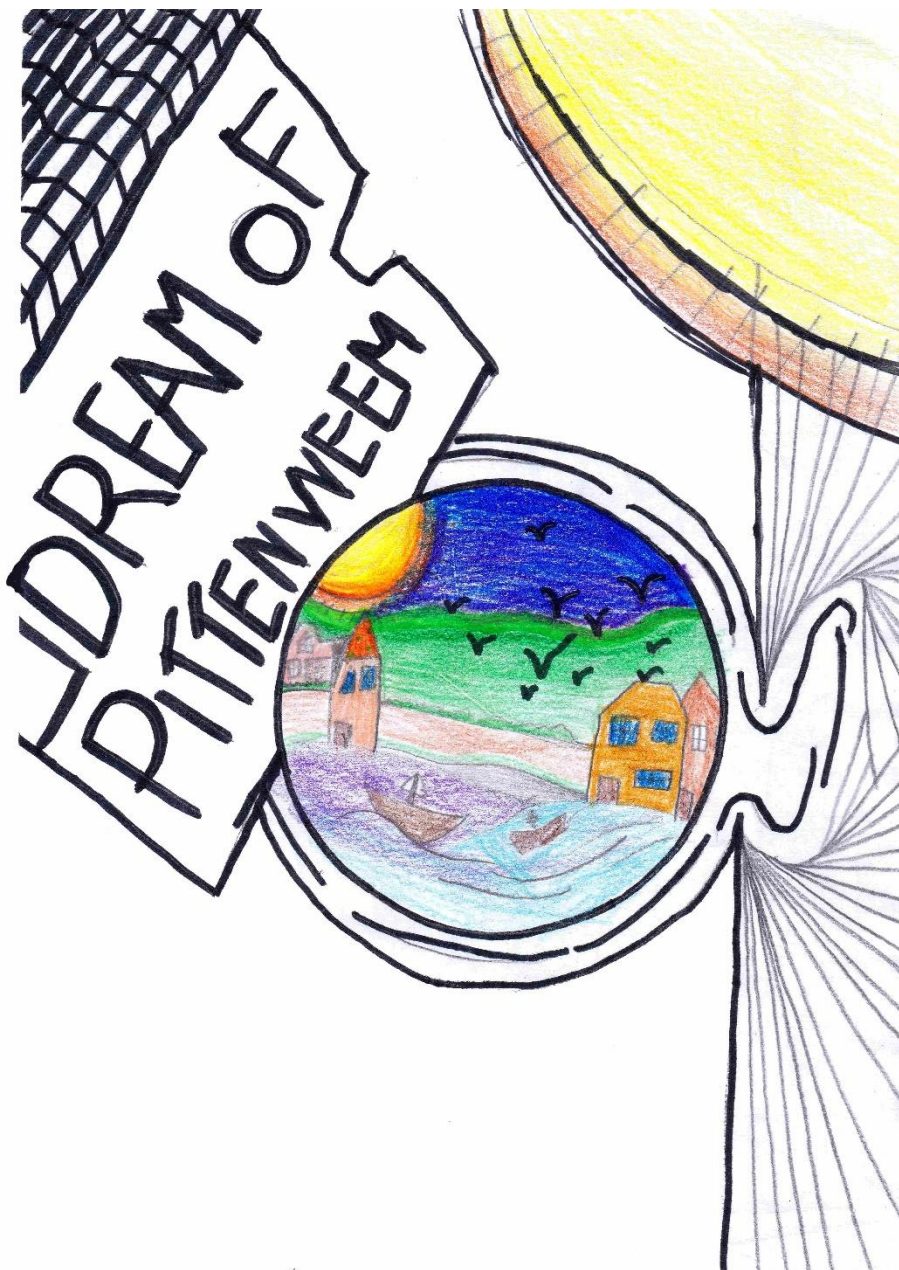


The Royal Burgh of Pittenweem and District Community Council



Local Place Plan

May 2024

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Figure 2 Welcome to Pittenweem



Figure 3 West Braes Tidal Pool

Executive Summary

Pittenweem is a fishing village with a historic conservation area located in the East Neuk of Fife. It has a proud background as a religious centre and a Royal Burgh that had trading links to continental Europe. In the past it was renowned for boat building and remains an active fishing port to this day. Many of the houses in the centre and along the shore are listed buildings which help to keep the traditional feel of the community alive. However, pressures to enlarge are ever present with three new housing estates currently planned. Planning for this potential growth is essential.

This Local Place Plan was prepared after having reviewed the requirements of the Local Development Plan (FIFEplan Sept 2017) and the National Planning Framework 4 (Feb 2023).

Margaret Wardlaw

Chair, Royal Burgh of Pittenweem and District Community Council

Introduction

This Local Place Plan (LPP) has been prepared by the Royal Burgh of Pittenweem and District Community Council and is the output of two years of community consultation including community surveys, drop-in sessions and feedback consultation (see supporting documentation). Planning Aid Scotland assisted in the consultations.

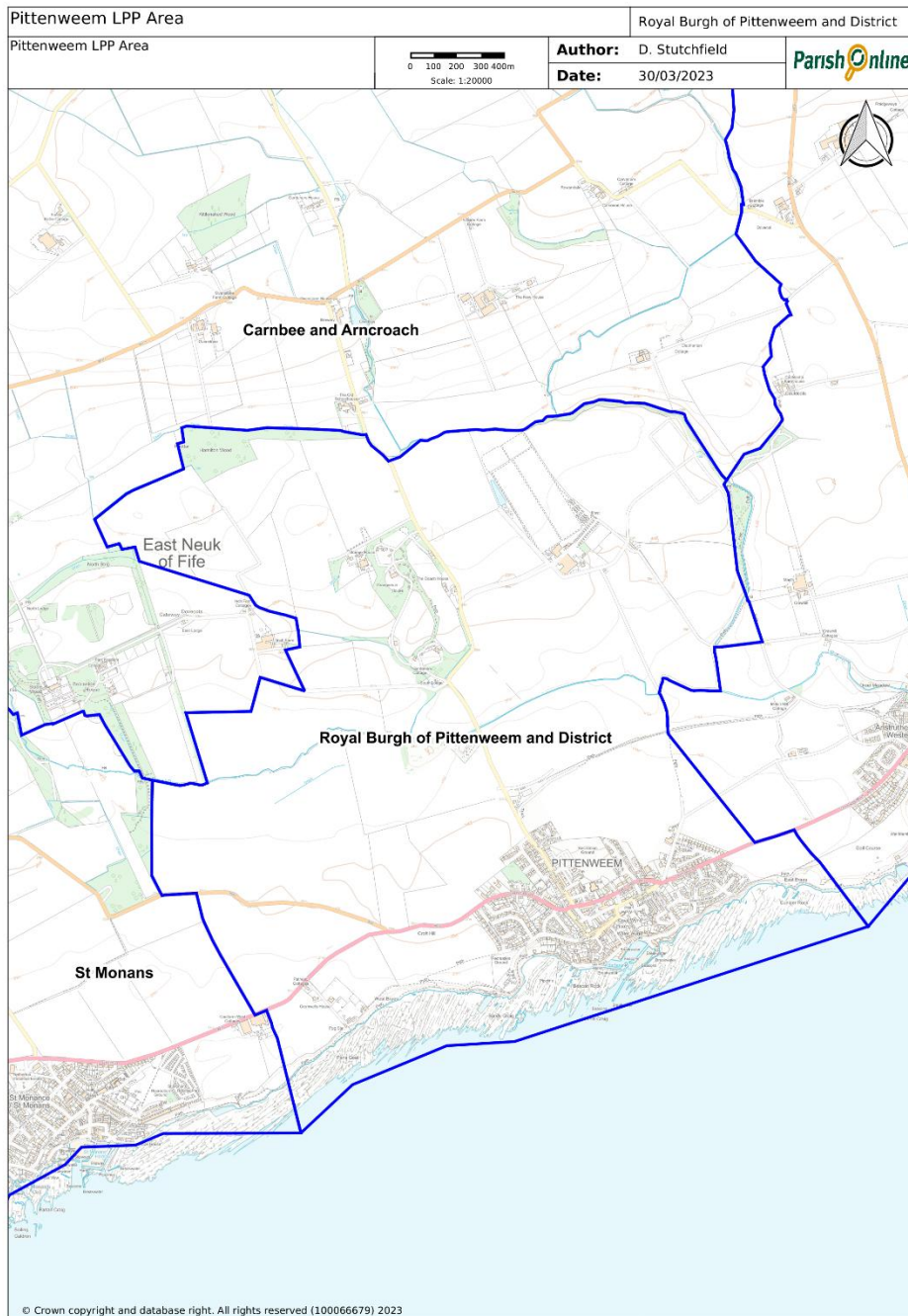


Figure 4 Boundary of Pittenweem LPP

History

Pittenweem grew up around the Priory and became such an important centre of trade that it was granted the status of a Royal Burgh in 1541. That status meant that Pittenweem had the right to trade with other countries, and the right to govern itself through a Burgh council.



Figure 5 Drawing of Pittenweem Priory

By 1587 Pittenweem had become the 12th richest town in all of Scotland. In the 18th century, Pittenweem had a series of coal mines on the coast between Pittenweem and St Monans and was served by 37 breweries!

By 1861, the town had a population of circa 1,710 living in 286 houses and the annual pay of a school master was £60.

At one time the village was served by the Fife Coast Railway.



Figure 6 Extract from The Imperial Gazetteer of Scotland (1868)

The Present

Pittenweem is currently the most active of the fishing ports in the East Neuk coast of Fife, but it suffers from a 20% child poverty rate, an ageing population, shrinking local economy and has the unenviable status as one of the communities with the poorest outcomes in all Fife.

POPULATION

Table 1 – 2021 Population Estimates

| Royal Burgh of Pittenweem and District | Population | Population as a percentage. |
|--|------------|-----------------------------|
| Total Population (2021) | 1,469 | |
| Males | 673 | 45.8 |
| Females | 797 | 54.2 |
| Children (0-15 years) | 220 | 15.0 |
| Working age (16-64 years) | 799 | 54.4 |
| Older adults (65+ years) | 450 | 30.6 |

Figure 7 Population in 2021 in numbers and percentages

Table 3 – Housing Tenure 2022

| Royal Burgh of Pittenweem and District | |
|--|------|
| Total Households (2022) | 913 |
| % Owner / Occupier | 65.1 |
| % Private Rented | 7.5 |
| % Social Rented | 15.9 |

Figure 8 Housing Tenure 2022

Table 5 – Households with access to a car or van 2022

| Royal Burgh of Pittenweem and District | |
|--|------------|
| Total Households | 913 |
| % No access to a car or van | 15 |
| % One or more car or van | 85 |

Figure 9 Access to Private Transport Statistics

Figure 10

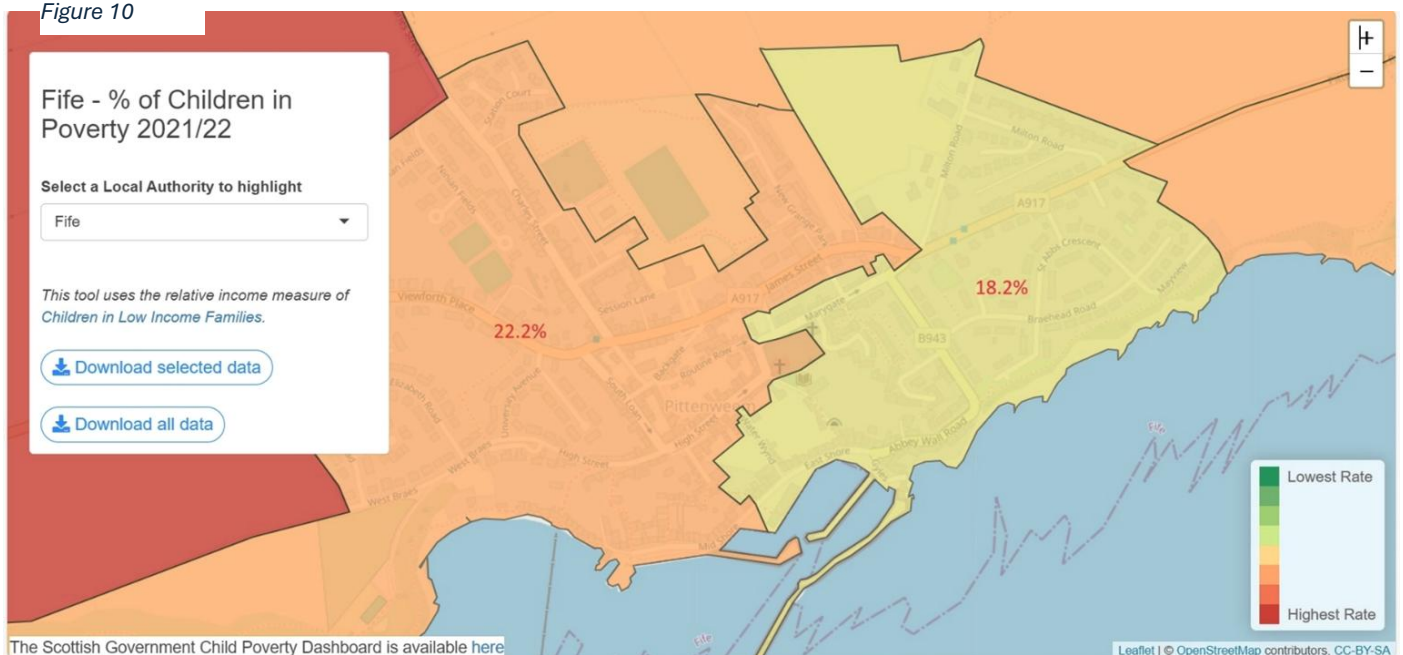




Figure 11 Table of Outcomes

[Data courtesy of www.know.fife.scot]

It is against this backdrop that we create our local place plan. The need for improvement, investment, community wealth building, infrastructure and growth is clear. Fife Council is the most important partner in the town's future. This makes good decision making of vital importance.

No one knows Pittenweem better than the people who live here. Here are our aspirations for the years to come.

Community

Pittenweem has an active community life with a supportive Community Council, active Church organisations, the Community Library and Information Centre, the annual Arts Festival, the West Braes Project, numerous sports groups, scouts and guides, arts clubs and a model railway club. Restaurants, cafes, shops and pubs are doing good business and are widely used by East Neuk residents. A doctors' surgery, post office, pharmacy, petrol station, recycling centre and an active harbour ensure that most needs are met. The Primary School has an excellent reputation, however falling school rolls threaten its long-term viability.

Areas of concern are as follows:

1. The cost of living in the East Neuk is high. Community kitchens have helped. However, there is a great need for improved personal and social care for the sick and nursing home care for the elderly. There is **no care home** in Pittenweem and **no sheltered housing**, yet we have an aging population.
2. Local employment would be encouraged by establishing a **business park** with modest and supported rents, to allow the initiation of small businesses.
3. Many of the town's **commercial properties lie empty**. Incentives to restore and re-open these properties should be devised. After many years of lying vacant and unmaintained, a compulsory purchase order should be considered, with the council subsequently acting as landlord for the restoration and letting of these properties.



Figure 12 Three Photos of Empty Commercial Properties

The Pittenweem Inn (listed building) in Charles Street has been closed for many years. A recent attempt to restore and reopen it should be encouraged.

- The two children’s playparks have failed with either no play equipment or fewer than three pieces available. **Community projects to try and restore the playparks are strongly supported locally.** A town with no play facilities for children will discourage urgently needed young families from coming to live in the area. Without them the school is under threat. The skatepark is also closed and its replacement is uncertain.

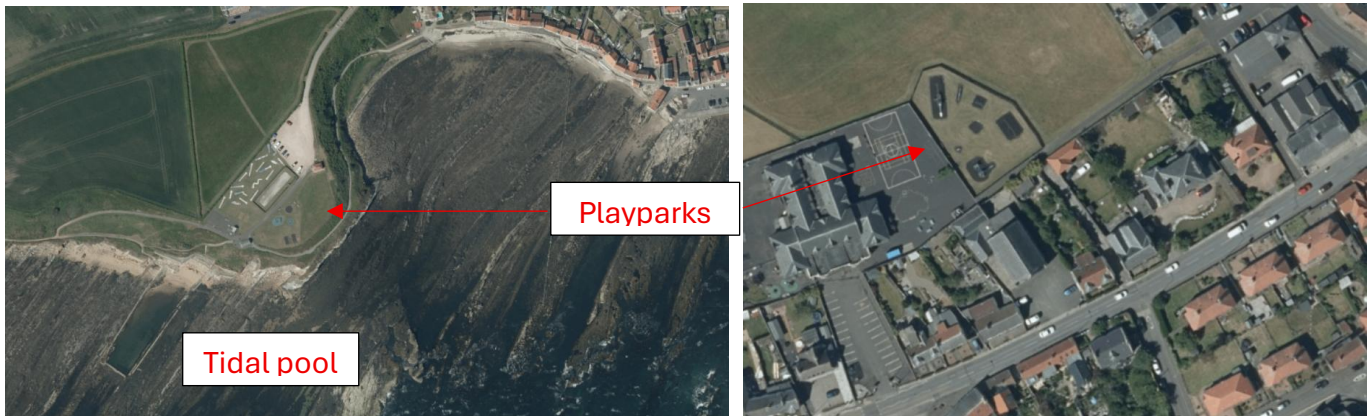


Figure 13 Aerial views of children’s playparks and West Braes tidal pool

- Out of hours medical care** is limited in the East Neuk. The St Andrews Community Hospital currently remains open until midnight after community campaigning, but the service is difficult to staff. Transport to Kirkcaldy at night is not available. Residents currently remain vulnerable with poor medical support.
- Community food growing** on allotments should be encouraged. The current small allotment area is insufficient and has no water supply. Additional allotment space should be obtained and the unused land (see map below) between West Braes and Viewforth Place could be considered.

Detail of proposals: Unused land between West Braes and Viewforth Place as highlighted in yellow has a potential change of use to community growing space.



Figure 14 Map and Photo of proposed Community Growing Space

Heritage

Pittenweem has a large historic Priory Complex, many listed buildings, a conservation area and St Fillan's Cave. Preservation of this legacy is important. Professor Tony Lodge's recent book on the Pittenweem Priory has highlighted its fundamental role in the life of North East Fife in the past.

Areas of concern as follows:

1. **The Tolbooth Steeple and the adjoining Pittenweem Parish Church** are two important buildings in the Priory Complex. The Tolbooth Steeple required emergency repair in 2021/22 to prevent it from collapsing. Repairs to the exterior of the tower have been satisfactorily carried out but the building cannot be used at present because the interior is not safe for public access. It is Common Good Property owned by Fife Council and requires further restoration to make it safe and useable. The Church of Scotland is closing most of the parish churches in the East Neuk and both Pittenweem Parish Church and the Church Hall are listed for closure by 2027. There has been a church on this site at the head of the High Street since 1200. The community requires help in finding a way to support the cost of maintaining the church and finding a new sustainable function for the building.



Figure 15 Pittenweem Tolbooth and Church Location

2. The Conservation Area is well demarcated at present. The Planning Department needs to be vigilant in **maintaining restrictions on inappropriate development** of historic listed buildings and in the Conservation Area. The Planning Department needs to be clearer in managing Community Council Statutory Consultee status and indicating to the public that objections need to be made to both the full and the listed building planning applications. Councillors on the Planning Committee need support from members of the community to maintain a strong voice when considering applications for planning.

Travel

Pittenweem suffers from limited availability of public transport. Stagecoach operates two bus routes (95 and X60/X61) during the day, only the coastal route (95) runs in the evening. Local travel with Moffat and Williamson Go-Flexi service is also possible by arrangement Monday to Saturday. However, as the Stagecoach buses stop at all villages on the route the journey times to local cities such as Edinburgh and Dundee are so long that they make commuting for work or study impossible. The extension of the rail link to Levenmouth is encouraging but of limited help as the trains are infrequent, slow and do not link with buses at present.

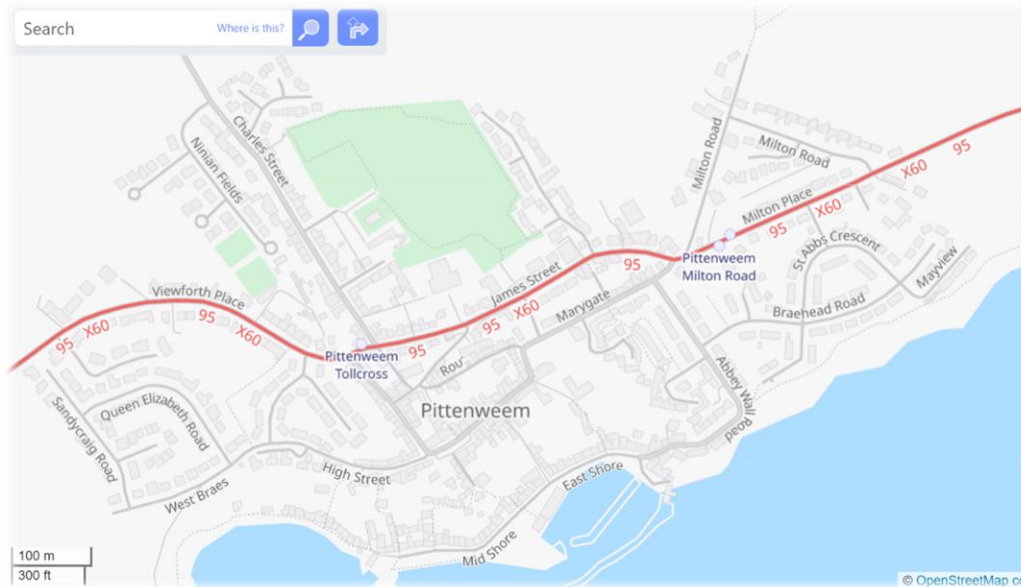


Figure 16 Local Bus Routes

The inadequacy of public transport means that car travel is essential for many journeys. The Local Transport Strategy for Fife 2023-2033 hardly mentions the East Neuk but concentrates on safe travel and the transition to net zero. Importantly, active travel is not addressed. Residents in the East Neuk suffer from poorly maintained roads, speeding traffic and limited pedestrian safety and access. The A917 in Pittenweem still has a 30mph speed limit and is tortuous and extremely busy with 8000 vehicles travelling each day and 11 vehicles a minute at peak times. Many vehicles are speeding and crossing the road as a pedestrian is hazardous at times.

Areas for improvement:

1. All roads in Pittenweem have a 20mph speed limit at present apart from the A917. Consideration should be given to a **20mph limit for the A917** in Pittenweem and to installing safe crossings.
2. Active travel should be encouraged for short journeys. Currently pedestrian paths are unsuitable and cycling on main roads is very unsafe. **Multiuser paths are being planned** by community groups between Anstruther and Earlsferry. Community surveys have indicated strong support for this initiative with funding being sought from Sustrans and Transport Scotland. Wheelchair use on pavements needs to be improved by levelling uneven pavements and installing drop kerbs.

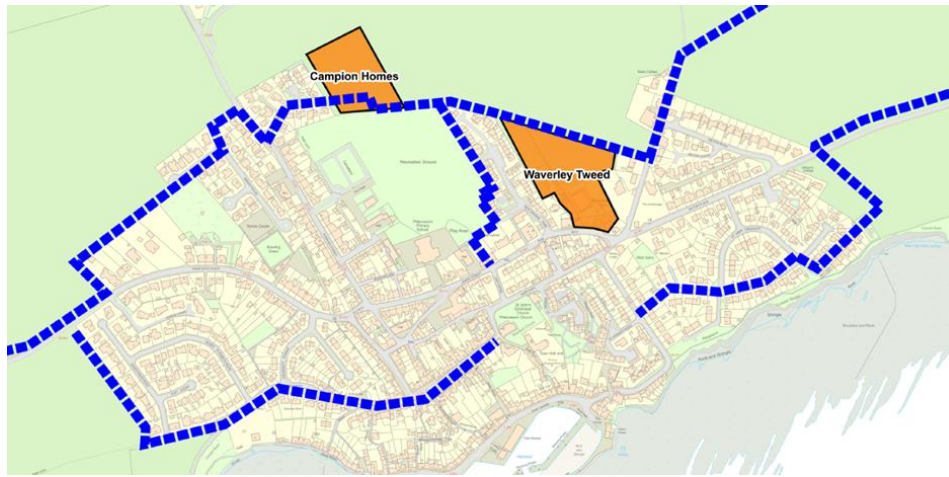


Figure 17 Proposed Active Travel Routes

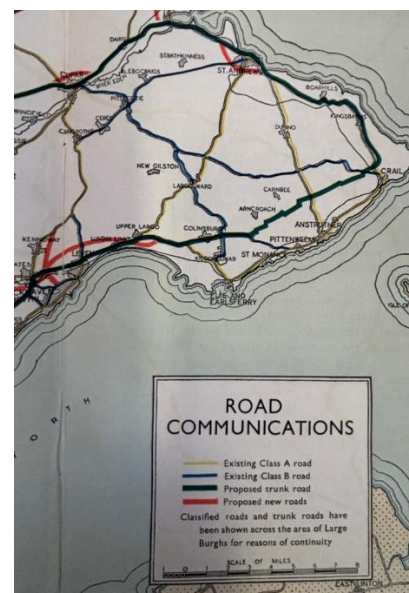
Community multiuser path – a path running from Anstruther through to Earlsferry. Details of the path passing through Pittenweem are shown.

3. Parking is very limited in Pittenweem at present and inconsiderate visitors may block roads. **Additional parking provision is essential.** Cycle racks are also needed.
4. **Forming a Pittenweem bypass linking the B942 to the B9131** along the route of the old railway line should be explored. This would remove traffic from the A917 in Pittenweem and also from the difficult corner in Anstruther (at Buckie House opposite the Dreel Halls) which is currently a major hazard for lorries and buses. This was first proposed in 1946.

Fig 18 Old railway line

Fig 19 Proposed East Neuk trunk road (dark blue)

Report of Fife County Council Planning Advisory Committee, C J Cousland & Sons 1946.



5. Stagecoach should be encouraged to put on **fast service buses** with limited stops to cities at peak times. Bus times should coordinate with rail travel from Levenmouth to improve journey times.

Housing

The attraction of living in the East Neuk means that property prices and rents have increased to the point where local people have difficulty in obtaining housing. Properties in Pittenweem had an overall **average price of £274,261** over 2023.

In addition, second homes and short-term holiday letting have exacerbated the situation. Council tax at 200% for second homes and recent legislation on letting may help to address some of these problems. In the longer term, the East Neuk should become a **control area for short-term letting**. However, there is currently an urgent need for affordable and social housing in Pittenweem. The three planned housing developments include a number of affordable homes, but more are needed.

There is a need to consider zoning land between the Campion Housing and Waverley Tweed projects at the back of Pittenweem (shown in green) to allow for future affordable housing developments (area shown in yellow).

Figure 20 Possible location of new housing



It must be noted however that the land proposed for housing is Common Good Land. The community would expect to see a compensatory benefit over the long term for the sacrifice of its historic Common Good Assets.

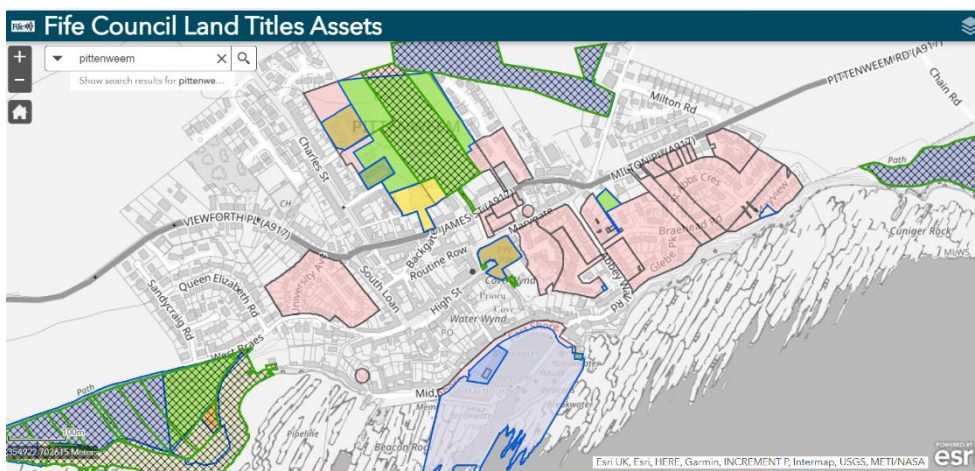


Figure 21 Blue, cross-hatched areas represent Common Good titles.

Environment

Climate change and global warming require us to consider how best we can ameliorate problems and help with national campaigns aiming for net zero. Can we reduce carbon emissions and improve agricultural practice? Current fishing techniques may damage the Forth and may lead to failure in the future. Recent storms have indicated our vulnerability to internal flooding of houses and damage to property from coastal erosion. Sewage drainage in the East Neuk of Fife is conducted through four preliminary sewage works (Crail, Cornceres, Billowness and Pathhead) which all drain raw sewage directly into the Forth. Pittenweem drains to Pathhead and Billowness Water Treatment Works and both have limited capacity for expansion.

Various initiatives to consider are:

1. local wind turbines and solar panel fields to generate renewable energy
2. installing EV chargers in all parking areas
3. developing a biodiversity corridor along the Dreel Burn (highlighted in yellow below)
4. encouraging regenerative farming methods
5. encouraging working from home
6. using sustainable (nephrops) fishing techniques which do not damage the seabed
7. diversifying fishing business into sea fishing for tourists and sea mammal observation trips
8. supporting current Scottish Water initiatives to improve combined sewage outflows into the Forth to prevent internal flooding in houses
9. encouraging Scottish Water and SEPA to address the need to treat sewage before drainage into the Forth
10. ensuring that Fife Council plans for prevention of coastal erosion in Pittenweem
11. proposing that the West Braes sea pool becomes a designated SEPA bathing area to allow regular monitoring for sewage contamination of the water.

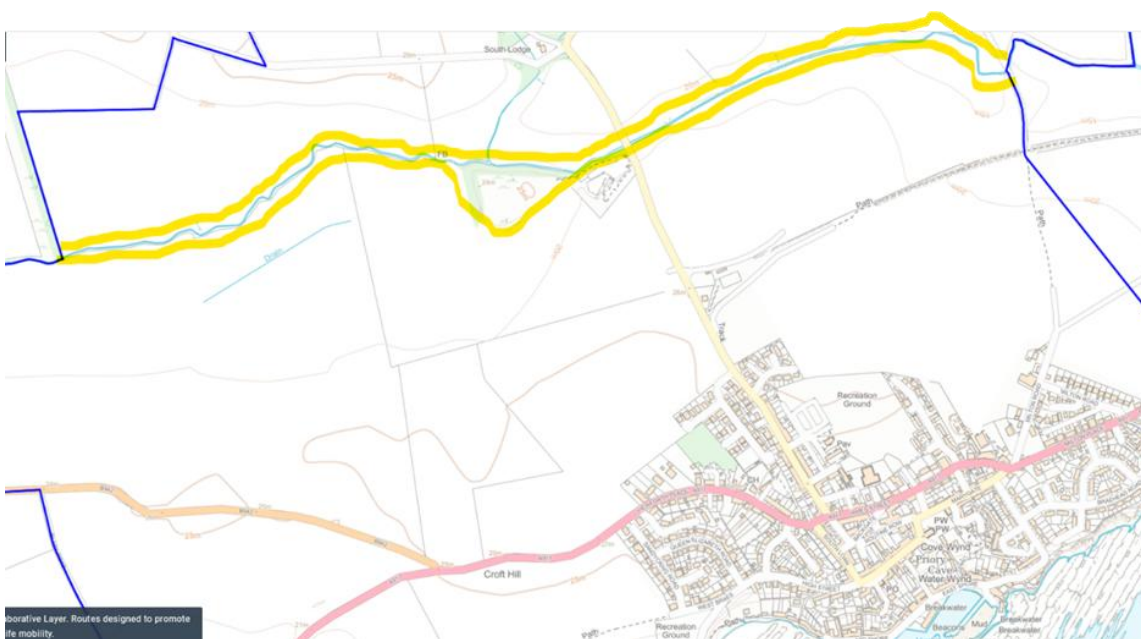


Figure 22 Dreel Burn Highlighted in Yellow

Tourism



Figure 23 West Braes Leisure Facilities: A Major Asset

Tourism is a major industry in the East Neuk of Fife and employs large numbers of local people. Sustainable tourism is to be encouraged and **holiday homes ideally regulated by agreeing a control area**. Pittenweem needs to encourage tourism to support the retailers in the Burgh.



Figure 24 Tourism (Controlled) is essential





Figure 25 The path down to the tidal pool at West Braes

Community facilities and local services

The Tidal Pool at West Braes is cherished and greatly used by locals and tourists alike. Improved changing facilities with an outdoor shower are desired. There are concerns over the capacity and quality of the existing public toilets with ever increasing user numbers and rapidly ageing infrastructure. A rolling process of maintenance and investment is required.



Figure 26 West Braes Tidal Pool deserves regular investment

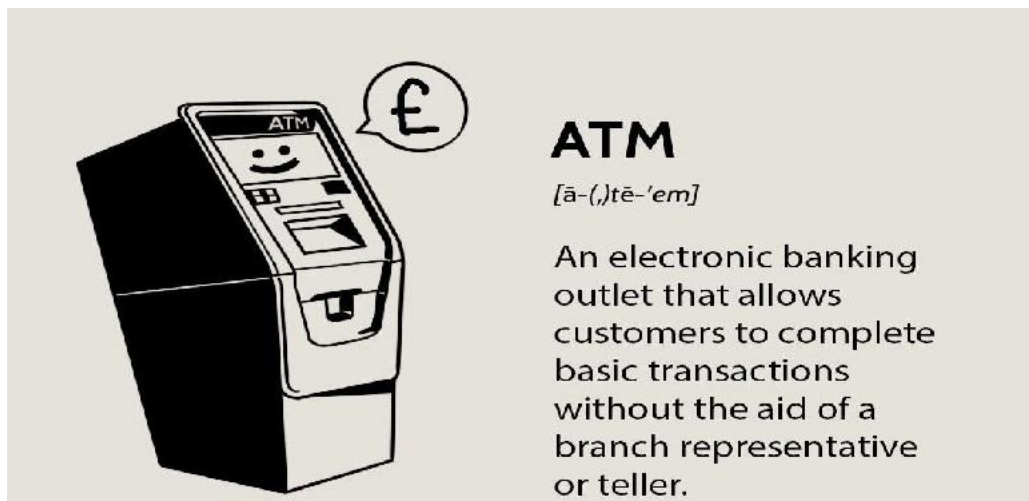
Planning for the Future

The Pittenweem Community Council has an important local function in monitoring all planning applications to Fife Council. It is often difficult to submit comments and statutory consultee advice.

It is important that communication between Fife Council and the communities it serves is improved and enhanced as much as possible. Community Development Trusts have been formed to try and support Fife Council but maintaining groups of committed individuals is often difficult in smaller communities.

Fast broadband is often promised and is essential for businesses to operate efficiently. It also allows people to work at home. We are fortunate in the Anstruther-Pittenweem municipal areas in having had fibre recently installed and residents in the town can usually access fast broadband. However, **rural areas still lack this facility.**

An ATM would be useful in Pittenweem. Money can be accessed at the Post Office during working hours, but out of hours and on Sundays people have to travel to Anstruther to access cash. In general, access to banking facilities and cash in Pittenweem and, indeed, all of North East Fife is woefully inadequate.



Appendices

Supporting Documentation

Document 1: Detailed Pittenweem Community Survey of all households in summer 2022 with 174 responses.

Document 2: Pittenweem Sustainability Festival held in the Church Hall in March 2023 with community consultation, multiuser path and energy conservation emphasis.

Document 3: Pittenweem Youth Engagement Survey involving pupils, staff, parents and guardians at the Pittenweem Primary School in March 2023.

Document 4: Fife Council Traffic Report and Speed Survey in James Street, Pittenweem, over 10 days in March 2018.

Document 5: Fife Council Traffic Report and Speed Survey in Milton Place, Pittenweem, over 10 days in June 2018.

Document 6: Pittenweem Community Council report on A917 road safety in March 2021.