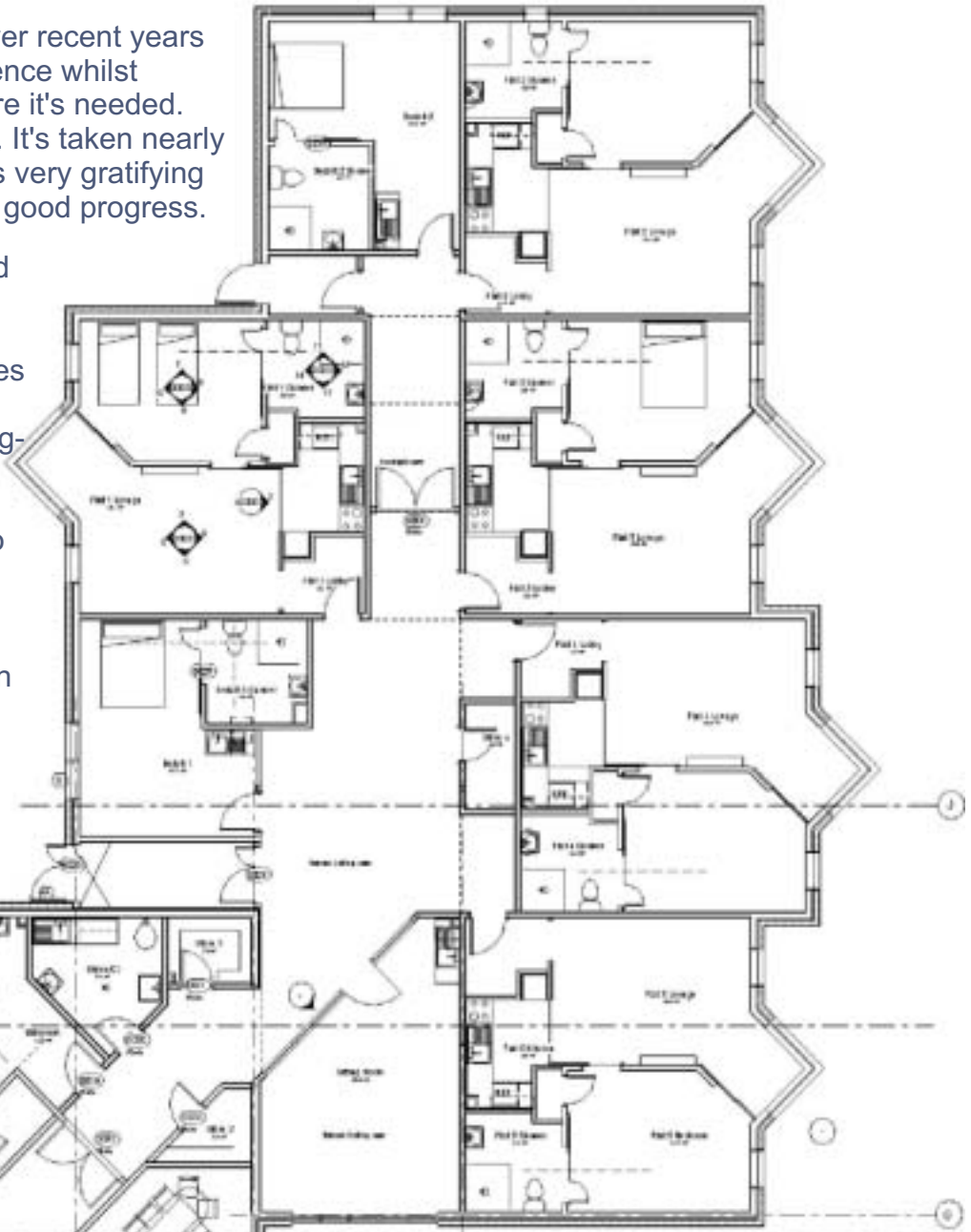


# Care Centre

One of the things we've learned over recent years is the need to show collective patience whilst keeping appropriate pressure where it's needed. The Care Centre is a case in point. It's taken nearly six years to reach this stage but it's very gratifying to see the construction work make good progress.

This project is about all things good in community development: partnership working; a community pulling in the one direction; agencies responding to local needs; job creation; training opportunities; long-term economic benefit and so on. But most of all it's about the restoration of dignity to people who were previously denied that opportunity because their needs could not be catered for in the Isle. It's scandalous that such a situation was ever tolerated, but it's tremendous that it's now being addressed in such a positive way.



Many people have been involved in bringing things to this point but particular thanks are due to Dawn Sherwood, (Project Manager) and to Cllr. Keith Johnson, (Chair of Social Services & Housing), both of whom have kept faith with the project when others put obstacles in the way. We also owe a big thanks to Shirley Haunschmidt who Chaired this sub-group for several years, and to Leslie Burgher for his innovative design and making such efforts to take local ideas on board.

The Sub-group has much less to do now but has not yet been stood down and we hope to be involved in helping to set up a local support group. Meantime we look forward to an official opening early next year. Iain MacDonald.

*Sub-group members during the past year have been : Linda Hagan, Stephen Hagan, Karen Rendall, Alison Hutchison, Iain MacDonald, Willie McEwen, Alena Tulloch.*

# Access to the Countryside: Core Paths, Pilot Project 2004

By Christine Skene working with the walks subgroup of the Westray and Papa Westray Tourist Association

A Path Network for Westray, Papa Westray and Sanday.

This pilot project is the first phase in the development of a core path network for the whole of Orkney. It will develop path networks on Westray, Papa Westray and Sanday – with the aim of improving countryside access for both local communities and tourists. The creation of a path infrastructure will be accompanied by the development of information for the public about the path network, countryside access in general, and the natural and cultural heritage of the islands.

The pilot project will involve the creation of new paths; upgrading of existing routes and linking these with new routes; the upgrading of existing vehicular access/parking facilities which service paths and amenity sites; and the creation of new parking facilities where necessary. It will develop unobtrusive signposting/waymarking for routes; interpretation of the walks, and their associated natural and cultural heritage through the provision of interpretation boards; guidance for walkers; and production of a walks leaflet for each island.

Spread across the three islands, the total proposed developments are:

New paths created – approximately 20 km of coastal footpaths

Upgrading of existing routes – approximately 21 km of existing footpaths will be improved by provision of gates/stiles; upgrading the path surface; clearing of overgrown routes; removal of obstructions; dangers and rubbish.

The resulting promoted path network, comprised of new paths linking with existing routes and quiet roads, to provide a series of mostly circular routes of varying lengths, will be more than 80km in length.

Upgrading of existing vehicular access/parking areas where these serve footpaths or beaches. Access to beaches is very important for visitors and locals, and in particular for less able people.

Provision of two new car parks, which will be viewpoints with picnic areas and also allow access to the shore. These will be facilities for people of all abilities.

Signposting/waymarking – approximately 25–30 wooden directional signs and waymarkers will be erected on the path networks

Interpretation boards – 9 A2 size interpretation boards will be produced and placed in various car parks which provide access to the paths. The boards will have a map of the route; information about the walk; guidance on responsible behaviour; and information about natural, historical and cultural heritage.

Walks Leaflet for each island – a leaflet will be produced with a map of the island showing all the walks and other attractions on the island. It will provide information about all the walks and what visitors will see while walking, as well as other useful information about the island.

The provision of a path network will provide long term benefits to the islands. It will encourage walking amongst the local population, improving health and the quality of life. Promotion of the path network will encourage tourists to come to these remote islands, and the additional activities provided by the new walks will encourage tourists to stay longer on the islands and therefore contribute more to the economy. Increased awareness of the natural environment will help people to appreciate and protect it. Well signposted and interpreted routes will reduce conflicts between farmers and access users and avoid confusion and frustration amongst walkers.

To ensure we provide access opportunities for all sectors of the community the project will provide:

- ✍ A range of walks of different lengths and difficulties. The type of path will be shown on interpretation and promotional materials.
- ✍ Vehicular access points close to popular recreational sites, especially beaches. Walking along a smooth sandy beach is a pleasant and easy option for less able people. By providing parking facilities close to beaches and ensuring access from the car park to the beach is easy, we can allow less mobile people to enjoy some of the beautiful places on the islands.
- ✍ Vehicular access points close to good viewpoints. By providing parking facilities and seating close to attractive viewpoints we can allow people of all abilities access to attractive areas.