

WRESTLING WITH SOCIAL VALUE: AN EXAMINATION OF METHODS AND APPROACHES FOR ASSESSING SOCIAL VALUE IN HERITAGE MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

Case Study Report: Dun Carloway Broch, Lewis

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Full acknowledgement and grateful thanks are given to all the individuals who participated in this study.



Image 1: External view of Broch with the Loch an Duin below



Image 2: Wall cavity with internal steps



Image 3: signage for Carloway township



Image 4: Back of Broch, showing green moss, with visitor standing on the wall

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1. Summary

The research informing this site report was conducted primarily over a period of four weeks spent on Lewis (one week in March and three weeks in May/June 2019). This case study used a rapid, co-designed approach. The aim was to identify the variety of communities and range of social values associated with the site.

The research identified a number of communities for whom the Broch was of value. These were not all people who regularly visit the Broch; its position in the landscape allowing for engagement from a distance.

Standing on a rise above Doune Carloway, the Broch is **part of the surrounding landscape**:

- Its **setting** – within a working croft and with views across the surrounding area – is critical to the experience of the site and links the monument to wider **narratives of place**.
- Respondents' displayed intimate **familiarity** with the setting and **sensitivity** to potential changes.

There is a sense of **ownership** of the Broch, largely not conceived in legal terms, but akin to **belonging**:

- It is a distinctive **symbol of community identity** (appearing on the Carloway flag and mirrored in the signage for the village).
- People are **proud** of the site and feel it is deserving of **attention and care**.

The Broch is a site of **physical interaction and activity**:

- Many people's memories of the site and primary engagements have been through childhood **exploration and play**, and it is a place that continues to attract and intrigue children.
- The multi-sensory experience (in particular **touch**) contributes to the sense of place.

The site is also somewhere people go to for **inspiration and reflection**:

- It is a place that sparks the **imagination** and a focus for **creative activities** (e.g. photography).
- At quieter times, it is somewhere people go for **solitude and peace**.

This report concludes with some implications of the findings, which may contribute to on-going discussions around the management of the site. Key points:

- There is a **complex** mix of priorities and values to be considered in managing the site, some of which appear to be contradictory or require contextualisation (e.g. climbing, interpretation).
- Changes to the **appearance** of the structure or **access** to the site are particularly sensitive.
- While **tourism** presents practical challenges, the recognition of significance, applied at various scales (village, Estate, Island), contributes to communities' sense of identity and 'place-making'.

2. Description of Site

Monument: Dun Carloway (Dùn Chàrlabhaigh) on the Isle of Lewis is an Iron Age broch that was probably constructed about the 1st century BCE and occupied initially until about 500 CE. Brochs are a type of circular roundhouse or tower construction unique to Scotland. Dun Carloway is a well-preserved example, with the back wall rising to a height of around 9 metres (see image 1). The partial collapse shows the double-walled construction technique and reveals the internal staircase that gave access to upper floors (see image 2).

Dun Carloway was in regular use after the initial phase of occupation, as a site for light-industry, a residence, and a shelter. In the 1600s, it was reportedly used as a refuge by members of the Morrison clan following a cattle raid on the local MacAuley clan. The Morrisons were smoked out with burning heather and parts of the building destroyed by the MacAuleys. However, it was still reportedly in use as a residence in the 1870s.

Setting: The Broch is set on a prominent knoll, South of the modern township of Carloway (Carlabhagh) and within the settlement of Doune Carloway (see image 5). The area surrounding Dun Carloway is worked croft land and contains other evidence of earlier phases of settlement, in the form of ruined 'blackhouses' from the 19th and 20th centuries, alongside modern occupied homes. The higher ground gives wide views of the hills, islands and sea that lie to the South and West, as well as elevated perspective on the settlement of Doune and Loch an Duin immediately below.



Image 5: The Broch silhouetted on the skyline above the crofts and houses of Doune Carloway. © Elizabeth Robson

Managing partners: The Broch is accessed via a path over common grazing land, which is managed by the local Grazing Committee. The site is owned by a community land owner, the Carloway Estate Trust ([Urras Oighreachd Chàrlabhaigh](#)). The Broch is a 'property in care of the state', one of the first monuments to be given such protection (in 1887), and is under the guardianship of [Historic Environment Scotland](#), promoted under the branding of 'Historic Scotland'. There is a small visitors centre by the car park (staffed by volunteers in the summer, closed in winter), which is managed by The Standing Stones Trust ([Urras nan Tursachan](#)). The site is free to visit, though visitors are asked for donations within the visitor centre.

3. Research Process

The research informing this site report was conducted primarily over a period of four weeks spent on Lewis (one week in March and three weeks in May/June 2019). This time was split between two sites, with Dun Carloway Broch being the more rapid of the two. In addition, approximately 3 days were spent on preparatory work, liaison and meetings in the preceding months (December to April).

The intention at this site was to conduct a rapid assessment using a co-designed approach. The Carloway Estate Trust had indicated in March that they were planning a community consultation process concerning the Broch site (the surrounding area and associated facilities rather than the monument itself). Following the Trust's proposal, activities in support of this study were incorporated into the June consultation day events, which were held in the community centre.

Specific research activities carried out as part of the study were:

- semi-structured interviews (5 respondents);
- community events (1) – broch consultation, invited stakeholder meeting and open forum; and
- participatory mapping, discussing why and when people visit the site and the feelings and activities that correspond with different locations (8 respondents) – conducted during the open forum.

These activities were complemented by a review of documents and online resources, and visits to the site (about twice a week while on Lewis) for observation. The draft Statement of Social Value was shared with community members during an open meeting (November), with updates incorporated before finalising.

4. Communities

The following ***communities of interest, identity and geography*** were identified during this study:

Members of the Community Estate Trust	Crafters
Local residents* in Doune Carloway	Artists/photographers
Local residents* in Carloway	Local children
Crofters	Local tour guides

This is not necessarily an exhaustive list and individuals may identify with more than one of these groups simultaneously or move between them depending on time and context.

* It was apparent during the study that temporary and more permanent (in and out) ***migration*** is a contemporary, as well as an historic, feature of life on Lewis. The periodic or regular movements of people mean that communities of interest and identity may be widely dispersed and 'resident' communities are more dynamic than might otherwise be assumed. Who is present may depend upon the time of year, particular activities, or personal factors, and who is considered a 'resident' can depend on the circumstances within which the discussion is taking place.

5. Findings

The designated area under guardianship of Historic Environment Scotland is quite tightly focused immediately around the Broch. The discussions informing this study related to the wider site, including the parking area, visitor centre, and paths up to/around the monument, as well as the surrounding environment.

5.1 Identity and Ownership – There is a sense of ***community ownership*** of the site that extends beyond those living in close proximity to the Broch.

- This was not articulated for the most part in legal terms, but more akin to **belonging** (i.e. the Broch is from or belongs to the place).
- The Broch is a distinctive **symbol of community identity** (appearing on the Carloway flag and mirrored in the signage for the village).
- There was also **pride** in the site and desire to see it receive the **attention and care** it deserves as a unique and special place.
- This was linked with feelings of **custodianship** and interest in **sharing** the site: “Want people to get joy of seeing the broch”.

5.2 Setting and Appearance – the Broch sits within a worked and dynamic, **living landscape** and this is important to how it is valued.

- Respondents’ displayed intimate **familiarity** with the setting and **sensitivity** to potential changes.
- This local knowledge highlighted **tensions** between local values and formal conservation practice.
- Respondents were interested in **engaging visitors more deeply** and meaningfully with the local area, sharing local knowledge and articulating the recent history of place (including crofting rights and community land ownership); linking the Broch to other sites in a coherent narrative of the island.
- The presence of the ‘blackhouses’ (possibly built in part from the Broch stones), provides a tangible **connection** between different periods of occupation and is considered “part of the experience”.

5.3 Physical Engagement and Activity – The ability to interact with the monument and explore the surrounding area are integral to the experience of the site.

- This includes multi-sensory aspects, for example related to **touch** - the elemental forces (such as the wind) and the physical interaction with the site (bending down to enter, the feel of the stones).
- Many people’s memories of the site and primary engagements have been through childhood **exploration and play**, and it is a place that continues to attract and intrigue children.

5.4 Inspiration and Reflection – Closely linked to physical experiences are the non-physical.

- Given that so many questions remain about the Broch and who built it, for children and adults alike it provides a place where they are free to **imagine**.
- The limited interpretation means that the site “speaks for itself”, allowing an **unmediated** personal experience and connection to place.
- It has inspired a variety of **creative activities**, including photography.
- At quieter times, the site as a place for **reflection and solitude**.

6. Implications

There is a complex mix of priorities and values to be considered in managing the site, some of which appear to be contradictory or require contextualisation.

The Broch is an important symbol of community identity and expression of belonging, set against a backdrop of historic community relocations and land insecurity.

- For these reasons, any limits placed on **access** to the site are highly sensitive.
- Communication is also critical, as some respondents felt that **local knowledge and interests have been disregarded** by managing agencies in the past.
- While increased **tourism** presents practical challenges, the recognition of significance at various scales (village, Estate, Island), contributes to communities’ sense of identity and ‘place-making’.

The Broch’s appearance and setting are integral to the sense of place but there are diverse views on how that should be interpreted and managed.

- The Broch is **highly visible**, being in an elevated location that can be seen from the main road (see map in Annex III). As such, changes to its appearance are much more **sensitive** than might otherwise be assumed and impact on communities beyond the neighbouring residents.
- Determining what is **appropriate** in 'caring' for the Broch depends on the values and knowledge being prioritised. Some forms of conservation intervention (for example, clearing of the moss growing on the outer wall) could be detrimental to other values.
- The desire to engage visitors more deeply and with wider narratives of place (potentially through increased or revised **interpretation**) would need to be balanced alongside the site's values as a place of **imagination** and unmediated exploration and reflection.

There are conflicting attitudes towards **climbing on the monument**. Feelings that it is disrespectful (and dangerous) were articulated alongside values associated with physical interaction - playing at the Broch was often shared as a common experience that is part of growing up in and belonging to the local community.

- The attitudes towards climbing on the Broch depend in part on the **context** and the extent of the **perceived risk** (to the structure or the safety of individuals). For many respondents, 'local' children playing within the monument, as their parents and/or grandparents had done, was considered acceptable, but the same behaviour by adult tourists was less so.
- This contextual negotiation of values results in concurrent expressions of concern over conservation and safety, while not wanting to see an overly bureaucratic or heavy-handed response that results in 'appropriate' activities and experiences being curtailed.

The strong association with children's enjoyment of the site and its capacity to inspire creativity and imagination suggests there is potential for stronger **links with schools and educational visits/resources**. Such linkages could support efforts to increase awareness of the site and explore wider the wider connections to place and community narratives that it raises.

Further Research:

The approach taken in this study was to engage with formally organised groups as an initial point of contact and then follow referrals to other individuals and activities. In terms of addressing the recognised **limitations in representation and scope**, complementary research could be conducted with:

- **Young adults** - the majority of the respondents were aged over 30-years. Parents and grandparents reflected on activities at the site by their school-age children but there was a gap in participation among young adults. They are likely to have been at work during the day, when many of the research activities took place or possibly away from the Island (for education or work).
- **Ancestral tourists** - the Broch is identified as a site connected to the Morrison Clan, both locally and online (see e.g. Scottish Field 2018). This study found no evidence that the Broch is currently the focus for any gatherings or Clan-related activities, but there was mention of overseas groups coming from Canada to 'find their roots'. Other ancestral tourism studies suggest that there is likely to be some interest in the site from this community (see e.g. research on Tiree by J. Rodgers).
- **Seasonality** - responses indicate that the season, weather, and time of day have an impact on the sense of place and activities at the site. Given the nature of this study, exploration of such variability was limited and could warrant further research.

Annex I: Statement of Social Value

This Statement is an attempt to illustrate the range of values associated with the Dun Carloway Broch site. Values are not static and are liable to change over time. In addition, this Statement is based on a limited number of inputs from individuals who do not claim to speak for or represent the views of their entire community. It should therefore be considered as indicative of the diversity of values for communities with interests in the site, rather than comprehensive or definitive.

Identity and Ownership: Although there are other brochs and duns on Lewis, they are not as well preserved or iconic as Dun Carloway.

- As a prominent and distinctive monument, it has become **symbolic of the immediate area**, appearing on the Carloway Flag that was developed by the Comann Eachdraidh Charlabhagh (now in the Museum nan Eilean at Lews Castle) and mimicked in the signage for the village (see image 3).
- One of the Island's top tourist attractions, the Broch also features in **wider Lewis and Western Isles** promotional materials (i.e. on the cover of the '2019-20 Explore The Outer Hebrides' guide produced by Visit Scotland).
- Some respondents from Doune Carloway expressed a strong proprietorial 'ownership', but there is a sense of **community ownership** that extends to members of the wider Estate and other communities of interest.
- This was not articulated for the most part in legal terms, but more akin to **belonging** (i.e. the Broch is from or belongs to the place).
- There is **pride** in the Broch and surrounding area - "Views are lovely, most wonderful in the world" - and wish for the site to be **cared for**: "understood, interpreted, and looked after".
- This was linked with feelings of **custodianship** and interest in sharing the site: "Want people to get joy of seeing the broch".
- Respondents saw an opportunity to **connect tourists more deeply** with the local history of the settlement of Doune and/or the wider area: "Lots of stories aren't told at all, the struggle for land, crofting rights, now on community owned land, it's the latest chapter"; "people are just visiting all different places, all different dates, and they don't add up to a coherent narrative".

Local Knowledge: There is an unchanging, ever-present and therefore **'everyday' quality** to the monument itself: "for anyone local... don't notice it's there".

- This apparent ambivalence, is in contrast to respondents' intimate familiarity with the area and suggests that, rather than occasioning special notice, the **monument is seen as part of the landscape** in which it is situated.
- The reuse of the stone in the neighbouring 'blackhouses' links the Broch with more contemporary occupation of the area as **part of a living and working landscape**, a link reinforced by the worked croft land around it. "Three families were living on that land below the broch, brothers and their families, built their houses with stones from the broch, and the stone dykes – just stones lying there".
- As a background presence, the Broch appears to have a 'constant' nature. However, respondents were also alert to potential **changes**: "There is rare moss on the side of it [the Broch]. Translates from Gaelic as 'goat beard moss', hard and rough, makes the broch its green colour. On another site [not managed by Historic Environment Scotland], all the moss was cleared off the stones, changed the look and character of it and locals were disappointed. They said it [the moss] was eroding the stones, but older people reckoned it protected them from the weather" (see image 4).
- The above quote illustrates the **tensions** between local knowledge and conservation practice, which were also raised in the context of the wider management of the site: "Officials think the locals don't know or don't take an interest in the archaeology, sensitive ourselves".

- Although respondents observed a surprising ‘lack of yarns’ and folklore associated with the Broch (perhaps due to multiple clearances of the surrounding settlements), there are **stories** associated with the area and official interpretations were evaluated against local understandings: “local tradition wouldn’t suggest it was the residence of a wealthy landlord”.

Physical Engagement and Touch: Being in contact with the monument - the “ability to get up close and personal”, crouching to enter, climbing the stairs, touching the stones, crawling into dark spaces - formed a key part of peoples’ experiences and appreciation of the site.

- People who had grown up locally or had younger children or grandchildren spoke of the Broch as a **place of play**: “When I was a kid I climbed on it”; “It was a favourite place to climb and play and hide and scare people... Tale of a tunnel to the loch. Used to look for the tunnel as children, so did my children probably, never found any sign of it.”
- As a result, the attitudes towards **climbing on the monument** were quite mixed. For some people it was “disrespectful”, for others children climbing on it was something that they didn’t want to lose.
- Described during the mapping as “**exhilarating**”, I can personally attest that the prominent and exposed position gets the full force of the wind and rain in stormy conditions.

Sense of Place: The Broch is a familiar presence and a place people return to repeatedly.

- It is a huge **statement in the landscape**, having ‘visual impact’ when viewed from the surrounding land and sea. In turn, its elevated position provides expansive views from the buildings of the settlement and croft land, to the mountains, loch and islands.
- People go there for **solitude** and “**space and time and calm**”. Local residents mentioned that they visit the site during quieter periods: “in the winter, in the evenings to see the sunsets, and at the weekend”. There are also cairns on the hill above, which are memorials.
- The location and fact the monument is man-made spark the **imagination** - “what happened to this rock before?” - which is linked with the aspects of play.
- It also inspires a variety of **creative responses**. As a focal point or backdrop it is used in film, photography (including wedding photography), and other **artistic and exploratory activities** include dousing and drone flying.

Annex II: Comparators and References

Population movements, including people moving onto the island from elsewhere, mean that who is considered part of the community is not a simple matter of residency and may vary depending on context. The **dynamic nature of community membership** has been explored in other studies, e.g. MacDonald 1997.

Although the site appears ‘constant’, it is subject to **processes of material change**, including weathering, surface growth of moss, and occasional dislodging of stones from the monument itself. There are also interventions that alter the surrounding land (such as new pathways) and conservation work to ensure the structural integrity of the Broch. This study identified sensitivities around past and perceived potential interventions at the site. As Douglas-Jones et. al. argue, “The specific values and qualities associated with material transformation are complex, situational and contextual” (2016: 823). The three case studies in their article illustrate that it is difficult to know which processes contribute to a sense of place and which detract from it without qualitative input from the communities that consider the site to be significant.

The ‘Social Overview’ in the current Historic Environment Scotland Statement of Cultural Significance for Dun Carloway (reviewed in 2004) focuses solely on the site as “a major visitor attraction”. This study has identified a range of values beyond this, but the site’s status as a tourist attraction is also a factor.

- **Tourists** were not a primary focus for this research, but respondents did indicate that the Broch was somewhere that they took ‘visitors’.
- It would be incorrect to assume that visitors and residents are always distinct and different or that residents (however defined) are the only ones for whom the site has social value. Tourism studies suggest a much more **complex and fluid interaction** in how different communities use heritage and historic environments as part of identity formation (see e.g. Ashworth 2003).
- It would also be incorrect to assume that residents’ interest in tourism is primarily as a source of revenue. As in other cases (see e.g. Hilton of Cadboll in Jones 2004: 46-47), this study found that tourists provided **recognition of importance** for an area that is often described by outsiders as peripheral. There was a desire among residents to provide visitors with a meaningful experience of the area’s heritage and to share local understandings of place.

The Hilton of Cadboll case also provides a useful comparator for other aspects, notably:

- The community feelings of non-proprietary **‘ownership’** and notions of **belonging** (of individuals and of monuments), to a community and to a place (Jones 2004: 49-50).
- The **tensions with national bodies** over control of the site and the “inaccessibility of knowledge and systems” (ibid: 51).

The Statement of Cultural Significance lists some of the **archaeological studies** that have been carried out at comparable broch and dun structures around Scotland. The last major investigation at Dun Carloway was in 1972 (see paper by Tabraham and Close-Brooks 1977).

References:

- Ashworth, G.J. (2003). ‘Heritage, Identity and Places: For Tourists and Host Communities’ in S. Singh, D.J. Timothy, R.K. Dowling (eds.) *Tourism in Destination Communities*. CABI Publishing: Willingford.
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- Jones, S. (2004). *Early Medieval Sculpture and the Production of Meaning, Value and Place: The Case of Hilton of Cadboll*. Historic Scotland: Edinburgh.
- Rodgers, J. (forthcoming) ‘Ancestral tourism and heritage work in a Hebridean island’ in T. Carter, D.C. Harvey, R. Jones and I.J.M. Robertson (eds.) *Heritage, Modernity and Practice*. Routledge: London and New York.
- Scottish Field, November 2018, ‘10 Places Clan Morrison Members Should Visit’, <https://www.scottishfield.co.uk/travel/scotland-travel/10-places-clan-morrison-members-should-visit/> (last accessed 17/07/2019).
- Tabraham, C., & Close-Brooks, J. (1977). Excavations at Dun Carloway broch, Isle of Lewis. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 108, 156-167. Retrieved from: <http://journals.socantscot.org/index.php/psas/article/view/8967> (last accessed: 24/09/2019).

Links within the text:

- Carloway Estate Trust (Urras Oighreachd Chàrlabhaigh): <https://www.carlowayestatetrust.co.uk/>
- Historic Environment Scotland’s Statement of Cultural Significance for Dun Carloway: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/dun-carloway/>
- The Standing Stones Trust (Urras nan Tursachan): <http://www.callanishvisitorcentre.co.uk/index.php/services>

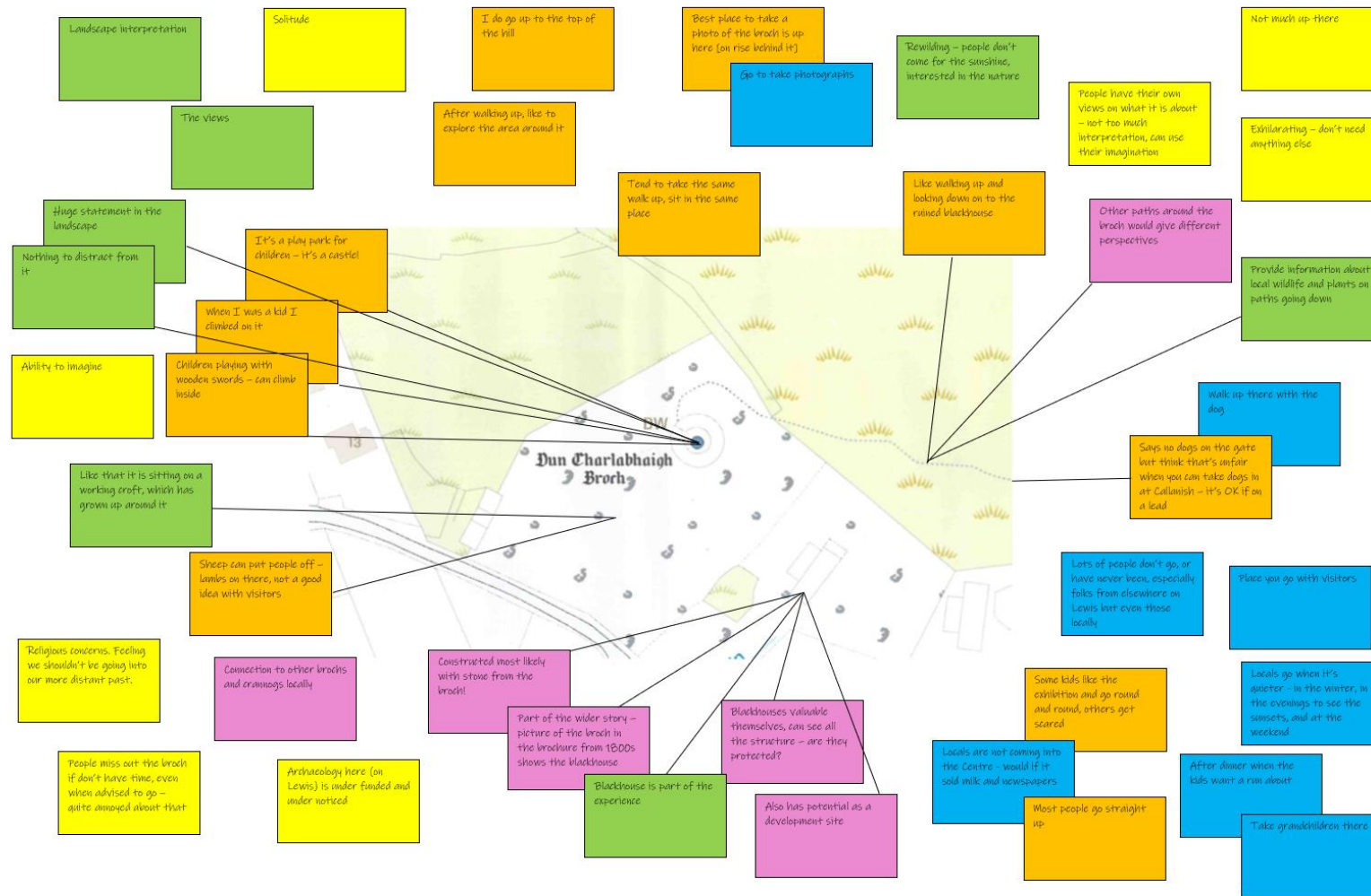
Annex III: Map of Location



Image 6: Map of local area, Broch and visitor centre are marked with blue symbols, the main road (the A858) is shown in red, black dots are records in Canmore (from where this map is taken, <https://canmore.org.uk/>) and include the Broch and neighbouring 'blackhouse'. The township of Carloway/Carlabhagh is just beyond Knock Carloway (top right).

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Annex IV: Composite Map



Colour code: Blue: Why and when people visit; Orange: Behaviours; Green: Landscape/Setting; Yellow: Feelings/Emotions; Pink: Connections to other narratives

Image 7: Output from the participatory mapping activity completed on 5 June 2019. Also available in pdf as a separate attachment.