is about an economic opportunity for a group of non-resident business interests and should not be confused or softened with any claims of biodiversity enhancement. The pertinent point in this process is - do the claimed 'biodiversity enhancements' offer any proportionate compensation for the loss of ecosystem services currently enjoyed by the local community? We hope the developers can rethink the scale and design of their development such that it no longer presents a threat to what many Berneray residents enjoy, existing tourism businesses profit from and most tourists come to experience.

15

Having lived in Berneray since 2002, run a B&B here since 2007 and been Rushgarry crofters since 2013, we are very much aware of the value of the unique natural environments that we enjoy here and also of the serious lack of tourist accommodation on the Island, especially facilities for campers and camper van owners.

Unmanaged and unregulated overnight parking and camping around East beach has been an issue of concern to residents for many years. The fact that there are no existing facilities for campers is also an issue, one might imagine, for many of the visitors themselves.

Camper vans are not going to "go away" any time soon, this is more than a "passing phase" The best solution therefore is surely that this should be managed in a way which both maximises enjoyment for visitors and community benefit.

We therefore feel that the development of a formal campsite is long overdue.

	<p>We do empathise with those who live closest to the proposed site and also recognise the importance of protecting the unique dune and machair ecosystem from erosion and disturbance. Our own croft looks towards the area in question. It seemed to us from the presentation made in the community Hall recently that these concerns are being addressed, with attention to landscaping, a “green roof” on the toilet block and the use of protective matting within the site area.</p> <p>A key point is that once the site is operational, motorhome owners should be actively dissuaded from parking up anywhere else (unless the crofters in those areas specifically want them on their land) We would therefore caution against reducing the size of this site significantly, as it will be more difficult to encourage its use if it is inadequate in size and frequently full.</p>
<p>16</p>	<p>I would like to register my objection to the proposed Campsite at No 8 Rushgarry on the Isle of Berneray.</p> <p>I will list my objection in detail covering the significant impact on the natural environment, local heritage and the resident community here on Berneray and especially the Tràigh Bheasdaire East beach area where my family and our neighbours live. Where relevant I will reference conflict/potential conflicts with the ‘Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan - Supplementary Guidance: Caravans, Huts and Temporary Buildings, published by CnES in Nov 2021 (OHLDP) and, the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Regulations 2013 Schedule 3.</p> <p>As you pass the junction to the Berneray old school with Loch a Bhàigh to your right and travel through the two knolls of rock on either side of the road, the view opens up to the stunning vista of the East Beach over the Sound of Harris to the mountains of Harris and beyond. This is a unique experience here in the Western Isles. Tràigh Bheasdaire is a rare accessible unspoilt wild beach on the east side and quite rightly a recognised National Scenic Area.</p> <p>This is all established agricultural Croft land that is part of the Rushgarry community and has been maintained and cared for by that community over many generations. There is also a unique concentration of architectural heritage that adds to the cultural history of this part of Berneray and indeed the Western Isles.</p> <p><i>OHLDP Holiday Caravans intro: Re the aim of this policy the proposal does not meet the criteria for a ‘...sensitive and unobtrusive development without compromise of the amenity and environment of the islands’</i></p> <p>And furthermore does not meet the criteria for:</p> <p><i>OHLDP P2B ‘it is proportionate in scale to its location and setting, and will not result in an over concentration of sites in any one locality to the detriment of the landscape or residential amenity’</i></p> <p><i>OHLDP P2A (c) no unacceptable adverse impact on important landmarks and vistas; only sites that are well screened from key viewpoints by existing landform or landscape features are likely to be suitable</i></p> <p><u>Natural Environment</u></p> <p>The application form asks, ‘Is the site within an area of known risk to flooding?’ The answer provided is ‘No’. However, this has to be questioned given the alarming evidence of dune system collapse and rising sea level. This part of the East Beach has seen a dramatic increase in erosion in recent years. Higher tides and increased south easterly gales are removing large</p>

sections of the proposed site on a regular basis causing the sea to encroach with each tidal cycle. The future risk to flooding by the sea across the proposed site is very high.

OHLDP P2 (d) 'the development is outwith areas of flood risk and no additional flood risk will arise as a consequence of the development'

Islanders can recall fields and buildings stretching between The Gatliff Trust Hostel and Sandhill that have completely disappeared. The new road that the council created up to Sandhill replaced a previous access route that is no longer there. This is a well-documented subject and a point of deep anxiety to island residents. At the Berneray Community Council meeting of 15th January attended by councillors from the Comhairle (Mustaph Hocine and Uisdean Robertson) this concern was raised via a letter from a Rushgarry resident, Miss Barbara Hunter with support from other islanders. The effected area is on the proposed campsite, at Croft 8 Rushgarry.

The proposal will bring increased heavy vehicle presence and human activity and will severely impact and damage a dune system that is increasingly collapsing due to these changes.

OHLDP P2 (e) 'the development can take place without damage to the foreshore / machair'

Our island infrastructure was never designed for the volume of traffic and size of vehicles passing through the village over to Tràigh Bheasdaire each day. Since the causeway opened and Covid created a new Motorhome culture there has been an increase in large campervans, many hired by inexperienced drivers. Residents including myself are now being regularly asked to tow out campervans that have become stuck in the machair/dune system. The single-track road is very narrow (below acceptable standards in some places) with little provision for passing places. A more serious incident occurred within the past few months when a large cement mixer travelling near the proposed site went just off the verge into soft ground and fell on its side. It took several days to clear the site. The fuel and oil spillage pollution that this caused is still very visible to residents passing by. Is it not the case that the Council chose not to position the ferry terminal on the east beach side due to the narrow road infrastructure? It was further noticed by residents that during the recent refurbishment of the road through Berneray, the contractors stopped halfway down the Loch a Bhàigh stretch. We were informed by the contractors that we were not a priority and that there were no more funds to complete work to the community that lived along the East Beach. Put simply the road system is not suitable for the volume and size of vehicle of visitor traffic.

OHLDP P2 (a) 'the provision of satisfactory and safe road access...'

Visitor numbers to the site will also bring an increased threat to the fragile natural environment through the disposal of waste. Given the numbers of pitches we could regularly see over 100 plus people per night on Tràigh Bheasdaire. That will nearly double the population of Berneray.

A recently published article in the Stornoway Gazette '**Harris is being polluted by over development**' (, 15th May 2024) highlighted the increasing issue of pollution from human habitation (both permanent and visitor) to the beach and coastal areas of Seilibost and Luskentyre, West Harris. This '**has contributed to the sea water being rated as a health hazard due to high e-coli levels.**'

The coastal water along Tràigh Bheasdaire is popular for bathing, waters sports and shore foraging/fishing. We are being told that other visitors to the East Beach will also be able to use the toilet facilities. Has this additional capacity on the treatment of human waste been calculated into the scheme?

Potential hazard...

OHLDP P2B d)' the location of development should enable the responsible disposal of waste without harm to the environment'

Heritage

The proposed Campsite will be located within a community of Grade A and Grade B listed buildings that have important cultural and historical value. Rushgarry is one of 4 Conservation areas in the Outer Hebrides. As the resident and owner of the nearby Thomas Telford Parliamentary Church I object to a campsite being within close proximity of this important piece of our Scottish and Island Heritage. The complete restoration of this early 19th Century building working within the constraints of its Grade B listing status was a large personal endeavour and investment. Our work was recognised with an RIAS award in 2013 and short listed for the Doolan Prize (the leading award for architecture in Scotland). The project was also the recipient the 'Outer Hebrides Design Award' for Conservation in 2014 and featured on a Channel 4 television documentary broadcast to national and international audiences. We regularly host visitors who come to see the Old Church and its position within this site of National Scenic Beauty.

OHLDP P2A (c) no unacceptable adverse impact on important landmarks and vistas; only sites that are well screened from key viewpoints by existing landform or landscape features are likely to be suitable

There is another factor in the visual aesthetic impact of the proposal which in effect significantly changes this croft land into a permanent industrialised tourist operation. If this was say a new permanent building of modernist white boxes spread out along the dunes, would it be allowed? However, for us residents and islanders there will be a continuum of visual impact of the same structures, with arrivals and departures of similar shaped vehicles to the same position every day.

Campsite

There has been a number of assertions in the application that refer to resolving an issue of Wild Camping. Wild Campers are entitled by the 'Scottish Outdoor Access Code' to pitch their tent in the landscape for free as long as they follow certain guidelines including a max recommended 3 night stay. It is important to differentiate between the type of motorhome and campsite users who will be attracted to the proposed site. The biggest impact here will be the regular presence and impact of Campervans.

The Hebridean Gatliff Trust has their acclaimed Berneray hostel on the boundary of the same croft close by. It accommodates campers who often pitch outside so it could be argued that there is already adequate provision in this part of Berneray (with toilet, showers and cooking facilities). Will the wild campers and users of the Hostel continue to come here because the unspoilt natural environment that they so value has been significantly changed?

There is also no indication as to the timeframe of operation throughout the year. Will this be seasonal or year long. Will there be any light pollution from the camp? The dark skies above this part of the Western Isles are something of great value to residents. And what about noise pollution? Family activity around a Campsite of this size will be boisterous.

As a permanent resident I am also concerned about the lack of 24-hour management presence on the site. This type of resource could attract unwelcome, anti-social users to the Island. The applicants have made it clear to residents that they do not intend to live on the Croft. They have a permanent home in Lochmaddy on the neighbouring island of North Uist, a 30-minute drive away. There is also a valid concern that there might be long-term or

permanent pitches of caravans on the site. No mention is made if there are plans for long term rental arrangements. For instance, Crofters in Rushgarry have to adhere to strict planning guidelines when installing shipping containers or temporary/permanent store-age spaces, polycrubs etc.

Our Tràigh Bheasdaire community is further perplexed about who is the actual applicant? It appears that a company called Berneray Sands (Companies House: CN SC753583) has been established by the applicant with other external financial investors. This suggests to us that the Campsite is part of a bigger project, and a commercial company is exploiting our islands natural and heritage resources. As I stated originally, this is a Croft and while we all welcome diversity of income for the live-in Crofter, the scale of the Campsite proposed and the impact large Motorhomes will have on the natural environment, our heritage and our daily lives are the driver of my objection.

Empowering Island Communities: A future discussion

The Islands Scotland Act 2018 introduced measures to support and help meet the unique needs of Scotland's islands now and in the future. Its aim was to help create the right environment for sustainable growth and empowering communities in decision making.

I recognise that the Motorhome problem will continue and that we as the Berneray island community who live here must foster a discussion on how best to resolve this matter. Other islands like Tiree have developed a strong policy for accommodating Motorhome visitors with the 3 van max per croft being acceptable.

[Link to article in The Guardian](#)

Elsewhere small island communities like Lindisfarne have a no visitor vehicle access with an excellent car-park and facilities accommodating motorhomes and vehicles on the outskirts, requesting visitors experience the island on foot or by bicycle. This discussion is long overdue and with Comhairle leadership working with our island communities we might find an innovative sustainable green solution.

The applicant and his wife are very well liked and make an excellent contribution to our Islands social and economic amenities through their ownership of our island's shop and bistro. It is regrettable that a fuller and more comprehensive consultation did not take place before the application was submitted. This might have promoted useful discourse on where might be a suitable location on Berneray to locate a motorhome and camping site that does not severely impact on the local residents who live along the East Beach. Other campsites on the Uists are more discreetly located away from residential property, heritage sites or on vulnerable foreshore/dune systems, with the owners living on or near the site.

Planning Application

There are some points of accuracy in the Planning Application process that need questioned.

- We as the local residents living next to the site have had no notification of the planning application submission including no posting of a notice on the proposed site...is this not normal practice?
- Schedule 3 Development. Application states 'No', but this is not the case
- Schedule 3 is relevant re...
- (1) '...installation of buildings for use as a public convenience'
- (2) b ...'disposal of refuse or waste materials...'
- (8) construction of buildings, operations...which will'
- (8) a...'noise, artificial lighting'...
- (8) b 'alter the character of an established amenity'

- (8) c 'bring crowds into a generally quiet area'
- (8) d 'cause activity and noise between the hours of 8pm and 8am' or
- (8) e introduce significant change into a homogenous area

In principle I recognise the need to provide some managed resource for visitors to Berneray but this proposal is too big and will be impactful and damaging to the ecology, heritage experience and NSA that we value as Tráigh Beasdaire.

Additional Comments – Received 10.01.2025

Thank you for emailing me information about the updated planning application for the proposed campsite at Croft 8 Rushgarry, Isle of Berneray.

The changes are signalled as: ***“Changes to site plan, addition of Archaeology evaluation, Biodiversity statement, and Climate Change Adaptation Statement”***

I note that the Archaeology evaluation provides a detailed analysis of the site set against the overall context of the history of this part of the Western Isles and that there was no material found in the selected trenches that was of significant archaeological interest.

Initial response 'Changes to site plan'

Revision Description states...

Passing place added...where is this? Is it the green extended area to the south east of the Track. What about the main road? This will become an increasingly busy section for local residents and visitors. The erection of stock fencing on both sides has created a busy bottle neck of visitor traffic.

Fenceline adjusted...where? This is not clear in the drawings.

Motorhome bays adjusted...comparing each drawing there is minimal difference in distance with detail/length not indicated.

The Protected green matting seems to be no longer present on the Motorhome bays and the driveway area through the machair. And is there no protective green matting for vehicles beside tent pitches? Noted that 'protective mesh' on the pitches is mentioned in section 2.0.

The South Turning bay has been removed at a vulnerable part of the site given the erosion issue.

Additional Parking Spaces

The provision of the new plan and details in the application form are inconsistent with regards both additional and total parking spaces on the site.

Access and Parking (page 4) in the application states 10 places.

The plan signals 9, a small matter. However there is no mention of spaces for cars/vehicles parked alongside tent pitches (17) or provision for additional vehicles ie extended families/visitors. In total therefore there is the potential to have 40 + vehicles on site at any one time.

With regards additional visitor vehicles to the site, it is important to observe what has happened down at Balranald Campsite in North Uist since it opened. Vehicles are regularly parked on and all along the dune system approaching the site often stretching to the car parking provision for the RSPB centre. I highlight this as another concern about how the

proposal will impact on local residents and the natural environment and ecology of this important NSA.

Initial response 'Biodiversity Enhancement Statement'

1. Buildings and structures

'a minimal approach to disturbing the landscape on the site'

roof covering of building noted...but what about the impact of 40 vehicles and upwards of 70+ people each day moving on or around this fragile natural habitat?

Surface Treatment

'Remainder of the access track shall utilise protective grass reinforcement matting to reduce the risk of damage to the machair'. Has this not been removed from the new site-plan? However, what is the environmental impact of plastic matting breaking down under constant vehicle use and the ecological damage to the natural environment and wildlife?

Initial thoughts 'Climate Change Adaption Plan'

In the Introduction the applicant states that the site will 'seek to reduce the environmental impact on the landscape from unregulated wild camping'.

How does this relate to Climate Change? And important to note The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 allows responsible wild camping and this has always been permitted by crofters along Tràigh Bheasdaire.

In section 4.0 and 5.0 the applicant acknowledges that there is serious dune erosion taking place at this location. Following on from the Berneray Community Council meeting 15th January, I was asked to research the issue and report back to Council. The impact of Climate Change is evidenced across the Berneray coastline and is most visible at the southern end of Tràigh Bheasdaire. The dramatic sea carving into the dune system has removed substantial volumes of sand undercutting and collapsing marram grass onto the shoreline. Through a conversation with Patrick Hughes, NatureScot officer, I was directed to the Govt website Dynamic Coast and specifically to data collected over many years on the erosion along the East Beach. The findings are alarming with up to 35 meters lost in the past 15 years as a consequence of storm activity. Good to see the adaption plan acknowledges NatureScot's advice on retention of seaweed and seeding of marram grass, however the scale and impact of the sea carving erosion issue at the proposed site is being grossly understated.

[Link to Dynamic Coast website.](#)

Applicant details + community engagement

In page 2 the applicant is listed as Ruairidh Nicholson. This is perplexing as there is no mention in this updated application that this is a development driven by a business consortium called 'Berneray Sands Ltd' (company number SC753583).

At a meeting hosted by Berneray Island Community Council (6th June 2024) business stakeholders in 'Berneray Sands Ltd' none of whom live on Berneray presented a mission statement and plans for the site. The community were able to ask questions and raise their concerns. Promises were made by the developers to listen to local resident's legitimate concerns and open a dialogue. When the Berneray Community Council requested a follow up meeting with island residents the developers refused to meet us.

There are legitimate concerns that our Island Community Council and local residents have been disengaged by 'Berneray Sands Ltd' over its plans for the site.

	<p><u>Campervan/Campsite provision in the northern area of the Uists.</u> Questions must be asked around permitted development of tourist industry focused campsites on important scenes of scenic beauty here in the northern part of the Uists. The proposals for 8 Rushgarry must be seen in the context of the campsite plans for Clachan Sands. Both are significant areas of natural scenic beauty popular with both island residents and visitors. Do we need two campsites in this part of the Uists? Clachan is significantly different given that its location and immediate access is away from residential property, listed building heritage sites and local day to day activity.</p> <p>Are we not at risk of destroying the reputation of North Uist’s natural environment, ecology and stunning island vistas?</p> <p><u>Design Statement</u> <i>Context Site Description...</i>”only the rooftops of the Gunnery and neighbouring farmhouse that are visible from the proposed campsite”</p> <p>This is not accurate. The restored Thomas Telford Parliamentary Church, a Grade B listed building of significant heritage and architectural interest (RIAS Award 2013) is clearly visible. As will be the campsite from the property.</p> <p><u>Summary</u> The updated application does nothing to address previous observations in my original objection. The ‘Biodiversity Enhancement Statement’ is superficial and aspirational around detail like net gains set against the disturbance and displacement of the current ecology and natural environment. I refer to the Nature Scot guidance:</p> <p>The fundamental ambitions regarding the scale and capacity of motorhomes, tents and visitor numbers remains the same.</p> <p>It was very revealing from our Island Community Council meeting that the developers care little about the legitimate concerns of the local residents of Tràigh Bheasdaire. This is a commercial operation led by people who do not live here to exploit an important Berneray NSA with no benefit to our Berneray residents and community.</p> <p>Regards the ecology and natural environment, I would ask has anyone from the Planning Department or other council/government agencies recently visited the site and observed the scale of erosion taking place?</p>
<p>17 Amended</p>	<p>I am writing to object to the above proposed planning application for a camping and motor home site at 8 Rushgarry, Berneray.</p> <p>I have a degree from Sheffield Hallam University in Recreation Management, specialising in tourism planning, countryside recreation management and heritage tourism and I was employed by the Youth Hostel Association at their largest activity centre at Edale in the Peak District to run their business operation and help them with their business strategies looking forward. My wife is an environmental scientist and teaches secondary school Biology to A level.</p> <p>I would consider myself and expert in developing facilities and businesses within outdoor education including hostelling and camping and do not believe that this planning application will achieve the aims of managing visitors to East Beach that the application proposer has suggested.</p>

I own the house that is of the closest proximity to the proposed camping and motorhome site. The proposed site is directly in front of our house and is in front of five of the seven windows we have at our property. We believe that the site and proposed building, despite its design and the reassurances of the architects, will be blocking the only views we have – Please see appendix 1.

I first came to the Hebrides in the late 1970's and have myself wild camped throughout the islands over the years. I truly do understand the motivations of a visitor wanting to wild camp and whether for financial reasons or the wilderness experience, a wild camper whether using a tent or a motorhome would never consider a campsite. When a person decides to wild camp, they are looking for a remote "adventure" location to camp in and would not be interested in camping at a regulated campsite. These two different camping experiences are entirely different; by putting a campsite at 8 Rushgarry it will only increase the number of visitors and will not manage wild campers at all.

This will eventually become synergistic as visitors to the proposed campsite become educated and realise that they can camp outside of the parameters of the campsite and then will return in future years to wild camp rather than use the regimented campsite; ultimately creating a crescendo of camping visitors and over time there will be more visitors than there would have been if the campsite wasn't there in the first instance.

In addition, this proposed camping and motorhome site is in an inappropriate location ultimately being towards the end of the Berneray "cul de sac". Every single camper and motorhome must pass and then re-pass many of the houses on the island to get to the proposed site. With the road infrastructure as it presently is, the access along this road would not be fit for purpose. The road is single tracked, the passing places are small and principally designed for cars to pass not multiple large vehicles.

The proposed "Berneray Sands" motorhome and camping site is a commercial venture with a mission statement, aims and objectives and a keen eye on achieving a financial bottom line. It is not, as the application suggests, a campsite proposed by a crofter, it is a small consortium of partners and investors looking to make a commercial profit from a campsite at a unique seaside location. Even the plan for the reception building has a designated ice cream area which I believe will evolve into buckets and spades, windbreaks and beach balls.

The consortium is not really proposing a solution to wild camping, they are proposing a holiday resort, where rather than someone coming for wild camping or parking their motorhome for two or three nights, they will be booking in for a week or two for their holidays. This is entirely different to the demographic of visitors presently. Each motorhome staying at Berneray Sands will head to and from Berneray every day in their motorhome as they tour the islands. This will cause extra pollution from exhaust fumes, brake and tyre dust etc as the motorhomes pass through the entire island to the proposed site.

The proposed dedicated beach access amplifies the holiday experience of the Berneray Sands camping and motorhome holiday park. It's a neat inappropriate package designed to attract a completely different sort of holiday maker that presently wouldn't consider this location without the comfort of the holiday park campsite and its facilities.

I draw your attention to two examples on Skye, both of which many years ago were remote island locations that succumbed to having a structured campsite and now are carbuncles and are precisely what Berneray must avoid. The campsite in Dunvegan and the campsite at Sligachan Hotel, both of which have grown to a point where they are unrecognisable from the size that they first set out as. I fear that the Berneray Sands proposed site will over time turn into a far larger concern than is currently being proposed.

Mr Nicholson and his spin doctors (investors) that presented at the Berneray Island special meeting have no experience in developing camping and motorhome sites, they are plucking data from the sky and have little or no understanding of the impacts, market trends or dynamics of tourism in a “honeypot” location such as East Beach and I believe giving permission to have this proposed site in this particular location would be a disaster for the island and the environment.

Referring to the Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan for Caravans, Huts and Temporary Buildings policy 2B: touring caravan and camping sites is plain to see that both points b and c are not fulfilled.

-

B. - Outwith main settlements, the layout should be open plan and without formally defined curtilages between units

And

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C. - Access to the site has been designed to allow safe movement of large vehicles and towed units to and from the site and the public highway: hard surfacing access across the site should be kept to a minimum.

Neither of the above have been satisfied by the applicants. Therefore, this application does not meet the planning authorities’ own requirements for the proposed site and thus this application should not be granted.

The use of CCTV, to be used as the applicants suggest to “Police” the behaviour of their would-be customers at the proposed Berneray Sand resort, is very worrying. Firstly, I find it preposterous that residents and the guests of the resort will be recorded and secondly, I cannot understand how the applicants think they are going to film children in beachwear from a legal point of view. This is a massive invasion of privacy, and it is totally wrong that this company think it is ok to record, capture and store images of children. This is totally wrong and must not be allowed.

So, to conclude, this application does not adhere to the guidelines published by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar for such a facility. It will destroy the ethos of the whole reason why visitors decide to come to Berneray and its wilderness experience. It compromises our house, it will cause pollution, it will be detrimental to the unique and fragile environment, it will cause congestion and disruption to the island, and it will only have benefit to a couple of businesses on the Island, one of which is owned by the applicant. Having the advantage of being new to the Island and perhaps being able to see the wood for the trees, this proposed camping and motorhome site should not be given permission.

I find it utterly incomprehensible that the planning authority even think or consider that this application for a motorhome site should be considered.

Additional Comments – Received 10.01.2025

I still stand by the objections I made last year and do not see that the new amended plans address the serious issues concerning the proposed development.

These are just some of my comments.

1. I attended the Island meeting regarding the site. It was more a presentation by the proposers rather than a meeting. I asked what their experience in managing a campsite and what back ground they have in tourism and the answer was they don't have any

	<p>experience. My degree is in Heritage tourism, Countryside Recreation Management and Tourism planning from Sheffield Hallam University. The meet was heated and it was a well polished presentation leaving little time for a proper, accurately minuted meeting allowing the residents, particularly of Rushgarry to share their views. I would suggest it wasn't run properly.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. To have a structured campsite quite literally at the furthest point you8 can drive to on Bernary is madness. It is quite literally at the end of the "cul de sac" meaning that all visitors and particularly their caravans and motorhomes will need to pass and repass to the furthest part of the island. Motorhomes using a formal campsite that they have booked ten to be larger that motor caravans and I believe that much larger type homes will attend, and the roads simply are not built to cope with such regular large vehicles, especially when they meet coming from two different direction. This will attract a completely new type of visitor to the island and not manage the existing visitor who will still want a wilderness wild camping experience or can simply not afford to use a formal site,. 3. I was shocked at the erosion that this winters storm have cause on East Beach. The dudes have eroded far more than I could have imagined. In a matter of years, it is possible that the proposed building will become at risk from the sea and they we could end up with a derelict building quite literally falling into the sea and the pollution this would cause. I have personally witnessed this in other seaside locations. 4. I do believe that a campsite is a good idea on Berneray but not necessarily if the one in Clachan is to go ahead which I would argue is in a far more sustainable location. If a site is to come to Berneray than the obvious place to site this is at the end of the causeway, near the ferry terminal, shop etc. That way vehicles could be limited to residents in the summer months allowing only access on foot and by bicycle to visitors which would help manage visitor numbers and the erosion and pollution they cause. It would from an economy point of view would be better as there could be an area for paid parking and even a electric bicycle shop to hire bikes which would add more revenue to the island than a stand alone site at East Beach. <p>I have many more point i would like to add, but sadly I only learnt of this second amended application today and time is running out.</p> <p>Please refuse this application as I strongly believe if you pass it then in a few years time we will all agree that it was the wrong thing to do and not the right location for a site. East beach is unique being East Facing and it need protecting not exploiting for the benefit of a few. Please have whole Island plan that sensibly lays out a 10 year plan to protect the Island and for any changes to benefit everyone and not a few.</p> <p>I strongly object to this application.</p>
<p>18</p>	<p>I am a permanent resident living in the Rushgarry part of Berneray, overlooking the East Beach. Our neighbouring Crofter has submitted a Planning Application to establish a campsite on machair and dune land that is a National Scenic Area.</p> <p>I wish to object to this development as it will damage this important NSA and its ecology.</p> <p>Legislation defines an NSA as an area "of outstanding scenic value in a national context". There is something very special about the Tràigh Bheasdaire East Beach on Berneray. It is a unique wild beach and dune system in the Outer Hebrides with important unspoilt views over to Harris.</p>

Nature Scotland states that:

Our National Scenic Areas (NSA's) include:

- Dramatic island landscapes – in the Hebrides and Northern Isles
- And that... 'The designation's purpose is both to identify our finest scenery and to ensure its protection from inappropriate development'

The 'Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan - Supplementary Guidance: Caravans, Huts and Temporary Buildings, published by CnES in Nov 2021 also states that any development should be a:

- *'...sensitive and unobtrusive development without compromise of the amenity and environment of the islands*
- Have an *'unacceptable adverse impact on important landmarks and vistas'*
- And *'only sites that are well screened from key viewpoints by existing landform or landscape features are likely to be suitable'*

It is my personal opinion that none of the above criteria are being met by the proposal. This permanent campsite will spoil what is arguably one of the best scenic views in the Outer Hebrides. It will also be visible interrupting the spectacular southerly vista from our Grade B listed Thomas Telford Parliamentary Church. A property where we regularly host visiting artists, musicians, writers and academics inspired by this unspoilt part of the Western Isles. Please can you ensure that these policies in the NSA and Outer Hebrides Development Plan are upheld to protect our beloved Traigh Beasdaire from the type of over-development and exploitation that we are seeing on Skye and Harris.

Volume of Traffic

Berneray has just over a hundred residents and is accessed either by ferry from Harris or a causeway from north Uist and the southern Isles. Our community is in the North East end of the island which in effect is at the end of the Uists road network. The road infrastructure to our part of the island is highly unsuitable for the number of holiday vehicles, especially large motorhomes. The road is a very narrow single track with few passing places or on-road turning spots. Consequently large vehicles are being driven over what is Croftland where there are breeding birds and marram grass that is vital to holding the dune system together. As we have experienced before when a previous Crofter started charging for overnight stays on 8 Rushgarry, there is an expectation that visitors can move further up the beach for free leading to over-crowding, ground damage and conflict with crofters, especially those visitors with dogs who do not recognise that they are parked on active Croftland with grazing sheep. BBC Radio 4's 'You and Yours' programme broadcast today 11th June, devoted a 1 hour timely discussion on the subject of 'Over-Tourism' highlighting issues regarding the change of dynamics to a place of scenic beauty and the impact on the community living in the immediate vicinity. The NC500 was highlighted as an example. Of special concern was a comment from Andrew Holden, Professor of Environment and Tourism at Goldsmith's University who spoke of 'Last Chance Tourism' where tourists visit wild locations that may change for ever due in part to over tourism and environmental damage.

Ecology

Has an ecological assessment been completed on the risk to the machair and dunes in this area? Are you aware of the current rapid loss of sand supporting the machair that has taken place in recent years? I walk along Traigh Bheasdaire every day and I am shocked at the level of erosion. Large motorhomes and regular vehicle use on this land will only exacerbate what is a serious problem. The infrastructure proposed will require concrete and extensive ground-

	<p>works for power supply and septic tanks. Creating dedicated camping spaces will involve digging into some of this fragile machair grassland. And yet the Campsite's mission statement is that it has a Green agenda.</p> <p>The application states that it is addressing the needs for wild campers. This is simply not true. Wild Campers seek locations in unspoilt areas in our natural environment away from busy tourist locations.</p> <p>As a neighbouring resident I am further concerned that the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Regulations 2013 Schedule 3, are not being addressed.</p> <p>Berneray is a small island community. We need to find collective agreement to the over-tourism that is taking place and effecting my life and the specific environment in which my neighbours and I live. Simon Calder the respected tourism journalist spoke in the Radio programme about greater 'dispersal' which avoids over-congestion in popular tourist spots. While I object to the current plans I am very willing to contribute to a discussion with our neighbours, community and council to find a creative solution to this issue.</p>
19	<p>I am writing to object to the above planning application.</p> <p>Together with my husband, I have owned, since June 2023. It is located just around the headland from the proposed site. We, together with our friends and family are regular visitors to the island. Whilst on Berneray I visit East Beach daily, enjoying the unspoilt scenery and serenity of the wild and undeveloped landscape.</p> <p>I heard about the application through word of mouth rather than any personal notification or community publicity. When I visited Berneray two weeks ago there was no evidence of any notices at the site. Ironically, I have since read an online article (welovestornoway.com) including extensive quotes from the applicant about the campsite and come across a "Berneray Sands' facebook page which states they are 'excited to introduce [their] upcoming campsite!'</p> <p>During our visit I made a number of observations in relation to the proposed camping site. These observations form the grounds of my objection and are set out below.</p> <p>Wild camping</p> <p>The Design Statement in the application states: <i>'This is a popular area for wild camping and during the summer months the area is busy with campervans and tents. Historically there has never been a formal licensed campsite in this area and the proposal will address the need for facilities for campers who wish to enjoy this area of the island.'</i></p> <p>We are keen campers, owning a small campervan in which we have toured the islands extensively with our family. I therefore know something of the nature of wild campers. Put simply, they like to wild camp. They are not likely to want to pay for facilities when they can simply wild camp further along the beach. Think for example of all the camper vans parked overnight in lay-bys on Skye within a mile or so of the large and inexpensive site at Sligachan. The proposed site on East Beach may therefore simply push the wild campers along the beach. This site may therefore 'grow' the number of campers, rather than actually address issues that some may perceive to exist.</p> <p>As mentioned above, when visiting Berneray, I visit East Beach daily. I have not so far witnessed any mess or litter from the wild campers. Additionally, according to the Berneray Community website, <i>"There are toilets (signposted) and a coin-operated shower at the fishing harbour on the east coast of the island. These are open from 8am to 9pm."</i></p>

I would therefore conclude that the 'need for facilities' on East Beach itself is not urgent and, in fact, is already met by existing facilities at the harbour.

Planning Policy

Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan Supplementary Guidance: Caravans, Huts and Temporary Buildings; ED3; 2B; Pg 7

The above policy states the following:

*Proposals for touring caravan and camping sites will be acceptable where **all** the following can be met:*

a) it is proportionate in scale to its location and setting, and will not result in an over concentration of sites in any one locality to the detriment of the landscape or residential amenity;

b) outwith main settlements, the layout should be open plan and without formally defined curtilages between units;

c) access to the site has been designed to allow safe movement of large vehicles and towed units to and from the site and the public highway; hard surfacing across the site should be kept to a minimum;

[...]

e) for sites on coastal, machair or agricultural land, exposed sites or those susceptible to damage, consent will be limited to use between 01 April to 30 September;

It is worth noting that an inability to demonstrate any one of these conditions may render the site unacceptable. I believe that several conditions are not met.

a) proportionate in scale to its location and setting

14 campervans and 17 tent pitches are planned. If there are on average 2-3 people per pitch, there could be near 90 'official' overnight visitors at busy times, without counting any wild campers. This is a huge number when compared to the resident population of the island and would certainly appear to be disproportionate.

b) open layout plan

The plans submitted indicate defined pitches, which may not be considered to be sufficiently 'open'. Current wildcampers tend to park along the beach, with some distance between them. This minimises the visual impact of the vans. Clustering them around each other in the proposed site will have a greater impact on views than currently experienced.

c) safe movement of large vehicles

Although this condition could be read to relate simply to the site entrance, it must be borne in mind that all campsite traffic will have to come along the single track road around Bays Loch. This road is already well-used. More cars and vans pulling over to allow others to pass will start to impact negatively on verges. Some motorhomes are not terribly manoeuvrable and hired motorhomes are often driven by inexperienced drivers. Road edges will therefore likely be compromised by increased traffic and larger camping units. In addition, subjecting the entire community around the main road to an increase in traffic on a minor and single track road should not be deemed 'safe'.

e) seasonal closure

Although seasonal closure is a good thing, it does mean that, when closed, a large area of the headland will now be closed off to all camping, once again, pushing the wild campers along

the beach. There is no detail in the application of how the site will be managed and maintained during the closed season.

**Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan
EI 6; Coastal Erosion**

This states:

*Development proposals on areas liable to coastal erosion will only be permitted when the applicant can demonstrate that the development will not exacerbate coastal erosion at the development site or elsewhere along the coast and when the applicant can demonstrate that the development meets **one or more** of the following:*

- a) it will have exceeded its useful life expectancy before natural erosion is likely to occur;*
- b) it is of a temporary nature;*
- c) it will not give rise to, or require, defence measures;*
- d) it is associated with the defence of the coastal area where one or more of the following is threatened: I. occupied buildings; II. important habitats such as the machair; III. scheduled monuments or listed buildings; and IV. major infrastructure and utilities.*

Any coastal protection method(s) to be employed should be justified and detailed as part of a planning application.

The planning application does not refer to coastal erosion (there are no boxes for applicants to tick), and does not contain an Environmental Statement. There is simply a tick box indicating that the applicant has not included one. The application does not therefore address any of the conditions in EI 6.

There is in fact significant coastal erosion at the proposed site, with great lumps of grass and marram already lying on the sand and other stretches looking to be on the point of collapse. This is within feet of where the camper vans will be parked and lies between the pitches and the beach - in the path of campers wishing to take a direct route to the beach. A campsite of this size must surely present a real and severe risk to this fragile structure.

The application states in very general terms that consideration will be given to the natural beauty and fragility of the site, but these comments do not amount to the required 'justified and detailed' statement of coastal protection methods that will be used.

**Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan
NBH 1: landscape**

Development that affects a National Scenic Area (NSA) will only be permitted where:

- a) the objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the area will not be compromised;*
- or*
- b) any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.*

According to the Scottish government website, National Scenic Areas (NSAs) are 'a national landscape designation of areas that have been identified as having outstanding scenic value in a national context. The designation's purpose is both to identify our finest scenery and to ensure its protection from inappropriate development through the planning system [...] There are 40 NSAs in Scotland, mainly in remote and mountainous areas, including [...] dramatic island landscapes (e.g. the Hebrides, Northern Isles) ...'

Berneray, including East Beach, has been designated an NSA. It is therefore the duty of those in charge of the planning system to protect it from inappropriate development.

	<p>I believe that the proposed camp site is ‘inappropriate development’. The size of the site, the facilities block and their position at the entry to East Beach will certainly compromise the overall integrity of the area. They will form a significant part of the first impression that visitors to the beach will have. The dunes are not high enough to shield them from view. The fragility of the beach and the impact of increased numbers of visitors on it should not be understated or ignored.</p> <p>I do not feel that the development of this site is remotely balanced by any of the suggested positives in the application. Facilities already exist at the harbour. The plans do not show or discuss the lighting that will be needed, nor how the site will be managed overnight. There is no real evidence or detailed plan of how the site will benefit the community (as opposed to the crofter and his business partners) and there is a lack of regard to the impact of the site on the East Beach and Rushgarry residents, many of whom live very close by.</p> <p>To allow this application will be to let the development ‘genie’ out of the bottle with lasting negative consequences for East Beach and Berneray.</p> <p>Additional Comments - Received 10.01.2025</p> <p>Thank you for advising us of the amended application. We have no further comments as we do not feel that the amendments fully address the points that we have already made. We stand by those objections.</p> <p>We would also like to point out that the plan included at page 14 is not accurate as it shows that the applicant owns our land at Ty Cymro and would welcome it being amended to show the current ownership position.</p>
<p>20</p>	<p>I would like to register my objection to the proposed Campsite at No. 8 Rushgarry, on the Isle of Berneray.</p> <p>My objection is due to fact that I believe there will be a significant impact on the special natural environment, local heritage and the resident community, and especially the Tràigh Bheasdaire East beach area where my husband and I live, along with the other residents in Rushgarry. Tràigh Bheasdaire is a rare, accessible, unspoilt wild beach on the east side of Berneray and it is a recognised National Scenic Area. The proposed site is on established agricultural Croft land that is part of the Rushgarry community. This has been maintained and cared for by the community over many generations. The architectural heritage in this area is unique and it adds to the cultural history of this part of Berneray. This proposal does not meet the criteria of the OHLDP Holiday Caravans intro: that states any proposal should be ‘...sensitive and unobtrusive development without compromise of the amenity and environment of the islands’. It does also not meet the criteria for: OHLDP P2B ‘it is proportionate in scale to its location and setting, and will not result in an over concentration of sites in any one locality to the detriment of the landscape or residential amenity’ OHLDP P2A (c) ‘no unacceptable adverse impact on important landmarks and vistas; only sites that are well screened from key viewpoints by existing landform or landscape features are likely to be suitable’ Since the causeway opened and Covid created a new Motorhome culture, there has been an increase in large campervans. Our island infrastructure was never designed for the volume of traffic and size of vehicles passing through the village over to Tràigh Bheasdaire each day. The roads are narrow with few passing places. There have been near misses and indeed other incidents due to the narrow roads. With the proposal there is only going to be an increased number of vehicles, including large motor homes. Put simply,the road system is not suitable for the volume and size of vehicle of visitor traffic. OHLDP P2 (a) ‘the provision of satisfactory and safe road access...” Many islanders can remember buildings and fields between The Gatliff Trust Hostel and Sandhill that have since disappeared. A new road had to be created up to Sandhill as the old road had disappeared. The effected area is on the proposed campsite, at Croft 8 Rushgarry. The proposal will bring increased heavy vehicle</p>

	<p>presence and human activity and will severely impact and damage a dune system that is increasingly collapsing due to these changes. OHLDP P2 (e) 'the development can take place without damage to the foreshore / machair' The proposed site on this part of the East Beach that in recent years, has seen a dramatic increase in erosion. Higher tides and increased south easterly gales are removing large sections of the proposed site on a regular basis causing the sea to encroach with each tidal cycle. The future risk to flooding by the sea across the proposed site is very high. OHLDP P2 (d) 'the development is outwith areas of flood risk and no additional flood risk will arise as a consequence of the development' Visitor numbers to the site will also bring an increased threat to the fragile natural environment through the disposal of waste. We could regularly see over 100 plus people per night on Tràigh Bheasdaire, due to the proposed numbers of pitches. The amount of waste will increase considerably and this could have a devastating impact on the local environment, including the sea water which is regularly used for swimming and other water activities. The proposed site would need to have sufficient provision for any waste and this I believe could be problematic, leading to significant pollution. OHLDP P2B d)' the location of development should enable the responsible disposal of waste without harm to the environment' Wild Campers are entitled by the 'Scottish Outdoor Access Code' and the proposal suggests it's a solution to wild camping. However rather than someone coming for wild camping or parking their motorhome for two or three nights, they will be booking in for a week or two for their holidays. This is entirely different to the demographic of visitors presently. Each motorhome staying at the proposed site will head to and from Berneray every day in their motorhome as they tour the islands. This will cause extra pollution from exhaust fumes, brake and tyre dust etc as the motorhomes pass through the entire island to the proposed site. Will the wild campers and users of the nearby Gatliff Hostel continue to come here because the unspoilt natural environment that they so value has been significantly changed? As a resident, I am also concerned about the lack of 24 hour management presence on the site. This type of resource could attract unwelcome, anti-social users to the Island. The applicants have made it clear to residents that they do not intend to live on the Croft and they have a permanent home in Lochmaddy, a 30 minute drive away. There is also a valid concern that there might be long-term or permanent pitches of caravans on the site. No mention is made if there are plans for long term rental arrangements. There is no indication as to the timeframe of operation throughout the year. Will this be seasonal or year long. Is there going to be any light pollution from the camp? The dark skies above this part of the Western Isles are something of great value to residents. Also, what about noise pollution? activity around a Campsite of this size will be boisterous. The proposal is to be based on a Croft and while we all welcome diversity of income for the live-in Crofter, the scale of the Campsite proposed and the impact large Motorhomes will have on the natural environment, our heritage and our daily lives are the driver of my objection. Whilst I do understand that people want to visit our beautiful island, I do not believe that the proposed site is appropriate as it will be too big, it will have a huge impact on the sensitive environment and on the nature and wildlife in this beautiful of places.</p>
<p>21</p>	<p>I am supportive of the idea of a camp-site on the island. A dedicated camp-site with amenities is much needed to help control the number of camper-vans & campers and the issues that come with them which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - driving & parking on machair - leaving rubbish lying beside full bins (which of course escapes from bags and covers the island) - leaving excrement at beach <p>The proposed camp-site is a good idea but it shouldn't be where it is planned to be and is too large for a very small island.</p>

- **The machair is a rare and fragile grassland.** The machair & dunes are an integral part of the East Beach & should be protected & respected. The proposed camp site would mean that a large section of the machair would be consumed with infrastructure, would incur heavy traffic (foot & vehicle) & would effectively be lost as machair. Lost to islanders, walkers, visitors & the myriad of wildlife which populate the machair.

- **The East Beach is the only area on Berneray where several migratory waders nest** (as pointed out by a bird expert at the Community Hall meeting on June 6th). Campervanners often come with dogs which can disturb nesting birds.

- **Dune & machair erosion:** The dunes & machair of the East Beach are already suffering from severe erosion - from both sea storms, campervans and visitors clambering up & down the dunes. The camp site on the machair may cause even more erosion, by inviting & encouraging more campervans to the area.

- **Access & privacy:** The area of the proposed camp-site - consumes the most accessible section of the East beach machair. Although the proposed site allows access via gates, this would mean having to walk through an area covered by CCTV. Not all of us wish to be filmed. Some of us value our privacy.

- **The proposed site is too large for a very small island:** As mentioned by a speaker at the recent Community Hall meeting on June 6th, filled to capacity, the camp-site could hold around 140 people - the island's population - in a concentrated area of precious machair. A large campsite, on the island will place even more pressure the narrow, one-way roads.

I suggest that the camp-site be smaller in size and situated in the small field just above the proposed site. This would allow the machair to live & breath & would allow locals/walkers & visitors proper access to the machair area below the field - which is low-lying, easier access to beach, flat. **The East Beach machair should be closed to campervans & vehicles** to help protect the fragile machair. Allowance could be made for some wild camping on the machair as this has a lot less impact on the environment.

There are several issues around the planned camp site which I feel need further clarification:

a) Use of CCTV - privacy and light pollution: Would the CCTV film outside the camp-site fence boundary? Any lights on the site - how bright? Will they be on all night/every night? Will the lights be triggered by movement? Lights on the East Beach machair would confuse and disturb nesting migratory birds.

b) Sewerage system - risk of disease & pollution: Will the 'soakaway' system drain into the soil & then into the beach and sea water? Will it increase the risk of E-Coli? Will this then mean that the East Beach will no longer be safe place to swim?

c) Beach Access for camp site guests: Will there be a dedicated beach access for the site - strengthened & maintained - as part of erosion control?

I also feel strongly that there should have been an open & clear notification of the proposed plan. The islanders & residents of Berneray all should have been notified of the proposal for a large camp-site situated on one of the valued assets of the island. This did not happen. It was only via word of mouth that islanders discovered that a planning application had been made. This meant there was less time to respond - was that deliberate? Tourism is essential to the islands - but at what cost? There may be other options for the island regarding a camp-site - perhaps a community run camp-site in partnership with a small business. Care & consideration and a proper consultation process with islanders is needed in such matters.

	<p>Where is there mention of impact studies/reports around the environment & birds in relation to the proposed camp-site -especially when the planned camp-site is situated on rare & precious machair, an area which is struggling with erosion and on a beach where several migratory birds nest exclusively.</p> <p>How is the CNES looking after the valuable assets within it's boundaries?</p>
22	<p>Although I support the need for better management of the camper van tourism on Berneray, I would like to comment on the Berneray Sands campsite development plans due to the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This site (along with the additional current allowance of three camp sites per Croft) brings the east beach capacity up to around 55 sites across the applicant's Croft and the other 8 Crofts. This does not include the capacity at the Hostel. I think a smaller site would be more suitable. 2. This area has earned the status of National Scenic Area. Anyone who has driven round that bend to take in the views across the Sound of Harris understands this. A permanent camp ground as proposed for development here would compromise this special place. I believe it would be better located elsewhere, or significantly reduced in size. 3. The developers do not live on Berneray. The local east beach residents were not consulted and do not approve of the development (this does not speak for the wider Rushgarry township, where opinions are mixed). The developers lack consideration and understanding for the current tourism situation on the east beach. This was evident at the local council meeting. 4. Concerns over the impact on the machair, dune systems and intertidal zone. How would the potential 55 camp sites on the beach impact on water quality following periods of high usage and precipitation? 5. I believe it could be better implemented elsewhere, or more spread out on Berneray. Not necessarily in an isolated location. There are successful schemes such as Tìree which have a more sympathetic approach. <p>The east beach is a main attraction of the island as a stunning and very accessible example of a Hebridean seascape. You wouldn't normally house the tourism in the middle of the main attraction. Not on a large scale anyway.</p> <p>I hope a suitable and sympathetic development plan is agreed which facilitates positive community engagement going forward. With a community buy out of the Bays of Harris Estate, we are likely soon to be in a position to have a community lead tourism/development strategy. There would be genuine community benefit, if a collaboration was to be established.</p>
23	<p>As a neighbour of the proposed development, quite naturally I do not want to live next to a formalised campsite at all. However, I'm not unreasonable and don't wish to halt all forms of diversification etc. I do recognise there is a requirement for a more formalised camping arrangement on Berneray. I had envisioned Berneray's camping solution would be in the form of a more community led campsite, especially with a community buy out in motion (note the community already funds an existing toilet and shower block at the harbour), so that the wider community benefit from it, rather than by external investors/developers. This proposal has arrived first and so I hope the applicant(s) will take these points into consideration.</p> <p>Proposed size and number of sites – The current campsite application would mean that if at full capacity it is likely that there will be more campsite attendees than the current population of Berneray. They will also all be in one condensed area of the island. These numbers do not take into consideration that each croft has a 3 campervan allowance already, therefore if all exercised the campervan capacity at Tràigh <i>Bheasdaire</i> could be up at around 38, plus the proposed tent sites, additional tents of wild campers (many cycling the Hebridean Way wild</p>

camp on Berneray) and cars/day trippers. There will also be the existing Gatliff Trust Hostel users which accommodates 21 people.

OHLDP P2B 'it is proportionate in scale to its location and setting, and will not result in an over concentration of sites in any one locality to the detriment of the landscape or residential amenity'

Residential area – A formalised campsite of this scale, with the promotion of activities such as water sports, outdoor eating, amenities block, a shop etc will inevitably bring with it increased noise levels. This also relates to previous comments about proposed number of sites. At a recent community council meeting it was emphasised by the developer that 'control' was important, with signage, contracts and use of CCTV. There will also be artificial lighting used to light the campsite at night (inevitably people will need to use the facilities at night). All of this will impact on a residential area. Furthermore, will the campsite be unmanned 'out of hours'?

OHLDP P2B 'it is proportionate in scale to its location and setting, and will not result in an over concentration of sites in any one locality to the detriment of the landscape or residential amenity'

Dynamic dune system – The application suggests that the arrangement will 'help protect the machair' as sites will be positioned between the existing marram rather than on marram etc. The dune system is not fixed, it is constantly changing. This beach runs in a cycle where for a period of time the south end retreats and the north end advances, and then it swaps. The sites may not be suitable (or there at all) while the south end is retreating and unstable. This needs to be considered when thinking about sites as well as the proposed fence line proximity to the dunes to avoid rylock fencing etc collapsing with erosion.

OHLDP P2 (e) 'the development can take place without damage to the foreshore / machair'

Flooding – I don't believe this can be ruled out as it is in the application currently, given the erosion cycle and high-water mark.

OHLDP P2 (d) 'the development is outwith areas of flood risk and no additional flood risk will arise as a consequence of the development'

Sewage treatment tank/waste disposal – The developers stated at the Community Council meeting that anyone (locals and non-campsite visitors) can use the campsite facilities. Are we confident that the additional capacity has been calculated and the system can deal with it?

OHLDP P2B d)' the location of development should enable the responsible disposal of waste without harm to the environment'

NSA – Many residents, day trippers and campers visit Tràigh *Bheasdaire* because of its visual impact, it's sense of openness, uninterrupted views to Harris, the wildlife and the low numbers of people on the beach itself. The area is a National Scenic Area. Note that other buildings in Rushgarry are set back away from the dunes and do not impact on that vista. Is the proposed campsite target audience different to the current tourism we are receiving since the openness and sense of freedom will be removed (considering the 'control' and 'contracts' discussed in the Community Council meeting by a developer)? Are we swapping one 'type' of tourist for another, or will we now have both? I appreciate that an attempt to make the building 'blend in' has been made, but the vans will be concentrated and consistent in one locality throughout the season and the campsite infrastructure will remain in sight all year

	<p>round (even once the tourists are gone). In essence it changes the area by making it tourism focussed and commercial.</p> <p><i>OHLDP P2B 'it is proportionate in scale to its location and setting, and will not result in an over concentration of sites in any one locality to the detriment of the landscape or residential amenity'</i></p> <p>Roads – At peak tourist season and ferry arrival times the roads of Berneray see an influx of cars and campervans driving through the island. Larger vehicles are becoming more common and there are no pavements in Berneray. Residents and tourists walk on the road and have to climb into the verge for passing traffic (not easy with a pushchair, if you have reduced mobility or are elderly). A formal campsite will encourage further use of these roads, with potential for more touring caravans given the electric hook ups. The narrow roads with ditches either side aren't designed for this type and volume of vehicle use. The road issue needs addressed by the council regardless of the Berneray Sands campsite development.</p> <p><i>OHLDP P2 (a) 'the provision of satisfactory and safe road access...'</i></p> <p>Investors – The application was made in the name of Ruairidh Nicholson, however it is my understanding that the campsite is to be ran as part of the company 'Berneray Sands' (Companies House: CN SC753583).</p>
<p>24</p>	<p>On finding out about an application for a camping and camper van site being submitted before any discussion with local residents we felt the need, as directors of the Berneray hostel, to put forward our opinion.</p> <p>We appreciate the need for a SMALL campsite on the island to dissuade the "wild camping" that goes on with no respect for the countryside.</p> <p>A major concern is for the shoreline, dunes, marram grass and what little machair now exists. It is steadily being destroyed at East Beach due to the uncontrolled camper vans, caravans and cars driving on with no thought to the damage being done to the afore said machair etc.</p> <p>The West Beach is protected so why is a similar project not in place for the East Beach? This beach is also the only nesting site on the island for the migratory wading birds - a campsite the size being proposed is bound to affect the successful breeding of these birds.</p> <p>On looking at the submitted plans for 31 pitches - matting for vehicles to park on is not going to prevent damage and will hinder the growth and any redevelopment of the machair. There is too much damage to the dunes etc without increasing the number of vehicles and persons accessing this delicate area.</p> <p>On a more personal note - i.e. - our hostel.</p> <p>We are affected by campers accessing our facilities without paying for the privilege. A large campsite with locked toilet/shower block, access by coin/card in the slot is not going to help our situation. When campers realise our open door hostel is on the doorstep they will take advantage, especially if the door locks at the campsite toilet block are out of order, to the detriment of our hostellers who pay for the use of our facilities.</p> <p>It also appears that the campsite is not going to be manned 24/7 and the owners are going to rely on CCTV. That doesn't fit with the tranquil, scenic atmosphere of Berneray. What about local residents and hostellers' rights to privacy?</p> <p>We are not against a campsite on Berneray but not one of this size and not on the machair at East Beach.</p>

25

I was absolutely shocked to hear from a fellow motor homeowner / wild camper that an application has been submitted for an official campsite on East Beach of Berneray. My grandparents cannot believe it. This has always been their go to peaceful place!!!

The Scottish Right to Roam Act.....the spirit of this act is to allow people to roam and stay on land as long as they are considerate of others and clear up after themselves, protect the environment and leave without a trace.

I have always followed this and travelled in motor homes and camped from a young age with my grandparents and parents. Wild camping is permitted and loved, there is a known wild camping spot near the youth hostel. I think that the youth hostel is one of the most picturesque places to stay in Scotland.

Part of this croft is in Rushgarry conservation area and very near to Macleods Gunnery. I was taken there as a child and taught by my grandparents that Rushgarry Barn and Byre, is very important, the oldest building in Berneray, I understand it is listed (LB46108) an early example of traditional building materials and methods relevant to Berneray....Its survival and rarity of its scale within its immediate setting makes this group of buildings very important.

Therefore I do not feel that it should ever be considered to put a motor home / campsite here, the view of the site will be visible from the oldest building in Berneray and vice versa.....A listed building of such special architectural and historic interest should not have a man-made eyesore, in such close proximity.

I am sure someone would not allow a motor home /campsite overlooking the Callanish Stones... the result would be a distraction from their beauty, and for the same reason I don't think one should be allowed here, a distraction from this area of natural beauty.

One of my favourite walks is to West Beach and then back over the headland, past the old cemetery, and down the hill..... an amazing view that takes your breath away, a remote, wild and beautiful bay will be ruined by this proposed site.

I do not feel it will have minimum visual impact, visually the reception/shop/laundry or kitchen may have rounded roofs covered with grass to look the part, but they do not blend in, they will be visible. I recently was travelling around Harris and Lewis and there are a number of these Hobbit style dwellings, and they can be seen from approaching roads and from quite a distance.....building materials may weather and try to blend in, but they will not. That is without the additional visual impact of the spaces for 17 tents and 14 motor home pitches.

I do not believe that it will be possible to preserve and protect the Machair and Marram grass areas as suggested.

The proposal says that it will address the needs for facilities for campers, I do not think this is needed, I have stayed on Berneray many times, and most people look after the environment and area. Lots of people including myself and my family will still wild camp in tents and motor homes, in Berneray, we like the peace and quiet, tranquillity and isolation, we do not want to be on a site near other people, hearing their noises , a camping and motor home site is definitely not needed here.

It would seem that the only person who will benefit from this, is the applicant, Mr R Nicolson....who already owns the Bistro and the store, which is a great shop, yet he seems to want this camping site with an additional shop, to just make a profit from this area of outstanding beauty.....I am sure it will not affect his personal views or experiences from his

house or walks, because he doesn't even live on the Island. I don't either, but I have a passion for this unique part of Scotland that I have grown to love over the years.

To visit Berneray is a tonic, to relax, unwind and enjoy beautiful scenery and a quiet, slow pace of life.

I do not feel this application will give anything to the Island of Berneray, but it will take away so very much.... I really hope that for the reasons stated above you decide to reject this application

Additional Comments – Received 13.01.2025

Further to my previous letter of objection on 1st November, I would like to clarify some points, and having read the new information make further comments.

I do not feel that there is a need for a licensed campsite here, I have spoken to many campers, who have wild camped here and in other places, that includes myself and we would continue to wild camp, we do not wish to be contained in a stockproof fenced area along with 17 other tents and 14 mobile homes. The beauty of wild camping is just that, you can be quiet, anywhere, alone in your little space. The view of this site including reception, showers, shop, laundry etc, along with the tents and mobile homes will ruin this unique and naturally beautiful bay.

I do not agree that it will create minimal visual impact on the landscape, for instance the view across the bay from the old graveyard up the hill, will be ruined, this camping and mobile home site, will be seen from many angles. I once stayed at a B&B, Tir-nan-Og in Rushgarry, and I am sure the view from that house, and others nearby will have a significant visual impact through their windows, from this proposed development.

A unique area of beauty like 'the East Beach' should not have to have stock proof fencing put up on it to pen in the campers and mobile home users; to keep out the animals who freely roam here.....and walkers should not have to use special gates to access the beach they have the right to roam too.

Protective reinforced matting will not protect the machair and marran grass.... see comment later regarding biodiversity.

Archas Archaeological Evaluation

My concerns are:

1.2.2

Wider area - It is clear that there is rich archaeology in the surrounding coastal landscape. There are sites here that range from burial monuments, stone houses and single grave sites. Many of these have been identified in machair sands, close to the sea.

1.2.3

The proposed ground disturbance associated with this application is reasonably large in scale and the proposals have the potential to unearth or disturb buried unrecorded remains, which could be of any period, and which **may be disturbed or destroyed by the proposals** .

2.3.1

It was considered that there is considerable potential for earlier deposits and structures to be present on the site underlying the windblown sand. These potential remains may be negatively affected during construction, particularly during construction of the WC/shower block, soakaway and access track.

The above points all show there is a strong possibility that there may be items of historic importance found in this proposed area.

It is noted in 4.1.1 that no archaeological features or deposits were identified during this work.

It must be remembered that trial trenching is only a small window into what may be found underground.....no artefacts were found, this does not mean that they will not find or disturb or damage any during what I feel is an unnecessary construction proposal.

Re: Biodiversity Enhancement Statement

The applicant has stated that the proposed development is in an area of unique biodiversity - and they will educate and encourage visitors to respect the landscape and its unique biodiversity.

I have always followed, The Scottish Right to Roam Act, which allows people to roam and stay on land as long as they are considerate of others and clear up after themselves, protect the environment and leave without a trace. I have camped for many years especially in Scotland and this area and most people follow these rules, and I do not feel there is a need for people to be to be educated by the applicant, regarding respect of the landscape and its unique biodiversity.

Numerous wildflowers, bees, insects and birds currently live and thrive in the Berneray machair, I don't consider it should be necessary to add the additional list of plants and flowers that the applicant has suggested sowing to the roof of proposed building and to the campsite itself....this area is already an area of unique biodiversity.....why try and change it ?

The small colony of sand martins which have been slowly developing over the last few years, they now have 16 tunnels.

They should be left alone we should not allow private funding for a new sand bank to hopefully provide a new nesting place.....which may as report suggests encourage the sandmartins to stay on the beach and hope that their colony will grow in the future.

Young sandmartins usually return to the colony they were born in, only moving on if there are no more nesting sites left. The sandmartins may not like the new sand bank, their proposed home, the sandmartins have been slowly developing their colony, where they are, they may not want to move or like the new sand bank for a new nesting place. The growing colony could be lost.

The protective grass reinforcement matting will not completely protect the machair, it can limit grass wear, rutting and muddy areas caused by vehicle use.

I do not feel that there should be a need to use Rylock fencing in such an area of unique beauty.

Climate Change adaptation plan

I do not feel that in my experience the current wild campers make a significant environmental impact.....not as much as this proposed development would cause.

Proposed access and pitch rotation to be implemented to allow machair to replenish between seasons....obviously there is going to be damage if this is needed.

	<p>Document states 3 access gates to the beach....access points to the beach should also be closely monitored and regularly assessed for indications of erosion.</p> <p>Minimising the entrance points to the beach and setting fence back from dunes should limit movement of people and traffic close to the dune edge...</p> <p>Applicant will monitor and replant marram grass.</p> <p>All the above points show there could be significant damage to this area of unique biodiversity.</p> <p>The 17 tents and 14 motor home pitches, if they all have only two occupants that will be a minimum of 62 people all exploring and walking about over this beautiful area</p> <p><u>My conclusion</u></p> <p>I feel this proposal will create a significant visual impact on this beautiful area, we need to protect this unique area of beauty and biodiversity, (No Rylock fencing wanted here), we need to protect of an area of great historic interest, and the protection of birds especially the sandmartins, and all wildlife is vitally important.</p> <p>The applicant suggests that he would like to educate and encourage its visitors to respect the landscape and its unique biodiversity.....I wonder if he does???? I feel he may just want to make a profit from this area of outstanding beauty.</p> <p>All the above, I feel are very strong reasons why this application for a licensed campsite for tents and mobile home in this beautiful unique area, should be refused.</p> <p>As I said in my previous letter of objection, I do not feel this application will give anything to the Island of Berneray, but it will take away so very much</p>
26	<p>I am writing on behalf of my husband and I following yet another wonderful trip to the island of Berneray, North Uist. We have been informed by local people that there is a proposal to build a campsite on the beautiful East Beach, Rushgarry and we feel so strongly about this, we felt we must write with our objections to this proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As frequent visitors to Berneray we were shocked to hear about the proposal to put a campsite on the machair behind the East Beach as Berneray is, in our opinion, the unspoilt jewel in the crown of the Outer Hebrides • This proposed development should not take place in an area of such outstanding natural beauty • It will be visible from all points of an unspoilt island and completely change the outlook • There is no infrastructure to support this development as the current roads could not support any increase in tourism • The fragile and unique nature of the machair habitat would be irreparably damaged by the the increased effects of tourist use of the habitat e.g wildflowers, rare orchids, visiting corncrakes • Part of the Rushgarry conservation area is next to the Machleods gunnery, the Rushgarry barn and Byre. These are a group of very important buildings, which we believe might be listed. • Any campsite building will be a permanent fixture - this completely changes the vista for all the local residents • Current wild camping is limited in frequency and impact, unlike this development. • West Beach is in Lonely Planet's top 3 European beaches and the top 100 of the world's most incredible beaches. East Beach is equally as breathtaking, in our opinion and more accessible which is a concern if you plan to allow enhanced access to these wonderful

	<p>remote beaches.</p> <p>We sincerely hope that our points will be considered. We are sure that there will be many other objections to this proposal and will be watching the outcome with great interest, as this will affect our future visits to the island.</p>
<p>27</p>	<p>My objections lie in two main areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Berneray is a very special island, appreciated by those who visit, often year after year, as providing a unique habitat for so many wild creatures. My concern is that this formalised campsite will change the very character of the island, not simply in terms of the natural environment being adversely affected, but also in terms of tourists who come to experience the 'wild' , unspoiled, peace and calm of the place. I worry that Berneray will go the way of Skye, where a number of my friends no longer wish to visit due to the intrusive nature of the tourism which has been allowed to grow unchecked. 2. If permitted, it will be a major sized site on a very small island(2 X 3 miles or so), and if fully populated in the height of the season, will come close to doubling the resident population. This is bound to lead to increased footfall on a beach site which is subject to considerable erosion problems, and on a dune area which is already somewhat unstable, to the extent that planting of more Marram grass has been suggested. I notice that the applicants have had their attention drawn to the problems of nesting sandmartins, and it is commendable that they are prepared to consider erecting a substitute nesting area, but this is but one species which nests there, and the effects on ground nesting birds are bound to be considerable. I have also spent happy times watching (from a distance) otters hunting and feeding on East Beach, but one cannot doubt that increased footfall will affect them, and not in a good way. <p>In conclusion, the site does not seem to me to be the right place for such a major development. It is situated in a narrow corridor between dunes and road, and will inevitably cause compaction, preventing lush grass growth. I confess I do not understand how placing matting over the machair can be held to be a 'protection'- surely it simply covers it! The site cannot avoid being a source of considerable light and noise pollution, both of which will adversely affect humans, birds, insects and animals i.e. the entire Natural world.</p> <p>I hope you will consider the foregoing points, and understand that I wish to record my major objection to the proposal.</p>
<p>28</p>	<p>I write to register my objections to the above application and thank you in advance for taking the time to consider and relate these objections to the above planning application and its short, medium and long term effects on island life, its culture, heritage, natural heritage and its unique position, physically and metaphorically, with influence on global natural and Anthropocene issues. 'Think Global, act Local.'</p> <p>I acknowledge that the Applicants, although they do not live on the Island of Berneray, have listened, responded and revised some of their environmental planning proposals. This is to their credit, and goes some way to Producing the Crofting Biodiversity Audit and Whole Farm Plan.</p> <p>It is however alarming, that sensitive SSI issues, Ramsar implications, A Full Environmental Impact Assessment, Habitat Survey and A copy of the Environmental Statement, Flood Risk Assessments and no overall East Beach landscape plan has been deemed to be not applicable. How does this proposal address the changes in suitability at all, but specifically of site ? in terms of Rising Sea Levels, Changes in The North Atlantic Drift, Climate Change, sand dune erosion due to footfall and climate changes.</p> <p>How does this proposal benefit the Island Natural and Cultural Heritage, its well being of inhabitant, visitor, land and overall community?</p>

The Co Applicants, own and run the much appreciated and successful Island Shop and Bistro.

I ask that the proposed Application site and the island itself is visited by a Member of the Planning Committee who make the decision.

An island Community, approx 2miles x3 miles.

Approx 130 inhabitants.

Featured on the Berneray Community Web site as 'rich in history, a natural heritage, A perfect place for walkers, kayakers, cyclists and Star Gazers, or for those simply who want peace and quiet.' Extracted from all of Berneray's Self Catering Businesses.

'A little bit of Heaven on Earth,'

Lonely Planet entry: Its West beach, described as 'unparalleled in Scotland.'

Current Island Self catering and Hostel Businesses adopt a responsive, respectful and harmonious appreciation of Berneray's unique and rare habitat, both in their cultural, environmentally designed , sustainable and managed ethos.

All would be negatively impacted if the Proposal was passed.

How does this campsite proposal address:

Custodians of our fragile environment.

Respect of fellow crofter and Berneray inhabitant.

Safeguarding now and for future generations.

'Well Being' and the Governments promotion and healing of:

How does it address Campaigning for Nature, The Natural Environmental Bill, early 2025 probability of a new Planning and Infrastructure Bill and the work of so many more Environmental and Natural Bodies.

Eco tourism , Businesses that focus on the natural World, Dark skies, well being, running of retreats, arts/cultural and Heritage courses run by the Highlands and Islands.

At a time since the Pandemic when Social Media has made the public aware of the Outer Hebrides as an undiscovered 'wild Natural wonder. A place that can provide 'fantastic encounters with wildlife.' The Hebridean Way, The Corncrake Calling Project, supported by the Natural Lottery Heritage Fund and the many, many Instagram and Television references.

Tourism and the need for people to have a unique and valued experience.

How does this proposal address this experience?

How does it do anything other than damage the very habitat that these visitors expect let alone the inhabitants?

The campsite proposal does not appear to give bearing and appreciation to its neighbour the Gatliffe trust, its ethos and its visitors alike. The area, thatched cottages, one of the Hebrides only Conservation Areas.

I strongly object to the assumption that those less demonstrative but appreciative of the natural world should be discounted in preference to commercialism under the guise of providing a facility for 14 Mobile Homes, 17 tents minimum of 10 cars and associated facilities

block, where there is currently only the Gatliff Trust and occasional campers in tents who can use the Gatliff Trusts' facilities.

An island 2 x3 miles. Population 130.

A potential increase of 14 x4 mobile Homes = 64 people possibly

17 tent pitches, a conservative estimate 17x2 = 34 people.

Total of possible visitors = 98.

Associated pets, water sports and :

The resulting damage to Island Habitat.

Damage to its Community, Island and local existing businesses as specified.

Damage to the natural world,

Noise Pollution

Light pollution,

Disruption to the breeding, rearing and raising of the Red and amber listed Birds.

Disruption to the off shore noise and pollution sensitive species.

Changing the habitat for resident mammals and Birds of Prey, including Golden Eagles, Harriers, Sea Eagles, Peregrines.

Growing / flowering and disruption of essential seed distribution of flora and fauna.

Negative effects of insects and biodiverse reliant creatures.

(All compacted in the brief period of Hebridean climate, and inability for species to thrive under Compacted conditions.)

Fragmenting an essential and unique environment recognised for its global importance.

Placing irreparable strain on an infrastructure that is part of the Islands Heritage.

Changing for ever what may be our last post for our rare and unique species.

The question should be: How as an Island/community how we respond to tourism?

Will this fluctuate as another failure to protect the environment is presented?

Are their negative lessons to be learnt as to the vagaries of Social media and its negative impact on natural habitat, species diversity, well being ie The C500, Skye, Sutherland/ Achmelvich?

Positives? Perhaps :Luskentyre in its 'managed' approach.

How as a Community with the prospect of an Island Buy Out should this be addressed?

What options are there for a democratic system that has a holistic approach, setting out what is desirable and not, whilst maintaining the unique cultural identity?

That addresses the inequalities of disproportionate ownership, and regulating Planning Applications that fundamentally damages the Island's integrity?

At what price? Solastalgia, and our legacy to the planet.

There are so many factors that influence this objection and I sincerely hope the above and preceding comments make it clear that **I object in the strongest possible terms to this proposed development.**

I do however reiterate that it is appreciated that the Applicants have listened, but the basis of this objection has not been brought to light, or the space that the proposal sits within the entirety of East Beach and its negative effects for the Planet.