

# WIND FARM DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM in STRAITON

a case-study of tourist provision for  
the Galloway Forest Park and the  
Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park.

a report by VisitStraiton

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## About VisitStraiton

VisitStraiton was set up to give information to those visiting the lovely area around the conservation village of Straiton in South Ayrshire, and to encourage new visitors. Our principal project is the website <http://VisitStraiton.com> but we are interested in all aspects of tourism promotion in Straiton.

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## With Thanks to

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## Note on the Second Edition

The second edition contains several minor corrections and clarifications. These are listed on page 52. Thanks to our readers and contributors for pointing them out. It also contains an addendum on the Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve on p. 53.

With the exception of these new pages at the end, we have retained the same pagination as the first edition.

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## Introduction

The purpose of this report is to open the debate about tourist provision on the borders of the Galloway Forest Park and Dark Sky Park. We focus in particular on the current status of tourist provision in Straiton and its likely future. However, many of the observations we make about Straiton apply to other small communities which provide accommodation on the borders of the Park, and we hope that this report will help towards some rational policy making for the Park's tourist provision as a whole.

The reason we have produced it at this particular time is because there are currently five applications for wind farms, containing a total of 130 turbines, all within approximately 5 miles of Straiton village. Most tourist-related businesses in Straiton perceive these wind farms to be a threat to the future of tourism in Straiton.

We are a lobby group, and not a union which represents all the tourist businesses of Straiton. We take full responsibility for any suggestions and recommendations set out below. We hope that this report will be the catalyst for other official reports which will investigate fully the opinions and status of all businesses in Straiton and other communities which are threatened by pressure from wind farm developers. We ourselves run tourism businesses in Straiton, and it is neither appropriate nor possible for us to conduct neutral and/or commercially confidential research into other local "competitors". We hope very much that planners and policy makers will rise to the challenge of commissioning that research either directly or indirectly, or will require wind farm developers to make appropriate and comprehensive tourist impact statements.

More than this, though, we hope that those same policy makers will see the Galloway Forest as a whole and implement policies which fully protect its quintessential wildness-by-day and darkness-by-night and also protect the right of people to access this wildness by enabling them to stay comfortably and enjoyably in some of the many beautiful communities on its fringes.

All information in the report is publicly available, and we have collated it for the benefit of policy makers.

## Tourist provision in Straiton

### Note on sources of information

Information in this report is compiled from the websites of the businesses represented and where information is lacking or in doubt, by follow-up phone calls to the owners / managers.

### VisitScotland

We recognise the role of VisitScotland in relation to tourism nationally, but VisitScotland does not have full information about tourism at a local level. Of eleven businesses providing accommodation for tourists around Straiton, only one is currently registered with VisitScotland. For most providers of self-catering accommodation, registration with VisitScotland is only one of a range of promotional and advertising opportunities. Whilst its rosette scheme is a useful one, it is labour-intensive and consequently costly to implement. These costs do not compare favourably in many instances with other forms of web advertising. As a consequence, many smaller businesses dispense with the additional costs of registering with VisitScotland.

Of the businesses in Straiton which are not registered with VisitScotland, at least two are substantial: Balbeg Holiday Homes (4 properties, 38 beds: formerly with VisitScotland, but no longer registered), and Cloncaird Castle (9 properties: 34 beds: has never registered with VisitScotland).

### The report *Walking Routes in Straiton*

In 2003 a report was compiled by for Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire on the economic impact of the walking routes in Straiton.<sup>1</sup> The survey conducted interviews with 119 walkers in April, August and September 2003 and compared the results with baseline data collected in 1996. The survey concluded that in 2003 “a total of c. £17,300 [was] generated by walkers into the local economy annually. Comparing this figure to the £500 of public sector funding spent on maintenance of paths and routes indicates the good value for money produced by the Walking Routes Initiative”.<sup>2</sup> A description of the report and more extended quotations from its conclusions are given in Appendix 6.

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<sup>1</sup> *Walking Routes in Straiton: assessing the economic impact*. Final Report, November 2003 (52pp.). Report prepared for Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire by Willie Miller Urban Design, Glasgow.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*: p. 36

## Tourist businesses, Straiton, April 2013

Given the lack of information in any central location, it might surprise anyone to learn that Straiton, a community of only around 300 people, contains 11 businesses offering accommodation to tourists. These include 8 self-catering businesses and 3 B&Bs: between them they manage 31 properties offering a total of 103+ beds.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the tourist accommodation there are two catering businesses – a café, (The Buck) and a pub, (The Black Bull). Both of these benefit from tourism and day trips to Straiton. The Buck is dependent on visitors for its commercial viability.

The Straiton Stores, run by the Straiton village co-operative, also provide important facilities for visitors, and derive income from them.

In addition to these businesses, camping is available by permission of Milton Blairquhan Estates in the “show field”, beside the church, which has hosted all sorts of groups from Brownies to bikers. This benefit to visitors is served by the public toilets behind the village hall, and adjacent to the camping field. These toilets were taken over from South Ayrshire and their maintenance is directly funded by the village.<sup>4</sup> The McCandlish Hall is also maintained by the village and although it principally serves the local community it is also occasionally used for visitors: for example when used as a tea room during the annual Show Day, and for registration for the Straiton Run on the Fun day. It is also hired by groups who use the camping field – for evening events and dances.

The nearest commercial campsite is the Walled Garden campsite – approx. 6 miles away.

## Types of tourism

### Active tourism

The following leisure activities are pursued by visitors to Straiton.

- Abseiling
- Bird watching
- Canoeing/kayaking
- Fishing (permit)
- Fishing (private)
- Geo-caching
- Golf

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 1 for a full list of tourist businesses in Straiton.

<sup>4</sup> Of the annual £3000 maintenance costs, around £1800 is raised by the village, and £1200 is contributed by the council as part of the “Comfort Scheme”.

- Gorge-walking
- Horse riding
- Motor sports
- Mountain Biking
- Road Cycling
- Running
- Shooting (pheasant)
- Stalking (roe deer)
- Walking/hiking
- Wildlife watching

In the 1990s, Monument Hill above Straiton was also used regularly for paragliding.<sup>5</sup> Please also see Appendix 2 for a full breakdown of types of tourism and how they are served by the village. Of the many types of active tourism, it is worth highlighting the most important and visible: Rambling and Cycling. For full details of many of the other activities, with links to clubs, maps, routes and other information please visit <http://visitstraiton.com>

## Rambling

“Welcome to Straiton. Rambler territory”, says a large sign on the way in to the village. Straiton has a varied network of waymarked paths, created and maintained by South Ayrshire Council. Provision includes the car park by the village playground, an information board, full signage, path maintenance and a leaflet describing and illustrating the walks, available at the car park, and in the shop and café.

- The Monument and Bennan Circuit (4.5 miles / 7 km)
- Straiton Village Ramble (1.25 miles / 2 km)
- Lady Hunter Blair’s walk (2.5 miles / 4 km)
- The Hill Wood (3.25 miles / 5 km)
- The Church Walk (1.25 miles / 2km)

The Straiton paths are described on several websites: the [Ayrshire Paths](#) site<sup>6</sup>, and the [WalkHighlands](#) website<sup>7</sup> for example.

This path network is extremely well-used. Any fine weekend throughout the year will see the car park full.

It is used by individuals, families and groups, such as the Cunninghame Ramblers.

The following extracts are from blogs by members of the Cunninghame Ramblers.

- Today Wednesday 7 December [2012] I used my bus pass to travel to the lovely village of Straiton in South Ayrshire to join Cunninghame

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<sup>5</sup> Combined steepness and accessibility make Monument Hill particularly suitable for this sport. See article and photos by Dave Thomas, *Straiton Arrow* Dec. 1996.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ayrshirepaths.org.uk/walkstraiton.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/glasgow/ayrshire.shtml>



Ramblers on their mid-week walk up Craigenhower and Bennan Hills. Ten of us met at the car park before walking through the village on a fairly cold blustery morning.<sup>8</sup>

- Ayr and District Ramblers met at Straiton School today Saturday August 25th [2012] to do a 10-mile circular walk to Genoch Hill. On a dreich drizzly morning 28 walkers made their way up Monument Hill with its impressive Hunter Blair family's tribute stone on the summit.<sup>9</sup>
- It may have been a dull day but it didn't detract from the beauty of Straiton and its surrounds.<sup>10</sup>

**Further afield:** Straiton is also used as a base by more experienced walkers: there are many more routes further up the Girvan valley. The foothills of the Galloway Forest have a rugged and varied topography.

Also used by visitors to the village is the Cornish Hill walk, maintained by the Forestry Commission and accessed from a Galloway Forest car park about 5 miles out of Straiton. The Forestry Commission also maintains tracks to the Stinchar gorge and, beyond that, to Barr. There is a circuit of Loch Bradan, walks over the moors to Loch Doon, and the long climb up Shalloch-on-Minnoch, (starting around 5 miles from Straiton). Visitors also make the 45-minute drive to Glentool, from where you can climb Merrick, the highest mountain in the Southern Uplands.

The [WalkHighlands](#) website includes full mapping and GPS information, as well as photos and descriptions, of many of the Galloway Forest walks: all within easy reach of Straiton – Glentool visitor centre is a 45-minute drive.

## The Carrick Way

A long distance route is in preparation which will use the old track from Straiton to Barr, and which will pass through the middle of the proposed Linfairn and Dalmorton wind farm complex.

## Cycling

South Ayrshire is well-used by road cyclists. The Ayrshire Alps is planned as Scotland's first Road Cycling Park, and many consider Straiton the heart of the area, as it has been welcoming cyclists for years. Situated at the eastern end of the park, Straiton is used as a base to tackle Tairlaw, Largs and Glenalla. Information on the best routes along with photos and maps at [Ride the Ayrshire Alps](#).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> extract from <http://gordonanne.blogspot.co.uk/2011/12/cunninghame-ramblers-mid-week.html>

<sup>9</sup> extract from [http://gordonanne.blogspot.co.uk/2012\\_08\\_01\\_archive.html](http://gordonanne.blogspot.co.uk/2012_08_01_archive.html)

<sup>10</sup> extract from <http://jimzglebeblog.blogspot.co.uk/2012/02/straiton-monument-and-bennan-circuit.html>

<sup>11</sup> <http://ayrshirealps.org/wp/>

In 2012, the village hosted the [Straiton Struggle Road Race](#).<sup>12</sup> The [South Carrick David Bell Memorial Race](#)<sup>13</sup> also often passes through the village. See their [blog site](#)<sup>14</sup> for images and reports. It has been billed as perhaps “[the most scenic race in the UK](#).”<sup>15</sup> The “[Lochs and Glens South](#)”<sup>16</sup> section of the National Cycle Network route no. 7 passes nearby, and makes a convenient connection with the Straiton to Newton Stewart road.

Serving both road cyclists and mountain bikers, there is also the Loch Doon Forest Drive, also known as the Carrick Forest Drive, a magnificently scenic route. See a description of the Forest Drive as a route for cyclists in the online [Herald](#).<sup>17</sup>

**Mountain biking:** there are many opportunities nearby. The Loch Doon to Craigengillan route is a circular route starting from Straiton going to Loch Bradan over the hill to the left on a rocky path down into the forest, through Craigengillan into Dalmellington then back over the Largs/Gass hill road.

Loch Bradan, near Straiton, has a mountain bike circuit around it. [The 7 Stanes biking trails](#) network has a major centre at Glentool<sup>18</sup> – a 45-minute drive from Straiton, and there are many other trails nearby.

## Art tourism

Because of its scenic qualities, Straiton has attracted artists for centuries. Dante Gabriel Rossetti came to view the waterfalls in Lambdoughty Glen in 1869 (see appendix 4). The village is currently home to several professional and many amateur artists. The Ayr Art Circle has made outings to the village.

At present art-related tourism, whilst important, is difficult to quantify. It is mostly individual and ad hoc: painters and photographers make their own trips and create work independently. There is room for more systematic development of art-tourism as a resource: courses and classes could be offered, and Straiton is also well-placed to take part in organised “open studio” events like the highly successful *Spring Fling* open studio event in Dumfries and Galloway.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/events/details/77656/Straiton-Struggle-Road-Race#summary>

<sup>13</sup> <http://southcarrickdaveibell.wordpress.com/about/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://southcarrickdaveibell.wordpress.com/2012/02/01/remembering-the-46th-davie-bell/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://southcarrickdaveibell.wordpress.com/2012/02/03/the-most-scenic-race-in-the-uk/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/what-we-do/national-cycle-network/long-distance-rides/scotland/lochs-and-glens-south>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.heraldscotland.com/life-style/outdoorsleisure/the-cycle-carrick-forest-drive.13828830>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.7stanesmountainbiking.com/Home>

## Dark Skies tourism

The Galloway Forest Park has been very successful in promoting itself as a destination for wild and unspoilt scenery, and for active outdoor activities. The recent establishment of the Dark Sky Park has complemented this day-time activity with the promise of unparalleled star-gazing opportunities at night. It has led to a noticeable increase in an already healthy active/nature tourism, which we have benefited from in Straiton.

The premise of the Dark Sky Park is that it is a large self-contained area which contains very little housing or motor traffic, and so very little light pollution. So, by definition, the Dark Sky Park itself contains very little in the way of visitor accommodation – either in the core area or in the buffer area.<sup>19</sup> However, and also by definition (because it is a night-time activity in a remote area), stargazers and visitors to the Dark Sky Park are almost all in search of overnight accommodation. That accommodation has to be provided at the fringes of the Park, as so little is to be found within the Park itself. So the communities at the fringe of the Park, which are already growing economically as tourist destinations, are becoming even more significant because of the Dark Sky Park. The communities are:

- Straiton
- Dalmellington
- Bellsbank
- Carsphairn
- New Galloway
- St John's town of Dalry
- Newton Stewart
- Barr
- Barrhill

Of these, **Newton Stewart** is the largest: because of its size and the fact that the Forestry Commission headquarters is located there, and because of its proximity to Glentool and Merrick (highest mountain in the Southern Uplands) it is the most important centre for day-time tourism in the Galloway Forest. However, its size means that it is not a prime destination for the night-time tourism offered by the Dark Sky Park: as it has its own significant light pollution, so anyone staying there would need to travel a significant distance by car before being able to enjoy dark skies.

Potentially the most significant of the other centres for providing accommodation for Dark Sky tourism are **Straiton, Carsphairn, St John's Town of Dalry** and **New Galloway**. The last three are on the A713 which allows easy access, and yet lie close to the borders of the Dark Sky Park. All are small communities, and although they have street lighting, it is a short walk or drive from the community to good star-gazing. Some of the outlying houses and cottages which offer accommodation have significantly less light

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<sup>19</sup> Facilities include the Glentool Holiday Park campsite, a small number of self-catering businesses, two or three walkers' bothies and wild camping.

pollution. Straiton lies on the north side of the Park, providing access from the M77 and A77. Straiton stands at the northern entrance of B7045 Newton Stewart road, the only road to go directly through the Dark Sky Park. Again, it has street lighting, but it is a very small community and so it is only a short walk or drive from the community to good star-gazing. Again, some of the outlying houses and cottages which offer accommodation have significantly less light pollution.

**Dalmellington** and **Bellsbank** are former mining communities which currently offer less tourist accommodation than other communities. However, they are well placed in relation to the Dark Sky Observatory at Craigengillan, a major project and a very important complement to the Dark Sky Park: and so there may be some potential for them to expand their range of Night Sky accommodation. Wild camping and caravanning were formerly very popular on the west shore of Loch Doon. This has now been all but stopped (boulders have been placed to block easy access to camping sites): a campsite is planned instead. These plans are likely to be affected by the proposed Glenmount wind farm.

**Barr** and **Barrhill** are small communities which are well-placed in relation to the Dark Sky Park. However, they are remote, and more difficult to access from major population centres. They are also both struggling to reinvent their tourist base in the aftermath of large-scale wind farm construction nearby. It remains to be seen how successful they will be.

At VisitStraiton, we believe that all the communities on the fringe of the Galloway Forest and the Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park need to achieve a joint focus on provision of accommodation and visitor services. We would urge other interested parties to consider joining together to develop strategic plans in relation to the park and to the implications of wind farm planning on its fringes.

### In search of beauty: tourism and the ideal landscape

Not all visitors to Straiton are interested in active tourism, or in star-gazing. Straiton has been regarded as an attractive destination for centuries. People come here simply because it is unusually beautiful. The following is a brief outline of the reasons why the area has historically been considered attractive.

The village is itself attractive: having benefited from its conservation status, the original core of stone cottages has been only slightly extended and the new developments have been architecturally in keeping with the original design concept.

It lies on the Water of Girvan, a medium-sized, clean spate river which runs down from the Galloway hills and through pasture and then through the woods and gorges of the Blairquhan estate.

The very fact that the Blairquhan, Cloncaird, Kilkerran and Craigen Gillan estates are recognised as designed landscapes and as such, significant national assets, indicates something about their natural setting. The landscape designers of the 18th and 19th centuries did not choose to design their clients' estates without reference to the natural topography which surrounded them. The way in which those landscapes were made to interact with their natural context is different from the way we might do it now: the wilder slopes of the upper Girvan valley were not the focus of the view for visitors to Blairquhan – rather the focus was the well-maintained pastures by the river and the extensive plantations. But the wild hill-country formed an important backdrop to the well-nurtured and well-maintained fertility of the river valley. The glimpses of the moors and high hills were a necessary part of the ideal landscape.

The landscape of pasture, forest, hill and moor which these designers incorporated into their plans was not invented by them, nor were they the first people to recognise it. It has been the common possession of all Scottish people for centuries, celebrated by Burns in the west Lowlands and Walter Scott in the east. The estates of Blairquhan and Cloncaird are no longer (if they ever were) the preserve of a privileged few: they are open to visitors: the right-to-roam legislation hasn't been necessary here because landowners have already engaged with tourism and welcome visitors from across Scotland and across the world to enjoy the same sights and sounds.

Those who come maintain the same interest in a varied landscape incorporating both cultivation and wilderness. The insertion of quasi-industrial elements such as turbines into a landscape of this sort destroys the aesthetic appeal which has made the area sought out for generations.

The topography is varied. There are gentle green slopes grazed by cattle and sheep, rounded hill forms (like Doonan's Hill which has often been mistaken for a hill fort), forested hills (like the pyramid of Bennan Hill), craggy hills (like Genoch Inner Hill), steep cliffs, tumbling scree slopes (Craig Hill), river gorges (within the designed landscapes of Blairquhan estate and at Tairlaw), specimen trees in parkland, wild woods, plantations, working farms, waterfalls (Rossetti Linn), moorland, wild walks, and gentle walks.

To complement the geology and topography, the animal and bird life of the area is exceptional. Those coming to Straiton are often from cities and in search of rural peace: so it is not only wildlife that is significant to them: the sheep and cattle, and the lambing and calving seasons in particular, are highly attractive to visitors.

Wildlife is also sought out: there are many resident and migratory species of birds. Swallows and martins nest widely through the valley. Badgers are

frequently seen. The otter, recently identified as one of the “Big Five” (the five most iconic Scottish animals)<sup>20</sup>, is frequently seen in the Girvan.

There is no particular way of quantifying the long-established relationship between the natural beauty of a destination and its tendency to attract visitors. However, we have gone some way to providing evidence of it in giving extracts from the visitors’ books of some of Straiton’s tourist accommodation businesses. These comments can be seen in Appendix 3. They refer to “beauty” or “beautiful”, “lovely setting” “views”, “peace” “peace and quiet”. Beautiful places are necessary: you don’t need to own them or live in them: but you do need to be able to visit them, to enjoy them, to find spiritual peace in them, and to know that they will be there for your children and grandchildren.

## Children

Many families come to visit Straiton for extended holidays, weekends and day-trips. The village has a play-park, picnicking opportunities are excellent, the local walks are varied enough to appeal even to children, and some of the larger tourist accommodation centres, such as Balbeg, provide extensive extra facilities for children. Please find these and other activities mentioned at <http://visitstraiton.com>

## Event tourism

Both Blairquhan Castle and Cloncaird Castle promote themselves as venues for weddings. In both instances, and as always, the scenic value of the setting is of great significance. The visual appearance of the Blairquhan castle landscape would be seriously (and adversely) affected by the proposed Dersalloch, Linfairn, Dalmorton and Scienteuch wind farms. Cloncaird castle is further from the proposed farms, and is set near only one (Scienteuch). One would be aware of the proposed wind farms on the approach to Cloncaird along the A77 and on the Kirkmichael / Straiton road.

## Straiton as a film location

The village and its surroundings, including Blairquhan Castle and its grounds, have been used as a location for [\*The Match\*](#)<sup>21</sup> (1999) and [\*The Queen\*](#)<sup>22</sup> (2006). In both cases the scenic qualities of the locations were essential. See Appendix 4 for quotations from location scouts.

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.snh.gov.uk/enjoying-the-outdoors/year-of-natural-scotland-2013/scotlands-big-5-celebrations/meet-big-five/>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0165384/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.imdb.co.uk/title/tt0436697/>

## A response to the Moffat Report: impact of wind farms on tourism within a local area.

The report *The economic impacts of wind farms on Scottish tourism: a report for the Scottish Government*<sup>23</sup> [the Moffat Report] commissioned by the Scottish Government, underpins much of current government policy. We have read the report and accept its finding that there will be no discernible effect from wind farms on tourism nationally in Scotland because of relocation of tourist business from turbine-affected areas to areas without turbines. Rather than dispute the findings of the Moffat report, we are concerned rather that certain key findings and provisos have been selectively ignored by the Scottish Government which commissioned it. For example:

1. We agree with the Moffat report's comments that large-scale wind farms can represent an effective industrialisation of what was hitherto wild or semi-wild landscape: "The basic problem of location in a scenic area is exacerbated because efficient energy production and transmission requires very large turbines, spaced across a relatively concentrated location. The economic ideal for the wind-energy producer is a development involving a large number of turbines sited on exposed ground. In effect some large wind farm developments may industrialise large areas of wilderness or semi wilderness."<sup>24</sup>
2. We very much welcome comments in several places in the report stressing the importance of continuing to adhere to past local planning policies which have so far acted to prevent wind farms from being built in scenic areas: it is important to note too that the continuance of such protection is taken as a given by the report.<sup>25</sup> Of course, once turbines are permitted

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<sup>23</sup> *The economic impacts of wind farms on Scottish tourism: a report for the Scottish Government*. The Moffat Centre for travel and tourism business development, Glasgow Caledonian University, March 2008. Available online at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/03/07113554/0>

<sup>24</sup> Moffat Report, p. 34

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*: p. 53: "In the UK the planning system, discussed in Chapter 13, has an important role. An environmental appraisal is required for all developments and where there is a significant negative impact on the environment the assumption is that the development will not be allowed. Given the assumed direct relationship between landscape and tourism, *ex post* findings of limited impact of wind farms on tourism could be taken as evidence of effective planning rather than evidence that wind farms in inappropriate locations or linked in a continuous band could not have serious negative effects on tourism." *contd./*  
*Ibid*. p. 67: "There is often strong hostility to developments at the planning stage on the grounds of the scenic impact and the knock on effect on tourism. However the most sensitive of these do not appear to have been given approval so that where negative impacts on tourism might have been a real outcome there is, in practice, no evidence of a negative effect." *contd./*

*Ibid*. p. 68: "Even if there is a loss of value the effect on tourism in practice is extremely small. This possibly reflects the current limited nature of the exposure (e.g. 10 minutes in a 5 hour journey) and, as mentioned earlier, the effect of the planning system preventing seriously adverse developments." *contd./*

within scenic areas, the conclusions of the Moffat report (that wind farms will have no discernable effect on tourism nationally) will no longer hold good, as the report is based on the premise that turbines will continue to be absent from scenic areas.

**3. We welcome the Moffat report's call for the protection of tourism interest by local authorities:**

"In our view councils, when assessing the economic impact of a development on the local economy and tourism, should take into account the following:

- The number of tourists travelling past on route to elsewhere,
- The views from tourist accommodation in the area,
- The relative scale of tourism impact i.e. local to national
- The potential positives i.e. information provision
- The views of tourist bodies i.e. local tourist board or VisitScotland.
- Outdoor Activity in the area of the development

This is effectively a guide to planning authorities of what to consider under the issue of 'tourism impact' and could be helped by the production from the developer of a Tourist Impact Statement."<sup>26</sup>

**4. In submitting VisitStraiton's views to planners and policy makers, we are following the recommendations of the Moffat report. We would also call for Tourist Impact Statements from all the developers for all the proposed wind farms around Straiton.**

However, we are not confident that the voices of local tourism are currently being listened to and we are concerned that because of the way in which wind farm applications are currently encouraged, undue pressure is being placed on the planning system to permit wind turbines in scenic areas.

We would also further note that the efforts to combat multiple wind farm applications place a huge strain on the financial resources of small local communities, and an additional expense for tourist businesses who feel in some cases that they have no option but to seek professional help to try to ensure their survival. Planners should consider the possibility not only of the potential blight caused by wind farms being constructed in scenic areas, but a period of blight during the long planning application period, when local tourist enterprises put planning and capital expenditure on hold pending final decisions.

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*Ibid.* p. 86: "We conclude that whilst there is evidence of a belief from local people prior to a development that it might be injurious to tourism there is virtually no evidence of significant change after development has taken place. However that is not to say that it could not have an effect, rather it reflects the undoubted fact that where outstanding scenery, with high potential tourist appeal, has been threatened, permission has been refused."

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p. 269



In addition to the points above, where we agree with the Moffat report's recommendations, we would like to voice a few points of concern.

5. We noted above, in relation to VisitScotland, that of eleven businesses in Straiton which offer accommodation to tourists, only one is registered with VisitScotland. In practice, this means that VisitScotland has definite information on only 9% of the tourist businesses in Straiton and 37.5% of the available beds. This casts serious doubt on the information on total tourism provision available to the authors of the Moffat report who relied on a list from VisitScotland.<sup>27</sup> Straiton's businesses are certainly not unique in remaining unregistered with VisitScotland, which, as noted above (see page 6), is expensive in relation to other forms of promotion.
6. We welcome the comment in the Moffat report that "The evidence is overwhelming that wind farms reduce the value of the scenery".<sup>28</sup> However, the report then goes on to say "(although not as significantly as pylons)" – this latter conclusion is based on poor methodology, which, as the report is currently so influential, is worth analysing.

The basis for the comparison on visitor perceptions of the potential reduction in scenery value of wind farms as opposed to pylons is based on a series of photographs of hypothetical hotel-window views of three types: open countryside, countryside with pylons (or telegraph poles), and countryside with wind turbines. Five photos show open country, five show country with wind turbines, two show country with pylons and one with telegraph poles (see page 45 for two of the pictures). From the point of view of accurate visual analysis, the photographs of the wind turbines should never have been compared with those of the pylons and poles. The latter are all engineered to show the lines of pylons in an axis which is perpendicular to the viewer: in other words an axis which comes from behind the viewer, passes in two cases directly overhead, and then disappears into the distance. In other words the viewers, seeing the perspective, knows that the pylons and poles pass very close or in two cases right over the hotel room in which they are staying. Consequently they occupy a much larger proportion of the visual field.

By contrast, the photographs which show wind turbines all show the turbines in a horizontal axis parallel to the viewer's window, at a considerable distance: four in the far distance (est. 4 miles) and one in the middle distance (est. 1 mile).

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* p. 142: "An accommodation list for the whole of Scotland was obtained from VisitScotland. This gave a list of all the different accommodation units in Scotland, their post codes, the number of rooms/units and the number of beds." The validity of this data has to be doubtful in the light of our comments above.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* p. 283

Aesthetics are a combination of what people see and what they know. Perceiving that a line of electricity pylons passes right over their hotel bedroom, people are highly unlikely to want to stay there. If you ask people whether they would prefer to have pylons at a distance of 50 feet, or turbines on a hillside several miles away, it is hardly surprising that they choose the turbines. It is not a valid like-for-like aesthetic comparison.

This undermines the report's evidence on the scenic loss in value accruing from wind turbines.

The current proposals around Straiton include one wind farm which incorporates one of Straiton's tourist accommodation-providers actually within its boundaries. This, and another major provider of tourist accommodation in the same valley, are within 900m of the nearest turbines. As the Moffat report offered visitors the chance to view hotel rooms which were very close to pylons, it clearly should similarly have offered them the chance to view rooms in very close proximity to turbines.

7. We have some concerns about the way in which the Scottish Government has used the Moffat report selectively. The comments from the report on the efficacy of current planning practice in preventing scenic areas from wind farm development, and the calls for Tourist Impact Statements from developers are not prominent in the way in which SNP ministers and policy-makers are referencing the report. Nor has the report's call for the protection of the major arteries into Scotland (the M74 and the A9)<sup>29</sup> from large-scale development been heeded. Nor indeed is the call for "[a] system of compensation by developers [which] might go some way to placate those most negatively affected".<sup>30</sup> Nor, so far, is the call for "Scotland's National Scenic Areas and National Parks (and their buffer areas), ... [to be protected] ... not only from wind farms but also from other even less desirable intrusions such as Grid Lines and Pylons [although see above for comments the report's poor analysis of the relative nastiness of pylons and turbines]. It might be argued that the protection should perhaps be offered to all areas defined as of 'Great Landscape Value' provided this did not conflict with the marketing message of unspoilt wilderness."<sup>31</sup> The selective editing of the report by the executive is evident even in the document itself. In the conclusions of the report, the authors point out that "An established wind farm can be a tourist attraction in the same way as a nuclear power station"<sup>32</sup> By the time this statement arrives in the executive summary on page 4 of the report, it has changed to: "An established wind farm can be a tourist attraction in the same way as a hydro-electric power station". Nuclear power stations being a great deal less ecologically, politically and aesthetically acceptable than

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* p. 274

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* p. 274

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* p. 272

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p. 275

hydro-electric ones, this is a small example of the selective editing obviously intended to put the cleanest possible gloss on wind farms: it may seem harmless, but it shows more journalistic flair than intellectual integrity.

## The Galloway Forest & Dark Sky Park as “Wild Land”

Above, we have detailed the Moffat report’s premise that scenic areas with sensitive tourist value have been and should continue to be protected from wind farm development: and that the existing local planning strategies for achieving this should be supplemented by a clear and defined national scheme of protection, to be offered potentially to all areas within Scotland of great landscape value. We agree with this conclusion, and for this reason we welcome the recent call by Scottish Natural Heritage [SNH] for the Scottish Government to exempt “Wild Land” from wind farm development.

We would further recommend that SNH consider the importance of tourism provision on the fringes of this “Wild Land”, however specified. Not all visitors wish to go wild camping, and so, rationally, scenery tourism has to include scenic accommodation as well as the wild scenery itself.

We would suggest that policy makers, including the SNH, should consider identifying the whole of the Galloway Forest Park and the Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park as “Wild Land” and exempt from wind farm development: this is only logical, as a Dark Sky Park must, in order to remain “Dark”, be “Wild”. Further, that scenic communities on the fringes of the Park be also exempted from Wind Farm development, as it will alienate visitors to the Wilderness areas which they serve.

The tourism of the areas surrounding the Galloway Forest Park already identify “wildness” as a key component of their tourist appeal. Take this, for example, from April 2013:

“Dumfries and Galloway’s 10th annual Wild Spring Festival is our biggest and best yet, with over 100 wildlife events, many free and most hosted by local wildlife guides and experts. [...] Set amidst beautiful unspoilt countryside, our festival is perfect for families and wildlife fans alike to discover this most surprising and naturally inspiring part of Scotland.”<sup>33</sup>

The majority of the viewing stations on Galloway’s Red Kite trail (which centres on Loch Ken, New Galloway and St John’s Town of Dalry) and including the feeding station at Belymack Farm (where up to 70 red kites will congregate at one time) are not within the Galloway Forest, but outside it, where visitor concentrations are greater than they are within the Park.<sup>34</sup>

This type of wildness/wilderness tourism, which already exists in the communities fringing the Galloway Forest, is not compatible with what the

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.wildseasons.co.uk/home/events/spring-events/spring-events-2/>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.gallowaykitetrail.com/>

Moffat report correctly calls the effective industrialisation of the landscape by wind turbines.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See above, p. 16

## **The economics of tourism in rural communities: employment, self-employment and diversification**

In addition to the quantitative statistical analysis of the Moffat report, we would like to call on the Scottish government, as a matter of urgency, to commission a dispassionate sociological study of employment, self-employment and diversification in rural communities, particularly those in Southern Scotland, which is more populated than the Highlands, and has a landscape which is highly valued by many of its residents.

Judging by our own experience in Straiton we would suggest the following as hypotheses about the makeup of contemporary rural society:

### **Economic potential of scenic and non-scenic areas**

hypothesis: that “scenic” and “non-scenic” landscapes will have different sociological identities, and different economic potential because of the repopulation of “scenic” areas by incomers in search of a “better quality of life”.

### **Depopulation of areas where farming is the only economic activity**

hypothesis: that in areas where farming remains a key component of the local economy and of the local landscape: because of mechanisation, it will seldom be found able to offer full employment to all young people. This is a global phenomenon, from which Scotland is not exempt.

### **“Scenic” areas:**

#### **Re-use and upgrading, in scenic areas, of isolated and remote houses by incomers**

We would suggest that, as in Straiton, it will be found more widely in scenic areas of Southern Scotland that depopulation, and the dereliction of isolated houses formerly used by agricultural workers will be found to have been halted and/or reversed by the arrival of three particular types of resident: commuters / second-home owners, retired people, and people who wish to try to make a living from tourism either directly (as caterers / accommodation / activity providers) or indirectly (retail / the arts / and, as tourist accommodation is now of a very high standard, building and related trades).

#### **Economic diversification in scenic areas**

We suggest that this diversification will be found to have proceeded up to the present time in parallel with the farming economy. Some farmers will be found to have themselves diversified into tourist-related provision. Tourist related industries will be found to have provided employment for children of farming families who are not able to be employed in agriculture. Some incomers particularly those in search of the “good life” will be found to have

themselves engaged in small-scale farming and have diversified agricultural practice.

### Economic damage of wind turbines by population movement

We would suggest that the Moffat report seriously underestimates the damage to the national economy from the relocation of residents that it anticipates will happen as a result of the arrival of wind turbines.

The Moffat report states in relation to the movement of people who are severely affected by wind turbines: “those who lose most will in time move out, those who object least will move in. [...] In terms of economic impact, changes in property values should have no effect on expenditure in the area.\* However for transient visitors we would expect a change in value to be replicated in a change in accommodation price and a small negative impact on expenditure in an area.

\*[note in the original text:]*The impact on spending of wealth changes is central to modern macro-economics, increases in nominal wealth do induce increases in spending. However it is equally true that a decrease in house price to a new arrival in an area will divert expenditure from mortgage payments made outside an area to expenditure within.*”

We think this is a very weak analysis for a number of reasons:

First: to be fair to the authors of the report, they absolutely do not anticipate the construction of wind farms in scenic and tourist-sensitive areas. So the authors would not anticipate the construction of any of the wind farms proposed around Straiton, for example. However this is the situation which we have to combat in reality, and without the benefit, currently, of any defined protection for scenic areas.

So of course, the actual economic impact of the construction of a wind farm in a highly scenic, tourist-sensitive, and economically tourist-engaged local area is not analysed by the Moffat report, and we suggest that that economic impact would be likely to be far worse than anything outlined by the report.

Second (and accepting the above) the Moffat report does not describe the following likely scenarios: that the moving out of “those who lose most” will **not** be followed, as the report anticipates, by the arrival of “those who object least”: in other words, the houses and businesses of those who have moved in because they love the scenery will **not** be bought at a new low price by those who don’t care.

The reason for this is precisely because it is the more remote, former agricultural properties, no longer required by the farming economy, which have been sought out by those incomers in search of scenery and a better life, have no appeal to those who are neither employed in agriculture nor interested in scenery: they are often at the end of long tracks, remote from

the village centre and school, likely to be cut off in winter and to need a disproportionate expenditure to keep them warm and weather-tight.

We suggest that there will be no incentive for “those who don’t care” to buy up properties of this sort, especially those which find themselves in the midst of a sea of wind turbines. The end result will be a second phase of rural depopulation, and a much greater decrease in nominal wealth than the report anticipates.

Nor is there any reason to suppose that this depopulation will be offset by more people moving into more conveniently situated housing, as the local economy will offer fewer opportunities than previously. Once up and running, the majority of wind farms offer almost no employment. So we suggest it is likely that in the event of wind farm construction in highly sensitive areas, the “decrease in house prices to a new arrival in the area” will not, as the Moffat report suggest, compensate for the loss of value of the depreciated housing. There will be no particular incentive for people to move in.

It is worth pointing out that the Moffat report considers some economic effects purely within a national context (the relocation of tourist spend from turbine-affected areas to non-affected areas for example) but arbitrarily chooses to ignore the national context in other comments. For example, it does not consider the loss in value which it perceives will accrue to turbine-affected housing as having a national effect (which it undoubtedly will have – the loss in value is a loss in national capital). Instead, it suggests that loss in value will have “a minimal effect” because of the “[diversion of] expenditure from mortgage payments made outside an area to expenditure within”. In other words it analyses (or rather comments on) the “loss in value” only on a local level, and dismisses it. The arguments for dismissing it are specious, as we have suggested above; because the depreciated housing is not, in many cases, likely to be reoccupied. It is also completely wrong to describe this as a purely local effect. Those whose houses have lost considerable value will be unable to participate at the same level economically wherever they relocate to in Scotland.

### Partial abandonment of scenically-debased areas

We suggest that in the longer term, all of the three principal types of incomer to scenic areas will be found to have come principally precisely *because of* the scenic value of the area, and will be likely to leave areas which are too adversely affected by wind farm development.

### Economic downturn

As a concluding hypothesis, we would suggest that scenic areas which become debased by wind farms will suffer long-term economic damage for a number of reasons:

1. loss of income from visitors,
2. loss of investment in housing stock



3. loss of ethnically and socially diverse population
4. loss of diversified economy

### The foot and mouth epidemic

The foot and mouth epidemic of 2001 affected some areas of Southern Scotland, particularly Dumfries and Galloway. Its economic consequences have been studied in detail by public bodies and academic institutions. Livestock farming was devastated and tourism also suffered badly in areas most badly affected by the epidemic. However, the economic resurgence of the area has to be partly attributable to the resilience of diversified economies. Dumfries and Galloway's scenic and artistic tourism was able to bounce back much more quickly than the area's farming and now offers a great deal more to visitors, and a great deal more economic potential to residents than it did before the epidemic.

This episode has to be considered by planners who are considering replacing an area's scenic tourism by an economy based on private gain and community economic subvention from wind turbines. If a similar epidemic occurred in an area where the principal economic activity was farming, with little or no small-scale diversification, the consequences might be far worse even than they were in 2001.

### "Non-scenic" areas:

We recognise that Southern Scotland contains areas which are not scenic. We also recognise that many communities, for example former mining communities in Ayrshire and Lanarkshire, need economic stimulus which, without substantial intervention, is not likely to come from tourism, or the arts – and the economic diversification which they can bring.

We do not suggest that wind turbines are inappropriate for all areas. We would suggest that any sociological study of economic diversification in scenic areas has to be prepared by those who are confident enough with the history of landscape to be able to assess questions of aesthetics and symbolic value: and that areas identified as scenic must be compared with areas identified as non-scenic. Different strategies for economic development are urgently needed by non-scenic and/or industrially degraded landscape areas. Where ecologically inspired industrial development, in the form of turbines or any other technology, will enhance the economic life of a community, without degrading its symbolic life, then it should be encouraged.

## Models for tourism provision after a wind farm is developed

It is sometimes suggested that wind turbines may attract tourists. An obvious example of where this has happened is Whitelee wind farm near Glasgow.

We do not doubt that in some areas, a wind farm enhances a landscape – there are many degraded landscapes in Scotland and in Europe more widely, where their presence would mark an improvement.

The moors above Fenwick, whatever their ecological value, were never famous for their scenic qualities, nor were they already the destination of choice for tourists, active or scenic. The location (with easy access from the M77), visibility (lining the hills south of Glasgow), and the size of the project (the biggest onshore wind farm in Europe) has meant that they are an ideal venue for their successful visitor centre.<sup>36</sup>

Clearly this success is not going to be replicated at every wind farm: in the same way that the visitor centre at Cruachan (the power station in a mountain) is not going to be replicated in every hydro-electric facility.

Were a wind farm to be built in a scenic area with an existing active tourism, we suggest that it is highly unlikely that the advent of new tourism (to view the wind farms) would ever – if it ever came into existence at all – be likely to compensate for the loss of existing tourism.

In Barr, which is a picturesque small community on the river Stinchar, similar in size and situation to Straiton, but overshadowed by the Hadyard Hill wind farm, efforts are being made to re-stimulate the tourist economy artificially, using the community money which has become available to Barr after the Hadyard Hill farm was built (something which would not apply to Straiton to anything like the same degree).<sup>37</sup> In this particular case, a set of derelict farm buildings on the village are being considered for purchase by and for the community using the wind farm community fund.<sup>38</sup> There is opposition from the remaining tourist accommodation providers in Barr, as this would

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<sup>36</sup> Even if the Whitelee farm is considered a success as a visitor attraction, this is not to say that the wind farm has meant prosperity for those residents of the moor whose houses are blighted by the turbines. We share the view of the Moffat report that these individuals should be compensated.

<sup>37</sup> Allocation of hypothetical community benefit from any wind farms around Straiton is, of course, undecided. However, according to the last available information, community benefit from wind farms would be paid into a fund, of which 40% would go to Maybole, 40% to Crosshill Straiton and Kirkmichael and the remaining 20% to the wider area (Dailly, Dunure, Kirkoswald, etc). Under the terms of this arrangement, Straiton would receive 13% of any benefits payable. This might be further reduced if, as is rumoured, South Ayrshire council decides to keep some or all of the benefit for the wider region.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.hadyardhill.org.uk/#/news/4570278113>

undercut their efforts to retain and increase trade.<sup>39</sup> This is a type of salvage economy, using public money to stimulate economic activity which, in such a picturesque environment, and under normal circumstances, should surely have been expected to happen of its own accord.

No effort has been made to turn Hadyard Hill into a tourist attraction. The village website (<http://barrvillage.co.uk>), although sponsored by Hadyard Hill wind farm, describes Barr as “Carrick’s hidden haven” but contains no mention of the wind farm, and only one picture which contains any turbines.<sup>40</sup> All other pictures on the site are of beautiful turbine-less country. Clearly the wind farm is not conceived as an aesthetically valuable property here.

Barr is a very good example of wind farm construction inappropriately sited in a scenic area. We would encourage South Ayrshire or another interested party to commission a study which contrasts the experience of the last decade in Barr with that in Straiton: sociologically and economically, looking particular at economic diversification and small-scale commercial tourism.

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<sup>39</sup> *The Barrometer*, January 2013: available for download from <http://www.barrvillage.co.uk/>

<sup>40</sup> The sole photograph shows turbines in the far distance, behind a rainbow and a sign for a cycle track.

## Conclusions

1. In this report we have provided detailed information on scenic, active and wilderness tourism in Straiton, which is publicly available, but which has not previously been collated by any national or local body (for example by VisitScotland).
2. We recognise that many of the characteristics of the scenic, active and wilderness tourism in Straiton are shared by other communities around the fringes of the Galloway Forest Park, and we call for coordinated action by interested parties, local and national, to build policies which protect all these areas not only from the blight caused by wind farm construction, but also from the blight currently caused by wind farm speculation, which drains local communities of resources, and puts planning and capital expenditure by local tourist enterprises on hold until decisions are finalised.
3. We draw attention to the fact that the highly successful designation of the Galloway Forest as a Dark Sky Park presupposes that the land within the Park is and remains effectively “wild”. We therefore call on SNH to identify the whole of the Galloway Forest as “Wild Land” and ask SNH to urge the Scottish Government to exempt it from wind farm construction. We also ask SNH and the government to recognise the need of the scenic accommodation-providing areas on its fringes to be similarly protected.
4. We welcome the conclusions of the Moffat report – in particular those which call for improved clarity in the protection afforded to scenic areas, and the incompatibility of those areas with the effective industrialisation caused by large wind farms. We have recorded some reservations about how the relative scenic value of landscapes with and without turbines were assessed in the Moffat report.
5. We regret the selective use of the Moffat report by the Scottish Government to date, and call for it to engage with all the report’s conclusions, not just those which favour a policy of rapid expansion of land-based wind capacity.
6. We discuss the economy and sociology of the scenic rural areas around the Galloway Forest, and call for studies to be made of rural economic diversification and its future with and without wind turbines.
7. We discuss the hypothesis of wind farms being a tourist asset and conclude that this is not going to be the case in a scenic area with a pre-existing tourist industry.

## Appendix 1: Tourist provision in Straiton

### Accommodation

Businesses within 3 miles of Straiton which are directly dependent on tourism.

name of business	no. properties	names	no. beds
Balbeg <a href="http://www.balbeg.co.uk">www.balbeg.co.uk</a>	4	Rabbie Burns	16
		Balcraig	10
		Doonans	8
		Foxglove	4
Bennan <a href="http://www.bennanhouse.co.uk">www.bennanhouse.co.uk</a>	1	n/a	10+
Blairquhan <a href="http://www.blairquhan.co.uk">www.blairquhan.co.uk</a>	6	Kennedy	7
		McIntyre	4
		Farrer	6
		Wauchope	8
		McDowall	5
		Cuninghame	6
Milton Blairquhan Estate	5	n/a	3
		n/a	3
		n/a	2
		n/a	2
		n/a	2
Cloncaird Castle <a href="http://www.cloncairdcastle.co.uk/cottages.htm">www.cloncairdcastle.co.uk/cottages.htm</a>	9	Butler's	4
		Burnside	4
		Garage	2
		Gardener's	4
		Duck Pond	2
		Coach House	4
		Tack Room	4
		Stables	4
		Groom's	6
Genoch <a href="http://www.genochcottage.com">www.genochcottage.com</a>	1	n/a	2
Holly Tree Cottage B&B <a href="http://www.straiton.org.uk">www.straiton.org.uk</a>	1	n/a	4
Hazel Lodge B&B	1	n/a	2
Old Garden Cottage B&B <a href="http://www.oldgardencottage.com">www.oldgardencottage.com</a>	1	n/a	4
Old Toll Cottage <a href="http://www.glasgowholidaylets.com/page13.htm">www.glasgowholidaylets.com/page13.htm</a>	1	n/a	4
Rigg <a href="http://www.riggcottage.co.uk">www.riggcottage.co.uk</a>	1	n/a	5+
<b>11 businesses</b>	<b>31 properties</b>		<b>103+ beds</b>

## Catering

café	The Buck, Main Street, Straiton
pub	The Black Bull, Main Street, Straiton
shop	Straiton Village Stores rescued from closure by the Straiton village cooperative

## Camping

free provision offered in the “show field” near the heart of the village.

The nearest campsite to Straiton is the Walled Garden campsite

([www.walledgardencp.co.uk](http://www.walledgardencp.co.uk)) – approx. 6 miles.

## Toilets and other amenities

Public toilets behind the village hall serve the camping field: maintained for the benefit of visitors, campers and ramblers at an annual cost of around £3000, of which the Straiton Village Cooperative pays around £1800<sup>41</sup>.

The McCandlish Hall is also owned and maintained by the village. It is principally used for the village community but it serves visitors and tourists from time to time (see page 7).

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<sup>41</sup> See footnote 4 above

## Appendix 2: types of active tourism

	individual	group	private	public permit	available in Straiton	available nearby	may use Straiton village as start/finish
Abseiling <sup>42</sup>	●	●			●	●	
Bird watching	●	●			●	●	
Canoeing/kayaking	●	●			●	●	●
Fishing (by permit)	●			●	●	●	
Fishing (private)	●		●		●	●	
Geo-caching		●			●	●	●
Golf	●		●	●		●	
Gorge walking <sup>43</sup>	●	●			●	●	
Horse riding	●	●			●	●	
<b>Motor sports</b> quad-biking scramble-biking vintage car rallies vintage truck rallies	●	●				●	●
Mountain Biking	●	●			●	●	
(Paragliding) <sup>44</sup>	●	●			●		●
<b>Road Cycling</b> Ayrshire Alps	●	●			●	●	●
Running	●				●	●	●
Shooting (pheasant)	●		●		●	●	
Stalking (roe deer)	●		●		●	●	
Star-gazing	●	●				●	
Walking/hiking	●	●			●	●	●
Wildlife watching	●	●			●	●	

<sup>42</sup> See description of Boys Brigade trip, page 36

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>44</sup> Monument Hill is both steep and accessible and is particularly suitable for paragliding: it was last used regularly in the mid-1990s. See the *Straiton Arrow Dec.* 1996.

## Appendix 3: contemporary visitors' comments

### Old Garden Cottage B&B

Beautiful village	Wembley
Lovely area	Stoke on Trent
A lovely village and wonderful scenery, what more could you ask	London
Lovely walks, beautiful village	Victoria, Australia
We fell in love with your part of the world	Nottingham
beautiful area	New Zealand
Such a lovely part of the world	Northampton
Splendid village	London
Stunning location	Hertfordshire
Straiton a real find	Newcastle
Great countryside to explore	London
Straiton is the best village!	Canada
Lovely surroundings	Inverness
Lovely location, lots to see, such a difference from city life	Chester
Amazing location	Northamptonshire
Great area	Staffs
Lovely small village	Germany

### Genoch cottage

This is the ... prettiest cottage, in a really beautiful setting, that we've ever been lucky enough to rent.	
We absolutely loved this place! Peaceful and pretty around.	
Beautiful cottage ... great views	South Yorkshire
Had a fantastic time. Seen golden eagles flying overhead, <sup>45</sup> sad to be going home	Derbyshire
What a wonderful peaceful spot. We have enjoyed evenings ...just looking around at the amazing countryside. A really beautiful house in a great area	London
What an amazing time – gorgeous cottage and beautiful scenery	London
A beautiful location	Birmingham
long walks in the country and the most amazing star gazing	Glasgow
amazing location, beautiful and peaceful. kids loved it all	Cheshire
what a beautiful "get-away" from life in the city	USA
the scenery around us is lovely and the peace most soothing	Co. Down
Lovely house, amazing views all around	Norfolk
The animals and scenery are stunning and a classic backdrop to the theatre of the house	West Yorkshire.
Such a beautiful and peaceful setting – a world away from busy city life!	Manchester
Tranquil, picture perfect scenery and some great walks	Yorkshire
Had an amazing stay. Went star gazing in the forest. Popped the question. She said YES!	
Alas no stars for us because of the clouds, but that didn't seem to matter once we had the fire roaring ...	
gorgeous surroundings	Glasgow
[email message] We are not travelling very far but the location of your cottage makes us feel a million miles away. Peace and quiet - bliss!	Eaglesham

<sup>45</sup> Buzzards – sometimes confused with eagles – were nesting near Genoch when this comment was written. However golden eagles are seen over the Galloway Forest, so either – or both! – species may have been spotted.



## Holly Tree cottage

Really enjoyed our stay ... weather was glorious sunshine so we hiked up the Hill, walked on the Straiton paths, visited Culzean Castle and even had a brew up at Girvan beach. Galloway Forest and Loch Doon great natural resource for walkers, cyclists.	Rotherham
Enjoyed the local walks and a visit to Dalmellington Falls.	Leamington Spa
Most enjoyable action-packed holiday. Almost thwarted by deep snow drifts but, undaunted heaved our way to top of Bennan Hill. Did Burns at Alloway in depth, shore walks at Ayr and Culzean and long walk to Loch Doon Castle and admired giant icicles through the spectacular Ness Glen.	Edinburgh
Beautiful cottage, wonderful walks.	Essex
Lovely village. Best in South Ayrshire	Aberdeen
A great cottage and a great village and owls. A good time had by all.	Hobart, Tasmania
We loved Straiton and the surrounding countryside – hope to come back.	Australia
Best experience; red kite feeding at Lauriston - patience more than rewarded!	Dursley Gloucestershire

## VisitStraiton website comments and emails from visitors<sup>46</sup>

Having visited Straiton and the surrounding area for many years and been overwhelmed by its natural beauty, I am horrified at this proposal. If this goes ahead the visitors and tourists will go elsewhere, no question. P.W.

I've been visiting Straiton ever since my sister ... moved up there in the late 1970s, and it has lots of very happy memories for me. Straiton is just a beautiful and special place, and I can't believe anybody would even think of carrying through such an insane plan. E O'G

My great grandfather was a herd in the hills above Barr, and lived in the cottage called Knockscae by Dalmorton. My grandfather retired to Broadwood, and I was evacuated to Straiton in WW2, working as a young boy at Largs farm with the Moffat family. My father owned Broadwood until 1950, and great uncle Gilbert McFarlane farmed at the Craig in that era. After marrying, I brought my young family on holiday to the area year after year, and now in retirement come on holiday to the area every second year. So I have spent thousands of pounds on holidays in the vicinity.

I am a retired barrister ... and ... am prepared to ... lobby on your behalf about these appalling proposals for free. G.McF.

## Comments from *The Straiton Arrow*

Do you Straiton folks fully appreciate the beauty of your surroundings? No doubt you are used to it and just find it a pleasant place to live, whereas we 'townies' are delighted to visit and be entranced by it all.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Only those emails and comments which are relevant to tourism are included here.

<sup>47</sup> Extract from "Back again" – article on Straiton walks by "Ayr man", *The Straiton Arrow*, Spring 1997

Straiton over the years has always held a magical place in my memory. My first visits were as a child in the early 1930s [...] A day out to Straiton was a favourite run, easy for me but hard work for my brother who [...] had to pedal his own transport [...] Our recent visits were sparked off by reading the pamphlet detailing the five walks which have been laid out and signposted around the Straiton area.<sup>48</sup>

All was serene in the village of Straiton until 20 youths from 1st Alloway Boys' Brigade descended for their Summer Camp 2000 [...] The aim of the exercise was to encourage comradeship, physical endurance, mental stimulation and fun [...] Somehow we managed to return all boys to their Alloway homes, intact [...] and with everlasting memories of the Summer Camp 2000 in the idyllic location of Straiton. What boy would be able to forget the torture of the Craigenhower log run, abseiling, gorge ascent and camp food! ...<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Extract from "Straiton revisited" – article by "Ayr man", *The Straiton Arrow*, Autumn 1996

<sup>49</sup> Extract from "Straiton Bombarded by a Bustle of Boys", *The Straiton Arrow*, Autumn 2000

## **Appendix 4: historic comments on Straiton – literary sources**

*from* First Statistical Account of Scotland: Ayrshire

Edited by Sir John Sinclair. 1791-1799

Parish of Straiton

By Mr William Crawford, Assistant to the Rev Mr McDermit

### *Situation and Extent*

... The situation of the village, at the bottom of 2 hills, between which runs the water of Girvan, is delightful. It is built on a rising ground. The houses are neat and uniform, being all constructed upon the same plan, about 30 years ago, by Thomas Earl of Cassilis. The uniformity of the houses, together with the adjacent green hills, skirted with wood, the vicinity of the Girvan, and a considerable number of very old trees in the church yard, and about the village, justify those who visit this place, in pronouncing it one of the most beautiful Highland villages they have ever seen.

*from* Second Statistical Account of Scotland 1845

The Rev Robert Paton, Minister

Parish of Straiton

The whole of the district was inhabited by a Celtic race, and the village stands upon the Girvan, at the entrance of a pleasant and fertile valley.

### *Topographical Appearances.*

In a parish of such extent, there cannot but be great variety of scenery. The valleys of the Girvan and Doon are arable, and are either cultivated or in meadow, so that they present many agreeable landscapes. The rest of the parish is hilly, and the south-east extremity is remarkably wild and rocky. Craigengower, or hill of the goats, rises immediately behind the manse, to the height of 1300 feet. Bennan hill, half a mile south of the village, on which a small obelisk was built about fifty years ago is about 1150 feet high. From both these hills, there are fine views of Ayrshire, the Firth of Clyde, Arran, and part of the coast of Ireland.

### *Hydrology*

The river Girvan has its source above Loch Bradan, about 12 miles from Straiton, and falls into the sea at Girvan. From Tairlaw fall, three miles from Straiton, it flows to the village through a highly cultivated valley surrounded by hills, which are in some parts covered with natural wood, and rise in others in bold precipitous cliffs. From Straiton it winds three miles through the richly wooded grounds of Blairquhan, and then enters Kirkmichael parish...Tairlaw Linn is upon the Girvan above Straiton. The stream rushes down several

successive falls, forming a descent of more than sixty feet, and then opens into a deep and wooded dell.

### *Zoology*

The streams abound with trout, and in favourable seasons salmon are numerous in the Doon and Girvan. The lakes are full of trout and pike. [...] The moors abound with grouse and black game, Roe deer have been seen two or three times lately. Two pairs of eagles usually have their eyries in the higher parts of the parish, and one more than seven feet, between the extremities of the wings was lately shot, on the farm of Star.

### *Botany*

To classify all the indigenous plants in such an extensive parish would require a long period of study. The quantity of natural wood is a very pleasing feature in the scenery of the parish.

## Rossetti's visit to Straiton in 1869<sup>50</sup>

Kathleen Good

Rossetti Linn – the name romantic as the place itself. A gushing, gurgling waterfall that cascades over the rocks and boulders of Lambdoughty Burn, mesmerising visitors to Lady Hunter Blair's beloved glen. Follow the path there through the trees, and you are walking in the footsteps of a great artist – Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Poet, painter, and leading light of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, the waterfall's famous namesake once stood dangerously close to the edge, transfixed by the torrents plunging into the swirling pool 30ft below him. Seven years previously, his wife and muse, Lizzie Siddal, famous as Ophelia afloat on the river, had died of a laudanum overdose. Griefstricken, Rossetti consigned his manuscript of poetry to her coffin, writing little in the years that followed. In the summer of 1869, he travelled to Ayrshire as a guest of fellow poet and painter, William Bell Scott, at Penkill Castle. Home to Scott's intimate friend, artist Alice Boyd, the castle had become a favourite summer haunt for the Pre-Raphaelite circle. But, during Rossetti's visit, his friends grew alarmed. Tormented by Lizzie's death, he talked of suicide. On an outing to Straiton's scenic falls, they feared he might well be true to his word. William Bell Scott writes in his 'Autobiographical Notes':

### *Looking over Rossetti Linn into The Devil's Punchbowl*

"Miss Boyd sometimes drove us about the country ... One day she took us to the Lady's Glen, a romantic ravine in which the stream falls into a black pool round which the surrounding vertical rocks have been worn, by thousands of years of rotating flood, into a circular basin, called, as many such have been designated, the Devil's Punchbowl. We all descended to the overhanging margin of the superincumbent rock; but never shall I forget the expression of

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<sup>50</sup> from *The Straiton Arrow* April/May 2013

Gabriel's face when he bent over the precipice, peering into the unfathomed water dark as ink, in which sundry waifs flew round and round like lost souls in hell ... it said, as both Miss Boyd and I at the same moment interpreted it, 'One step forward, and I am free!' But his daily talk of suicide had not given him courage. The chance so suddenly and unexpectedly brought within his grasp paralysed him. I advanced to him — trembling, I confess, for I could not speak. I could not have saved him. We were standing on a surface slippery as glass by the wet green lichen. Suddenly he turned round, and put his hand in mine, an action which showed he was losing self-command, and that fear was mastering him. When we were safely away, we all sat down together without a word, but with faces too conscious of each other's thoughts."

Thankfully, Rossetti did not leap into the dramatic falls that now bear his name. Encouraged by Scott to 'live for your poetry', he began to write again in earnest, penning 'The Stream's Secret' by Penwhapple Burn. But, on his return to London, events took a macabre twist. He sought permission from the Home Secretary to exhume the buried manuscript from his wife's grave in Highgate Cemetery. The deed was carried out in the dead of night to avoid scandal.

He went on to publish this controversial collection of poetry; and, of course, to paint more of his stunning portraits of titian-haired goddesses that so epitomise the Pre-Raphaelite movement – works of art as awe-inspiring as Rossetti Linn, the waterfall that had terrified him with its wild beauty.

### *from Galloway: The Spell of its Hills and Glens*

by Andrew McCormick. 1932<sup>51</sup>

The author describes a trip taken with Sir Harry Lauder (presumably during the depression years)

When we wheeled into Straiton Main Street no decoration could have given a finer welcome than the radiant colourfulness of the American Pillar Rambler Roses which grow in front of the houses. "There", said Sir Harry, "is an example of what might be very cheaply done to beautify every village in Scotland." I pass the remark on in the hope that the present Government, which, in order to lessen unemployment, is ever urging County and Town Councils to press forward uneconomic schemes, may adopt the idea. It would give a real help these two great causes which should go hand in hand – "The Preservation of Rural Scotland" and "Come to Scotland" movements.

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<sup>51</sup> *Galloway: The Spell of its Hill and Glens* by Andrew McCormick; John Smith & Son, Glasgow, 1932

*from Carrick Days*by D E Cuthbertson. 1933<sup>52</sup>

The scenery was improving at every step. The roadway descends towards the village of Straiton, and below lay a miniature loch, with woodlands reaching away from its edge. The hills were closing in, bleak and bare to-day, but even so adding a pleasing tone to a picture full of charm and unspoilt beauty. Straiton lies sheltered at the foot of Craigengower, a hill of some 1160 feet. Perched on the summit stands a monument erected to the memory of James Hunter Blair, younger of Blairquhan. He was Lieutenant-Colonel in the Scots Guards, and was killed at Inkerman. A Member of Parliament for the county, he appears to have been a popular and able country gentleman. The dark column stands out prominently, and somehow dignifies and adds romance to the prospect. To-day my road turned off just before entering the sequestered little village. An outpost of Carrick on the borders of Galloway, to me there is something in the very atmosphere of the place which charms and arrests. Quiet and self-contained, tucked in beneath the shelter of hills, it is a sanctuary from the hustle and rush of the outside world. To pass through the little street is to adventure on the thirty miles between here and Newton Stewart with no township in between, but a road of wild beauty and interest. The river Girvan guards Straiton and has its source some twelve miles above the village, actually where Ayrshire and Galloway join, and not very far from the spot where the Stinchar starts to sing its way to the sea. A little distance through the village is Tairlaw Linn, a noted beauty spot, where the Girvan foams and dashes in a frenzy, and to-day I knew it well worth another visit, as the melting snows would add an unusual volume of water – but I hesitated and did not dare obey the impulse. The temptation to go further would then prove irresistible and I had to be in Kirkmichael ere it was dark and the old kirkyard closed. There is a fine wild road amongst the hills which I would fain travel again – a road where you will not meet another soul unless he be a lover of the open, silent places, or a farmer, dogs at heel, going his rounds amongst the sheep. If you are tempted – tramp it! Do not go by car. The wind comes cool from the hills, brown burns struggle and wrangle on the brae-sides, and sometimes you can stand on the roadside and look down into a valley, a sheer drop, and see the water in spate churning its way amongst the stones. In the autumn days the wind buffets you as if resenting the intrusion, or testing your courage ere permitting you to enjoy the charms of its domain. In summer, bees mumble and drone amongst the heather, and the whaups come close in angry warning to keep to the path and leave their sanctuaries in peace. A fine walking road – I do not know a better – but I have met more than one motorist who would willingly change his seat for mine on the heathery bank at the Nick o' the Balloch.

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<sup>52</sup> *Carrick Days* by D E Cuthbertson, FRGS; Grant & Murray, Edinburgh, 1933

### Third Statistical Account of Scotland: Ayrshire

by John Strawhorn and William Boyd. 1951

The village of Straiton is pleasantly situated on the east bank of the Girvan Water on a small plateau about thirty feet above the river and some 400 feet above sea level. There are 49 houses mostly of the cottage type, on the two intersecting highways ... The road sides to and from the village were once lined with large oak, ash and beech trees, but a number have been cut down in the present century ... Even so, the countryside is still well-wooded. The population is an ageing one: nearly 30% of the villagers are over 60. The best chance is the development of the village as a quiet holiday resort to attract incomers. It already has some reputation of the kind. Maybole mothers sometimes send their ailing children to recuperate in its mild atmosphere.

### Why Straiton? Diary of a location scout.

reprinted from *The Straiton Arrow*, Summer 1998

Way back in March '98, a location scout was sent out to the outskirts of Glasgow, in search of a highland-like village in which to film a comedy/drama. A village that appeared quiet and peaceful, a village that you would want to go and visit one day.

Photographers were sent, one village was selected. A director arrived, the village was liked but not quite perfect ... the search spread outwards towards Stirling, past Stirling towards Perth and even down towards Biggar. More villages were selected as possible locations, but still the director felt that there was an even better village out there.

After days of driving, the location scout suggested a trip to Scottish Screen, an organisation set up to promote film making in Scotland, and more importantly, to their location photo library.

The director described what he wanted – two rows of low buildings, either side of a road, with a hill at one end, and as fate would have it, Celia at Scottish Screen was a native of Ayrshire, and suggested the village of Straiton. Photographs were produced, the cry of “that’s the place” was heard.

A trip to Straiton itself left little doubt that it was the favourite out of all the other possibilities. However, all was not over, the travelling distance from Glasgow was just too far (films are often 12 hours long and putting an hour either side for travelling, was just too much), and once again the search nearer Glasgow continued, and other villages were re-visited. Meetings were had and we pondered the difficulties.

Just when the director thought we would have to compromise on one of the other villages, a decision from above was made, and having made it the company said “let’s make it in Straiton”, and the rest as they say is...<sup>53</sup>

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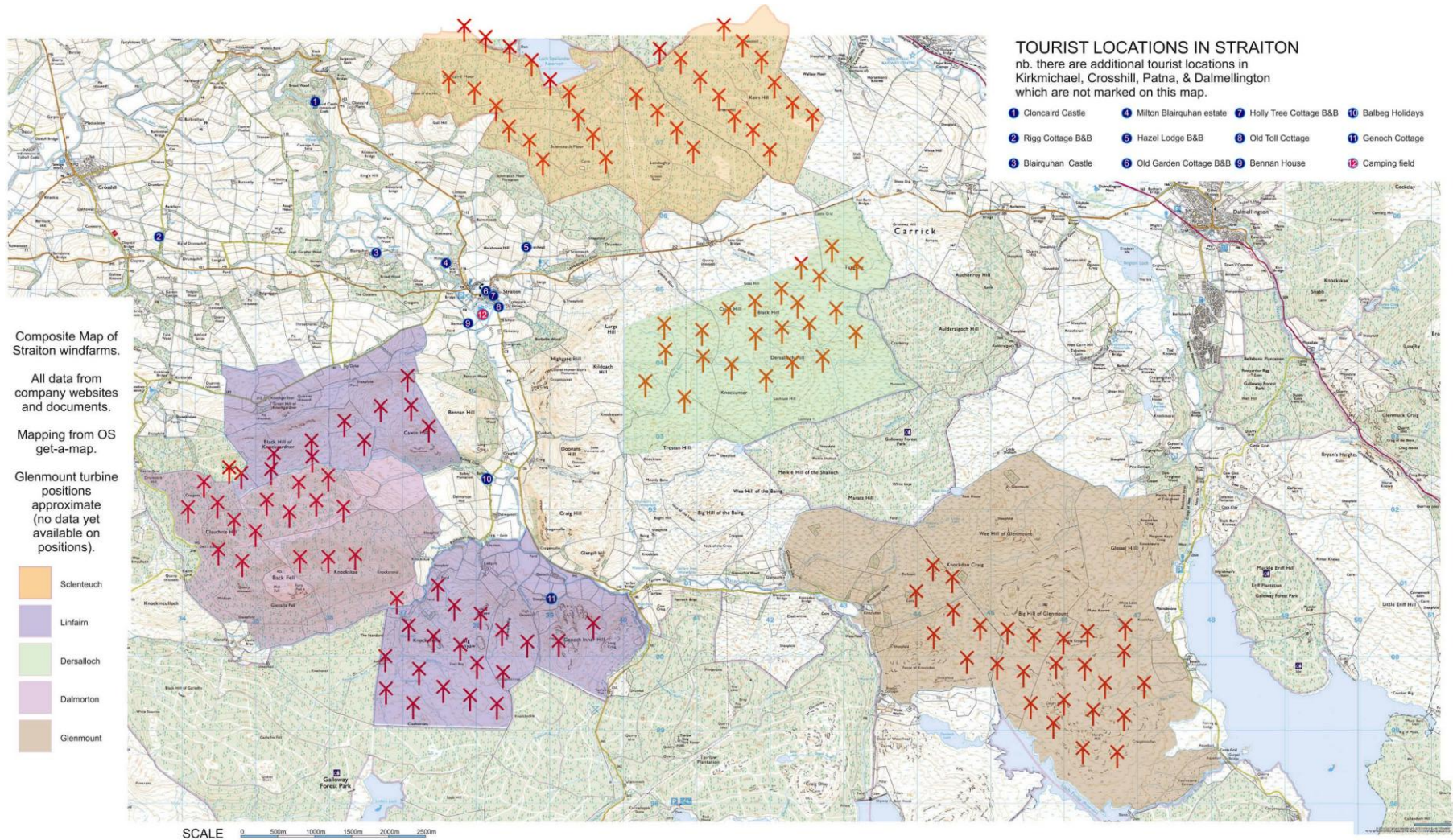
<sup>53</sup> by “The Football Match Ltd”



## Appendix 5: Maps, illustrations

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Composite Map of Straiton windfarms.

All data from company websites and documents.

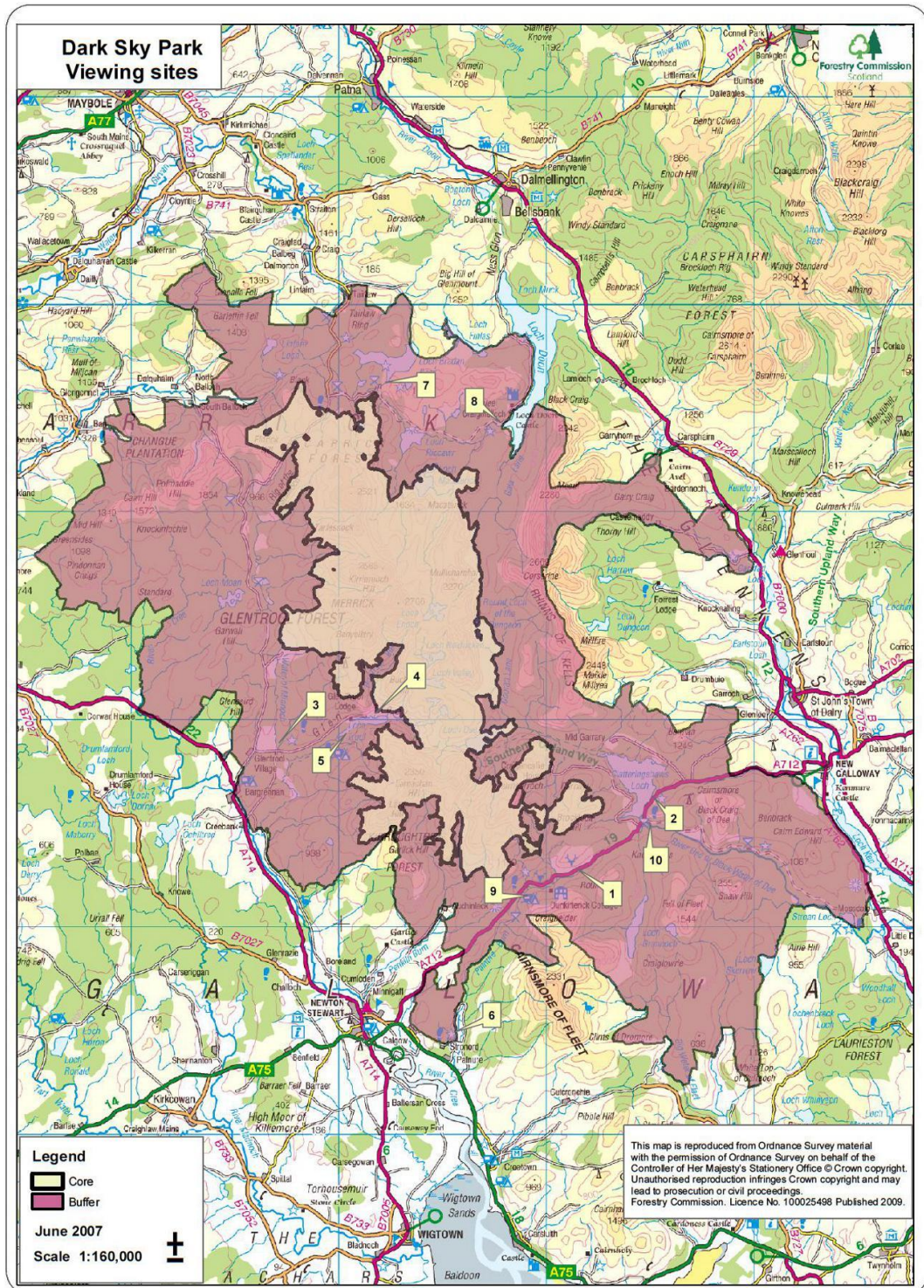
Mapping from OS get-a-map.

Glenmount turbine positions approximate (no data yet available on positions).

- Scleteuch
- Linfain
- Dersalloch
- Dalmorton
- Glenmount

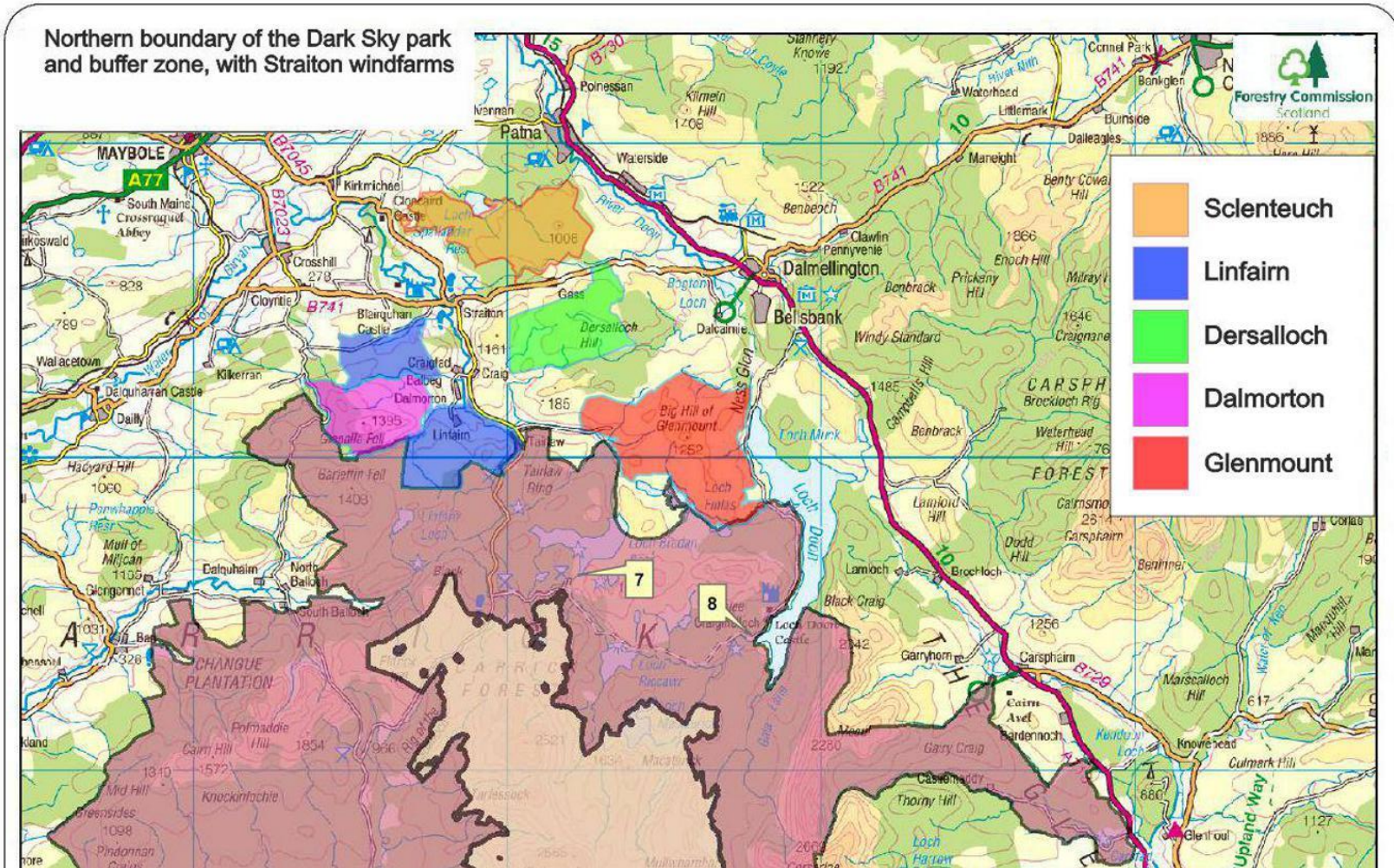
Map showing tourist provision sites in Straiton, with proposed wind farms





2. Map showing Dark Sky Park (forestry commission 2007)





Map showing northern boundary of Dark Sky Park (forestry commission 2007) overlaid with proposed wind farms around Straiton.



The screenshot shows a survey question with two side-by-side images. The left image shows a paved parking lot with a dark car and a white van. The right image shows a landscape with several high-voltage power lines stretching across a green field under a cloudy sky. Below the images is the text: "What is the maximum **extra** you would pay for a twin/double room in a 3 or 4 star hotel to upgrade to the view on the right?" followed by a dropdown menu with the text "--Click Here--".

4. from the Moffat report: one of the pylon photos presented to respondents.



The screenshot shows a survey question with two side-by-side images. The left image is identical to the one in the previous screenshot, showing a parking lot with a dark car and a white van. The right image shows a coastal landscape with a body of water, a grassy foreground, and a cloudy sky. Below the images is the text: "What is the maximum **extra** you would pay for a twin/double room in a 3 or 4 star hotel to upgrade to the view on the right?" followed by a dropdown menu with the text "--Click Here--".

5. from the Moffat report: one of the turbine photos presented to respondents.





**TOP: Straiton, Bannan Hill and the Girvan valley, seen from the old Patna track**  
**CENTRE: Straiton seen near the entry to the village, coming from Kirkmichael**  
**BOTTOM: The upper Girvan valley, seen from the summit of Bannan Hill**

## Appendix 6: *Walking Routes in Straiton*

This appendix gives quotes some details from the report *Walking Routes in Straiton: assessing the economic impact*.<sup>54</sup>

### *Walking Routes in Straiton: methodology*

The survey conducted interviews with 119 walkers (condensed to 85 responses) in April, August and September 2003 and compared the results with baseline data collected in 1996.

The survey analysed the following information about the walkers:

- Sex and Age Profile
- Profession
- Choice of Walking Route
- Frequency of Walks
- Location of Last Walk
- Travel Distance
- Number of Trips and Length of Stay
- Accommodation Used
- Number of Walks Completed
- Return Visits to Straiton
- Reason for Route Choice
- Activities on Walks
- Walking Group Composition
- Expenditure Levels
- Satisfaction with Walking Environment
- [suggestions for] Improvements to Route
- Information Source
- [suggestions for] Information Improvements
- User Valuation of Route
- Origin of Visitor Expenditure

The Report contextualises this survey within the National Research and Policy Context on Walking<sup>55</sup>, describes Key Initiatives and National Surveys (such as *Paths for All*)<sup>56</sup> and Existing Surveys on Economic Impacts of Walking in Scotland<sup>57</sup> and the UK as a whole.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *Walking Routes in Straiton: assessing the economic impact*: Final Report, November 2003: a 52pp. report prepared for Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire by Willie Miller Urban Design, Glasgow.

<sup>55</sup> *Walking Routes...* p. 2ff.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*: p. 5ff.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*: p. 6ff.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*: p. 13ff.

### *Walking Routes in Straiton: Conclusions*

The following are the conclusions of the report (unedited):<sup>59</sup>

1.37 The survey has found that the majority of people interviewed came from within Ayrshire and intended to spend between a few hours to half a day in Straiton during their visit. The greatest proportion of walkers was informed about the Straiton walks through information leaflets with the next greatest source of information coming from the acknowledgement of family and friends.

1.38 Countryside walks proved popular among those interviewed with the greatest proportion of respondents making over 15 countryside walks in the last year. The most influential factor in choosing to use the Straiton walking routes was the countryside scenery. However good paths, clear tracks and easy accessibility were also major contributory factors.

1.39 There were high levels of satisfaction from survey responses for walking facilities and the environment except for regarding the danger from road traffic which received the lowest satisfaction levels. Improvements suggested by respondents were mainly for the upgrading and the introduction of more paths and tracks. This would imply that the level of funding on paths and routes could be increased to meet such improvements which in turn may attract more walkers.

1.40 In terms of expenditure, the majority came from respondents who originated from Ayrshire. The total expenditure of survey respondents was primarily spent on petrol and food and drink. It is estimated that a total of c. £17,300 is generated by walkers into the local economy annually. Comparing this figure to the £500 of public sector funding spent on maintenance of paths and routes indicates the good value for money produced by the Walking Routes Initiative.

1.41 The Business Survey shows that three out of the four businesses included in the survey experienced an increase of turnover since the introduction of the walking routes through increased visitor generation. In comparison with the SNH Survey the average spend per person is above the SNH average, as well as that for certain other walking routes in Scotland.

1.42 In conclusion it is evident that the Walking Routes Initiative has created positive results both in terms of providing a popular recreational facility for the public as well as a direct source of income to local businesses in Straiton. We conclude that it would be beneficial for the local economy for the Walking Route Initiative to continue to

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*: p. 35–6



meet the needs of maintenance and improvements of the walking routes.

### *Walking Routes in Straiton updated: changes 2003 to 2013*

The 2003 report did not survey all businesses providing tourist facilities in 2003: and the number has increased since then.

For its “Business Survey”, the report interviewed only four businesses: Blairquhan Estate Office, the shop, the Buck café and the Black Bull pub. The total of businesses providing tourist services is now 14 (see page 7 and Appendix 1.)

Walking has expanded considerably since 2003 when this very positive report was written, along with tourism in general, and there is no doubt that its economic contribution, even during a period of recession, is considerably bigger than it was 10 years ago.

As witnessed by the expansion in the number of businesses providing visitor accommodation, there has also been a considerable increase in the number of those coming on walking holidays, in addition to the day trippers who were the principal interviewees in 2003.

In 2003 the Buck Coffee and Craft shop is listed as having “10% tourism turnover”.<sup>60</sup> This however seems to be a misreading of the interviewer’s own more detailed description of the conversation which is given later, that “10–15% [of customers] are new faces” i.e. new visitors rather than repeat visitors: however, both new and repeat visitors are still part of “tourism turnover”. A conversation with the Buck’s manager and owner in 2013 has informed us that around 90% of the café’s business is from people who live outside Straiton – how much of this can be categorised as “tourist” revenue is not easy to state – but must be well over 50%.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*: p. 34, para 1.29

<sup>61</sup> personal communication, 17th April 2013

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## Corrections and Clarifications

p. 7: In the first edition we wrongly stated that 'the village provides free camping in the "show field" '. In fact camping is by permission of Milton Blairquhan estates.

p. 14: 'There is no particular way of quantifying the long-established relationship between the natural beauty of a destination and its tendency to attract visitors.' Thanks to a reader for pointing out that we are wrong on this: work has been done on this topic at Newcastle University.

p. 14: In the first edition we stated: 'The village and its surroundings have been used as a location for *The Match* (1999) and *The Queen*.' We have re-written this to make clear that Blairquhan Castle was host to *The Queen*.

p. 18: In section 7, we wrote, 'We have some concerns about the way in which the Scottish executive has used the Moffat report selectively.' Of course this should have read 'Scottish government'. Apologies.

p. 31: Given the title of our report, star-gazing was a very obvious omission from the list of activities in Appendix 2! This has now been corrected.

p. 32, note 45: has been amended: it originally read: 'Could these have been buzzards? However there have recently been reports of golden eagles in the Galloway Forest, so it is possible.'

It now reads: 'Buzzards – sometimes confused with eagles – were nesting near Genoch when this comment was written. However golden eagles are seen over the Galloway Forest, so either – or both! – species may have been spotted.'

## Addendum: The Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve

The Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere [GSAB] did not feature in the first edition of our report. This was an omission. However, it is worth recording that the Biosphere featured in early drafts of our report, but was finally omitted. Why did we do this? After all, it would seem that the Biosphere designation, by UNESCO, would seem an ideal means of protecting the area's environment and promoting active and scenic tourism.

Although the protection of the environment is important to the biosphere designation, it is only one of its principal objectives: the whole concept of Biosphere Reserves "is in essence a sustainable regional development tool."<sup>62</sup> So whilst the Biosphere is potentially very important for tourism, use of the designation could also be actively sought by the renewables sector.

The 2008 report cited above stresses the importance of the tourist sector, and the potential importance of the Biosphere designation to that sector<sup>63</sup>. It also shows clearly the much greater economic importance of tourism *to the region* than renewable energy: the GSAB area contained an estimated 5,200 jobs in the tourist sector in 2008<sup>64</sup>. Finally, it also estimates that the potential *increase* in economic output which might accrue from GSAB designation is hugely greater to the tourist industry than to the renewables sector: an estimated £20.8 million to tourism as compared to £1.1 million to the renewables sector between 2010 and 2020.<sup>65</sup>

However, there is one very important area in which our analysis of the relationship between tourism and large-scale wind farms differs greatly from that of the 2008 GSAB report. One of the means which the report describes as creating 'sustainable development' suitable for the Buffer and Transitional zones of the Biosphere is wind energy. Several paragraphs of this report discuss not only the economic and climatic benefits of wind farms, but also the supposed economic benefits accruing from the community funds provided by wind farm developers.<sup>66</sup> In these paragraphs, the report cites Barr and Barrhill as benefiting from the Hadyard Hill community fund and Dalmellington and the Glenkens area being likely to benefit from similar

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<sup>62</sup> *The Socio-Economic Potential of the Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve: final report*, [prepared] for Dumfries and Galloway Council, East Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland. Mackay Consultants and RSK ERA: December 2008, p. 1

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*: *passim*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*: p. 29

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*: pp. 61–2: figures quoted here are for the 'Base case' scenario. Figures are also provided for optimistic and pessimistic scenarios: £31.2m tourism / £1.6m renewables and £10.4m tourism / £0.5m renewables respectively.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*: paras 6.51–6.54, pp. 42–43

funds. As we have shown elsewhere in this report<sup>67</sup> we would argue that where this type of “benefit” funding occurs in scenic areas affected by wind farm development, it acts essentially as a type of salvage activity: an attempt to replace the local entrepreneurial tourist industry which either disappears or operates at well below its former capacity. We strongly believe that the significant long-term economic advantages of this type of benefit funding are likely to be minuscule compared to the benefits of a healthy local scenic and active tourist industry.

We would also like to note that both the 2008 GSAB report and more recently the Scottish Planning Policy consultation draft and the accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment draft report<sup>68</sup> regard the provision of community benefit from wind farm developers as an unquestionable economic benefit to the communities which are in receipt of it. This is an unthinking assumption: and would benefit from economic analysis more detailed than we can undertake. Suffice it to say that it is rather like assuming that a lottery win is unquestionably beneficial to its recipient, or that any type of corporate or state intervention in the form of an unearned grant is unquestionably a good thing to a community which receives it. Surely we all realise now that grants, unearned benefits or “aid”, and lottery wins can have downsides as well as upsides, and can in some cases result in the stifling, undercutting or even complete destruction of local economic activity, and can unintentionally contribute to the demoralisation of both individuals and communities.

There is no question that the 2008 GSAB report is (like the 2007 Moffat report) out of date in its approach to wind farms, which have only recently begun to create severe economic stresses on our local tourism industry in Straiton. We would be glad to know of more recent research which may have been done.

In sum, the Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve is potentially a great idea, but much will depend on how it is rolled out. It has not yet made Straiton significantly more attractive to tourists, unlike, say, the Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park, which has had a strong, immediate positive impact on visitor perceptions of our area. We hope very much that the GSAB can be of use to our community and to our local tourism, but we hope very much that those responsible for developing the potential of the GSAB designation in future will note our reservations in this report about wind farm development in scenic areas.

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<sup>67</sup> See above, p. 12, pp. 26–7

<sup>68</sup> The National Planning Framework 3 & Scottish Planning Policy Strategic Environmental Assessment, [draft] Environmental Report: May 2013, p. 249, available online. Scottish Planning Policy: Consultation draft [2013]: p. 54, available online.