

Bucksburn and Newhills Community Council

TOOLKIT

Housing Business and Local Facilities

Strengths (Green)

Housing:

Within the Bucksburn and Newhills area there is a complete mixture of the type of housing available, which is good. There are solid granite buildings in the central old part of Bucksburn around Gilbert Road and Malcolm Road, there are well designed semi-detached houses in the Hopetoun/Hopcroft Developments, There are substantial family homes (ex Council Housing in the main part) and smaller homes suitable for elderly, in the scheme around the Newhills Primary School site known locally as “the Wimpey's. There are also three “sheltered housing/ nursing type” complexes in Fairley Den, Cloverfield Grove and Bucksburn Nursing Home which cater for those no longer able to look after themselves.

Shops:

Shops are available on the main A96 as it passes through Bucksburn; at the Four Mile just off the A96 at Hopetoun Grange; at Sclattie Park and on Kepplehills Road. These shops tend to be convenience type stores and there does appear to be difficulty in keeping them open.

Library:

The local library is part of the secondary school at Bucksburn Academy. This is an important and well used facility where classes are often held helping the elderly to use computers, the teaching being undertaken by the schoolchildren themselves.

Community Centre:

The Beacon Community Centre is also now part of the Bucksburn Academy Complex. In this Centre there are many opportunities for people of all ages to partake in sporting activities.

Swimming Pool:

Also within the Bucksburn Academy Complex there is the Bucksburn Swimming Pool. This also appears to be widely used by the community in general. In fact many people from out-with the area travel to Bucksburn to use this facility.

Problems (Red)

There are very few business opportunities within the Bucksburn and Newhills Community Council area. Going back twenty/thirty years the vast majority of people in this area worked in the various papermills that surrounded the area mainly on the banks of the River Don. A fairly large number also worked in the Rowett Research Institution. This covered everything from farmworkers to scientists and was a good mixture for the area. A smaller number worked on the farms in the Newhills area but obviously the numbers working on farms now is seriously curtailed.

There is a need for small scale industrial development to prevent people having to travel long distances to work but perhaps it is felt that this is provided with the developments at Dyce and around the airport itself.

Schools:

The two primary schools in the area are due to be combined on the site of the existing Newhills School. There is concern in the community that with the existing and proposed housing developments at Mugiemoss Road that the site of the combined school will be too far removed for the children from this development. Local feeling is that there would be merit in keeping both sites as primary schools to allow for this future development.

Priorities

There is a definite need for more leisure type facilities within the area. The Community Council are trying to organise for a public park to be constructed between the Cloverleaf Hotel and Bucksburn Academy. Any assistance that the Local Authority can give in this regard would be appreciated.

When Bankhead Academy was closed a number of years ago, the recreation field football pitches were also closed. Unfortunately these pitches were also used by Stoneywood Amateurs, Bankhead Amateurs and Cloverleaf Amateurs every weekend. The intention was for pitches at the new school Bucksburn Academy to be made available to these amateur clubs but to date this has not happened. At present all of the clubs mentioned are having to play their "home" matches at Inverurie which is not satisfactory. This affects not only the players but also the spectators who normally enjoyed attending these matches. Either the clubs have to be allowed to use the school pitches or alternative pitches will have to be constructed. This is especially true at a time when we are trying to get people involved in sports activities and in this case we are depriving many of the opportunities that they previously enjoyed.

Bucksburn and Newhills Community Council

TOOLKIT

Architecture, Urban Design and the Historic Environment

Strengths (Green)

The strengths of our local area in this regard are the many and varied items that exist but it should be emphasised that very few of the local inhabitants are aware of these things, so they are not visited as often as they could or should be. This needs to be addressed. I have tried to itemise as many as I can. Although some of the sites are just outside the Community Council boundary they are mentioned since they are closely associated with the area.

1) Rifle Range on the lower slopes of Brimmond Hill where the remains of the butts are still visible.

2) Kepplehills School

3) Newhills Church (and cemetery): founded 1663 – celebrating 350th anniversary this year.

4) Freedom Land March Stones:-

▲ 38: at the point where the Gough Burn issues from Moss of Brimmond.

▲ 39 was 50m east of 38, on the opposite side of the road.

▲ 38 and 39: both now missing

▲ 40: drystone dyke south of 1 Christie Grange, Newhills.

▲ 41 and 42: by Hopetoun Reservoir, 42 is 175m east, and on the opposite side of the road from stone 41

▲ 43: north end of lock-ups to the rear of 1-4 Netherbrae.

▲ 44: west of the Bucks Burn (close to small bridge spanning the Burn) and on the line of the Chapman's Road.

▲ (The line of the road leads down to the site of the Chapman's Ford)

▲ 45: corner of the access road 35m from Newton of Auchmill

▲ 46: gable end of 104 Bonnyview Drive,

5 Waterloo Quay, Bucksburn – Port Elphinstone Canal

▲ Bottom dyke (of three) in the car park behind TSB (Scotland) may be the retaining wall of the canal.

▲ Bridge over the Bucks Burn (behind the Staging Post Public House) conceals another bridge below it. This earlier bridge may have carried the canal over the Bucks Burn. The newer bridge was likely built to allow Mugiemoor Road to access the railway goods yard).

▲ The land bank in the grounds of the Scottish Episcopalian Church in Bucksburn may be part of the canal groundworks.

▲ Canal milepost situated at the top of Mugiemoor Road.

6 Aberdeen Suburban Tramway: the site of the most northerly street tram maintenance depot in the British Isles is now occupied by the Bankhead Avenue Chinese Takeaway. Evidence is the tracks set in concrete behind the takeaway. (About 50 years ago the tracks were still visible in the back shop of the then fish and chip establishment). Also visible on the wall of the former Stoneywood Church opposite the takeaway is a hook used to tension the overhead wiring for the trams.

7 (Great North of Scotland) Railway

▲ The railway bridge spanning the Bucks Burn just north of the site of Bucksburn Station.

▲ The up platform at Bankhead Station is still extant. Originally called Stoneywood Platform, the stop was used by workers from Pirie's Mill (now Arjo Wiggins, Stoneywood Mill) from about 1865. From the 1st July 1887, the station was renamed Bankhead to coincide with the opening of the Aberdeen Suburban Railway ('The Subbies'). The station closed on 5th April 1937 on the cessation of the Suburban Railway service. (N.B: this site is just outside the Community Council Boundary).

8 Built Environment:

▲ Strathcona House: residential block at Rowett Research Institute

▲ Reid Library and the main building of the Rowett, which are both granite. (N.B: this site is just outside the Community Council Boundary).

▲ Granite buildings of Gilbert Road and Malcolm Road, Bucksburn (core of the former village).

▲ Tenements on Auchmill Road

▲ The now derelict site of the former Winstans Snooker Hall in Bucksburn. The old Shepherd's Hall, perhaps better known as the Argosy Ballroom, was also used as a cinema by the Glen Cinema Company (established 1936).

Problems (red)

The main problems facing the community relate to the fact that it is split by the A96. This means that, although there are some shops etc. still remaining in Bucksburn, the vast majority are closing down due to the lack of parking space. This same problem exists for residents who stay in properties fronting the A96. Many park their cars on the pavement, and although this does keep the traffic moving on the main road, it makes it very difficult for people pushing prams on the pavement. Probably due to these problems, buildings like the old snooker hall mentioned

previously, are falling into disrepair and nobody is prepared to start new ventures in them.

There is a shortage of hotels in which to hold functions within the area and it appears that one hotel has applied for planning permission to reduce its car parking and to remove its function suite to permit more bedrooms to be built. This is going to be detrimental to the area.

The two primary schools are about to be combined into one on the site of the existing Newhills Primary School. This is going to involve considerable lengthy travelling for some children, therefore there is a need for suitable footpaths and cycleways so that children can be encouraged to make their own way safely to school rather than being driven there.

Priorities (blue)

With the extent of building proposed for this area it is important that house builders take into consideration the history of this area. Until relatively recently the vast majority of the residents in Bucksburn were employed in the paper industry. The site of the mills in Mugiemoos is to be developed for housing. Every effort should be made to retain the character of the site as well as to build houses that people would want to live in.

Most residents in Bucksburn like the area and want to remain there. This means that in developing the area, there is a need for varying types of properties: for couples, for families, and for retired people, where shops and bus stops etc. can be easily accessed.

Bucksburn and Newhills Community Council

TOOLKIT

The Natural Environment

Strengths (Green)

Nicol et al (1996: figure 6), in a simplified land cover map, show that the Community Council area is primarily urban with agriculture and corridors of woodland. Newhills comes under Landscape Character #14 where the agriculture is classified as open farmland with drystone dykes/ post and wire fences and shelter belts (Nicol et al, 1996: figure 11 and page 61). Despite the proximity to the urban edge, the area still has a rural feel to it (Nicol et al 1996: page 62), with trees helping to ameliorate the urban edge.

This rural feel is further intensified by the visible rim of hills rising to above 150m, with Brimmond Hill to the west and Kirkhill to the north (Nicol et al 1996: figure 8). East of the River Don, the rural views continue with the Braes of Don (Grandhome) rising to a 90m plateau, an agricultural landscape which includes distinctive landmark woodlands e.g. Monument Wood, as seen from parts of the City (Nicol et al, 1996: page 41).

The built environment reveals that the core area of Bucksburn was developed c1900; with Bankhead from 1900 -1945 and Newhills from 1945 -1970 (Nicol et al, 1996: figure 9).

Problems (Red)

Much of the rural aspect of the Community Council area will be lost through proposed developments on the farmland of Greenferns Landward (OP31), Rowett South (OP30) and the land to the west of Hope Farm up to Newhills Church. This will leave only woodland corridors such as the Bucksburn Valley, the Howes, plus the Auchmill woodland and the odd pieces here and there e.g. Sc lattie Woodland and Dander Hill.

Within Planning Advice Note 65, important parts of a green space network include sports pitches. This area has lost, or is in the process of losing, valued and well used football/sports pitches. These include the Mugiemo ss football pitch, Bankhead Academy playing fields (still extant, but no facilities) and the Beacon pitches, home of Beacon Rangers. Bucksburn Academy has been built on the latter and the replacement facilities appear to be not regularly available to local teams who are now having to play their 'home' games at Westhill or Inverurie

Ironically, the Bucksburn and Newhills Community Council area includes the Auchmill Golf Course.

Priorities (blue)

Not only are new, easily accessible pitches a necessity in this area, but also a network of green space corridors. To promote these new areas, streams and dry valleys could be utilised to form a series of interlinking corridors. They need to be wide enough to produce useful habitats and to be attractive to residents. Developers will need to be discouraged from cutting across these sites as this will sever both the habitat (making it non-continuous) and public movement along and between them.

There is no park within the area at present. The Community Council is trying to develop the area of waste ground behind the shops at Sclattie Park and the Fairley Den Housing Complex as a park to be used by the locals. Any assistance that the Local Authority can give in this regard would be greatly appreciated.

REFERENCE: Nicol, I; Johnston, A; and Campbell,L (1996) Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen. SNH Review No 80.

Bucksburn and Newhills Community Council

TOOLKIT

Transport and Accessibility

Strengths (Green)

There is a varied path network in the area, which includes sections of the Core Path network. These paths can be used for both recreational use and to access employment opportunities. Examples of the Core Path (CP) network include:

CP 44: follows the Bucks Burn from the Police Station to Northfield via the Howes. A loop leads back to Newhills.

CP 42: a through, mainly rural route to Kingswells. A connection with Core Path 46 allows links to both Sheddocksley and an alternative way to Kingswells. The catchment for Bucksburn Academy includes Kingswells and CP 42 also provides a Safer Route to School for these pupils.

For employment opportunities, **CPs 9 and 38** lead to the Airport (West) and Craibstone (SRUC) respectively. The latter also accesses the routes within the Craibstone campus and leads to Brimmond and Elrick Hill.

The **A96** allows access to Inverurie, an alternative shopping centre to Aberdeen. It is important to note that, due to the difficulties experienced travelling from Bucksburn into town, many people choose to travel out to Inverurie to shop. The journey to Inverurie is quicker than travelling into Aberdeen and is a far more pleasant journey. This, however, is bad for businesses located in Aberdeen.

Problems (Red)

A947: traffic problems morning and evening rush hours, especially where the dual carriageway becomes a single carriageway passing through Stoneywood.

A96 (T):

1 Morning rush hour traffic backs up from Macdonald's Roundabout to the Four Mile Roundabout and on to the Airport Roundabout.

2 This is going to be exacerbated by the proposed CALA housing development at Craibstone (OP20), light commercial developments at the Rowett (North) site (OP28) and housing developments proposed for the Rowett (South) site (OP30 and OP 20), plus the housing developments at Greenferns Landward (OP31). To this has to be added the ongoing work at Stoneywood Estate (OP24) and the regeneration of the Mugiemoos (Davidson Mill) site (OP22).

With, perhaps, most of the traffic produced travelling within the City; the AWPR will likely **not** alleviate future traffic-related problems generated by these developments.

3 At evening rush hour, Auchmill Road traffic going into town often backs up from the Haudigain Roundabout to the Macdonald's Roundabout at Bucksburn.

4 Mugiemooss Road / Oldmeldrum Road junction plus the line of Mugiemooss Road has a long history of traffic problems, not all associated with the former Davidson Mill site.

5 CP 38 (south side of A96 (T)) care needed crossing the Forrit Brae / A96 (T) junction and at the entrance to Julie's Kitchen lay-by.

6 'Rat-running' on Hopetoun Grange with associated congestion at its junction with Sclattie Park and at the Bucksburn Four Mile Roundabout. *First* route 17 (Newhills) terminus is at Sclattie Park close to the roundabout which adds to the congestion at this point.

Forrit Brae: a narrow road used as a 'rat run', by cars, light vans and heavy goods vehicles. Occasionally 'unofficial surveys' show in the region of 50 vehicles using the road in 15 minutes.

Kepplehills Road: speeding traffic, especially past the Beacon Sports Centre, Library, swimming pool and Bucksburn Academy.

Bankhead Avenue: regular congestion as refuse vehicles access the recycling site at Sclattie Quarry and are held up by private vehicles using the site and (heavy) goods vehicles going to the small industrial estate. Congestion is compounded by inconsiderate on-street parking by non-local drivers at the junction.

Priorities (Blue)

Traffic management schemes to prevent speeding and 'rat-running' through housing developments as described previously.

A network of paths designed to set in place Safer Routes to School, access to facilities (Library, swimming pool and shops) plus attractive routes for walkers and cyclists of all ages and abilities. These will help to cement social cohesion between existing and new communities as per the *Designing Streets* brief.

Walking and Cycling

At the moment there are a good variety of walks in the area allowing access to the rural hinterland. Unfortunately, the volume of traffic on some of the single carriageway C-roads, e.g. Forrit Brae, means they are not advisable for walkers and cyclists in the parts without footpaths. Future proposed developments, e.g. at Craibstone and at the Rowett will adversely affect some of the

popular walking and cycling routes in the area. Though some are Core Paths, and hence a material consideration in planning applications, the rural nature of the walks will be lost. Attractive alternative routes should be considered to mitigate the loss of these walking and cycling routes with new lines being promoted throughout new developments. Using *Designing Streets* as a template, communities should be given a sense of place and a local distinctiveness. A grid of attractive routes for walkers, cyclists of all ages and abilities and the less able can connect these communities internally, increasing social cohesion, and to link them with neighbouring communities. This is also important for Safer Routes to School, to access local facilities and amenities and to public transport.

Public Transport

During the day there are regular services on Routes 17 (Newhills) and 18 (Dyce). People from Newhills adversely comment on no day time through route to Dyce.

Conversely, people from Dyce, Stoneywood and Bankhead are happy that they do not undertake a 'tour of city and suburbs' round Newhills when travelling to and from the City Centre. The late evening service (17A) is only half-hourly and takes in Newhills on its way to Dyce.

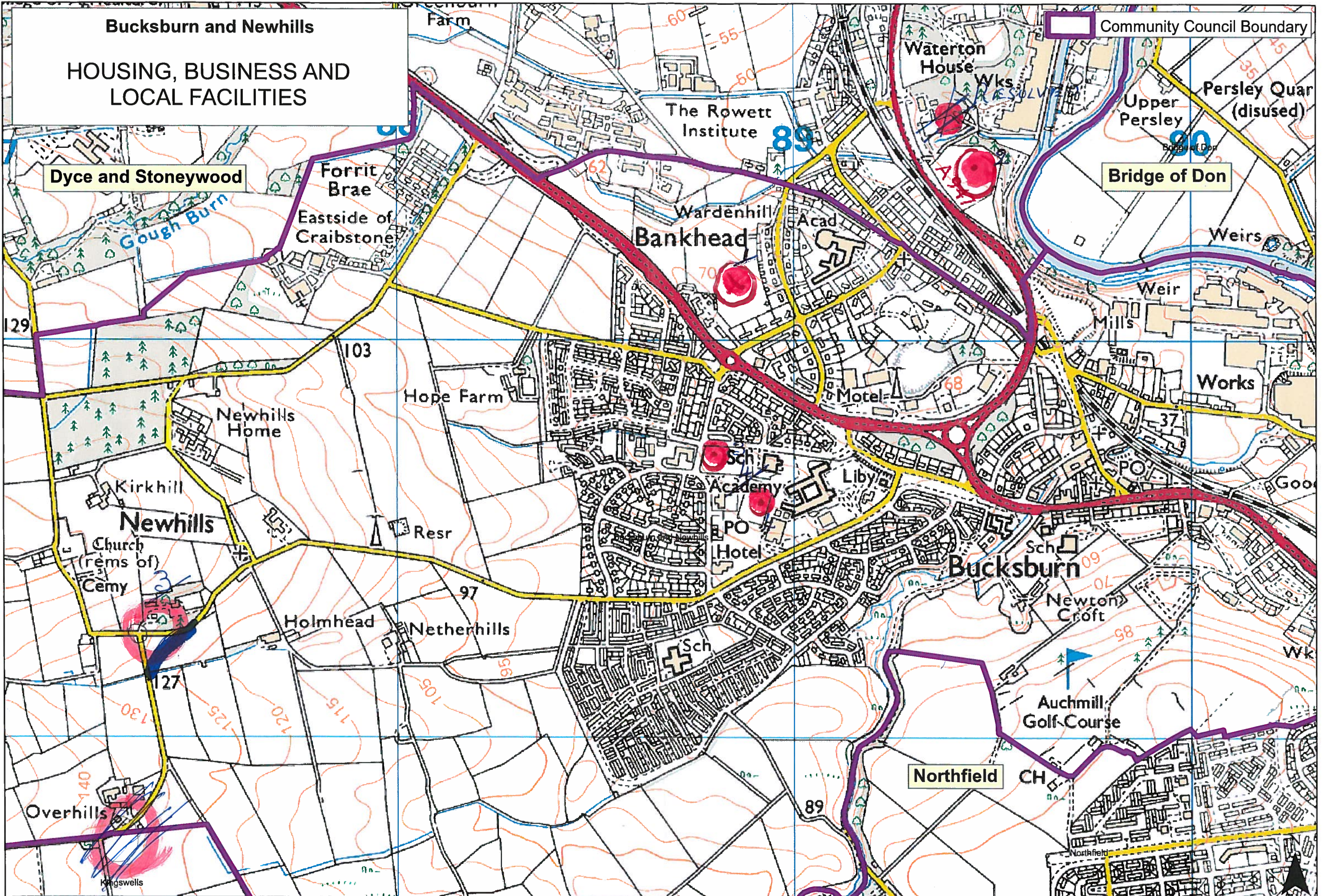
Stagecoach routes 37 and 37A (Aberdeen to Inverurie) are also available, with the latter giving a twice hourly service to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary during the day. The Aberdeen Airport link route 727 (Jet) provides an express service from Bucksburn to the City Centre.

There are increasing calls for the reinstatement of the former suburban railway station at Bucksburn to ease the traffic congestion in the area. This is going to become much more important with the extensive housing developments proposed for Bucksburn, Newhills, Craibstone, Stoneywood, Mugiemoos and Grandhome since the vast majority of traffic generated from these developments will pass through Bucksburn en route for the City. A railway station at Bucksburn would greatly assist in reducing the volume of traffic.

Bucksburn and Newhills

HOUSING, BUSINESS AND LOCAL FACILITIES

Community Council Boundary



Dyce and Stoneywood

Forrit Brae
Eastside of Craibstone

Bankhead

Bridge of Don

Newhills

Bucksburn

Northfield

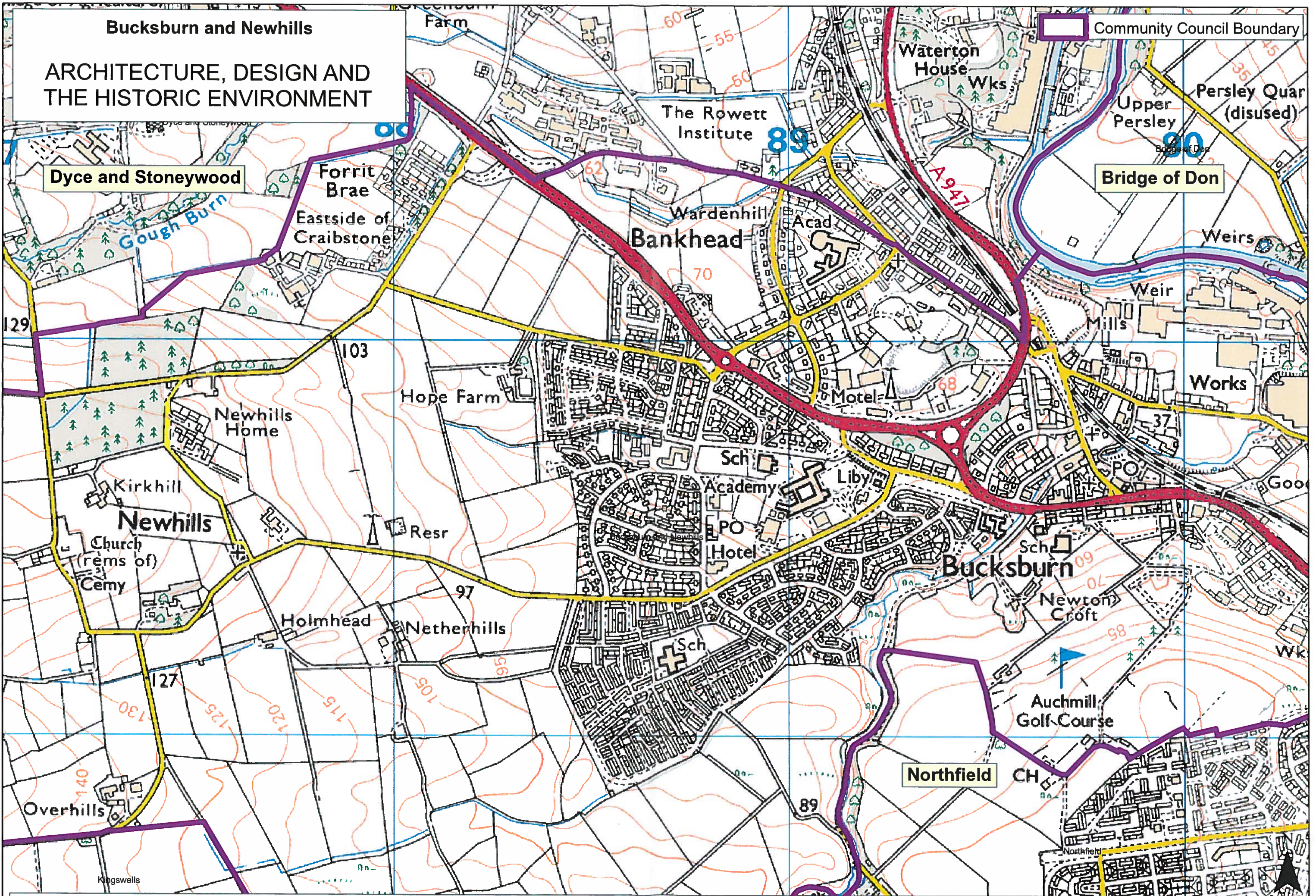
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Bucksburn and Newhills

ARCHITECTURE, DESIGN AND THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

 Community Council Boundary



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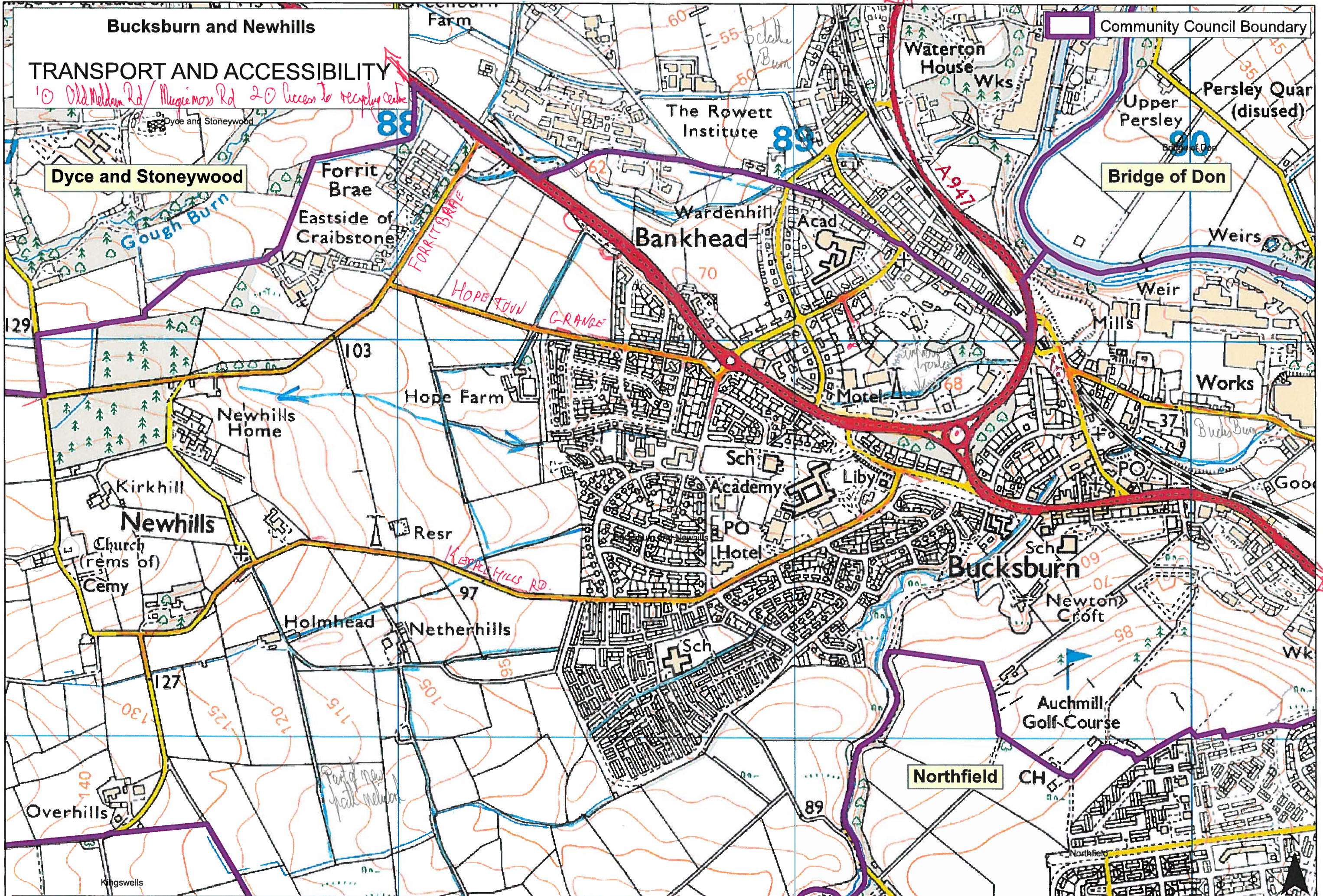
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Bucksburn and Newhills

TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

1. Old Meldrum Rd / Mugie Moss Rd 2. Access to recycling centre

Community Council Boundary

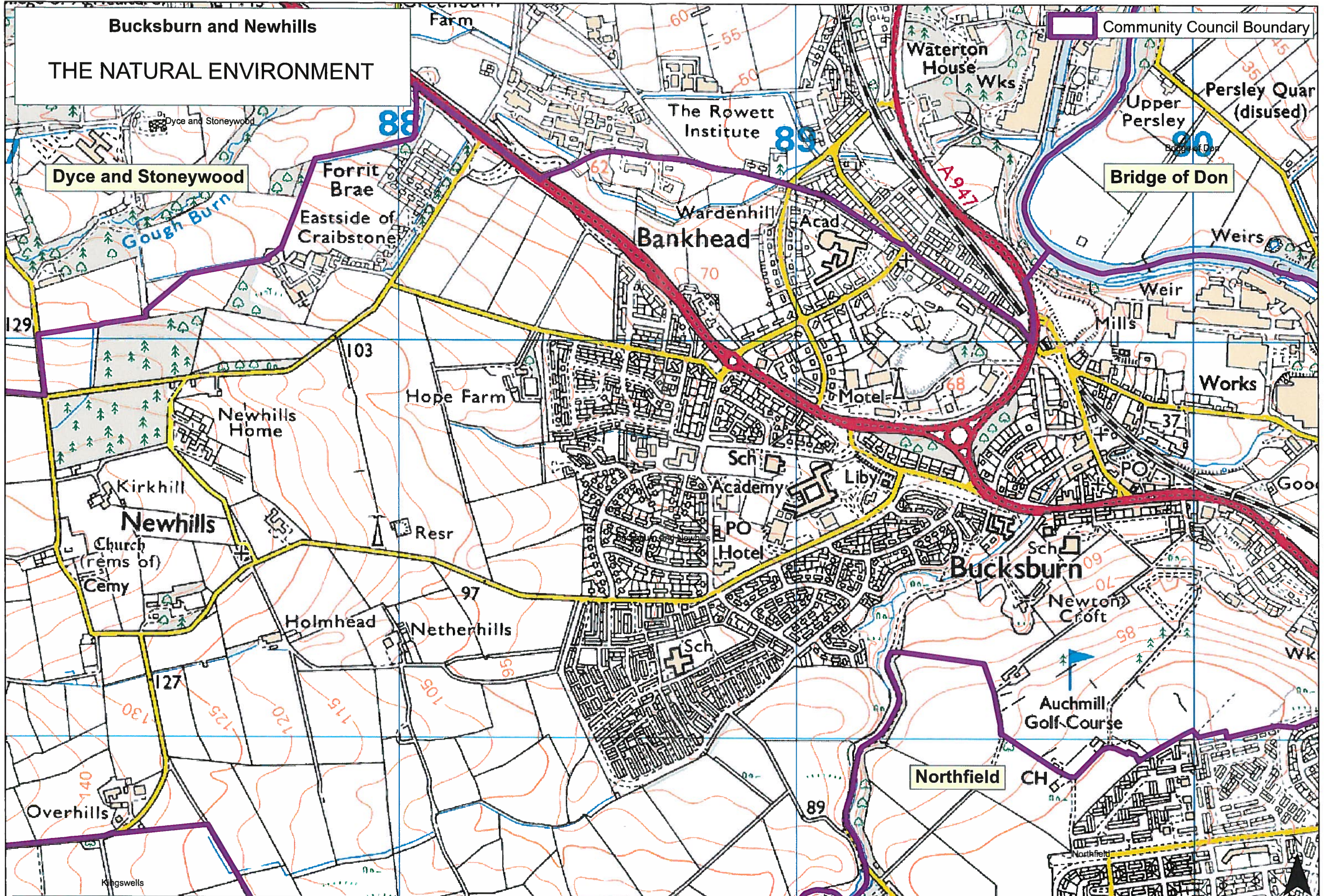


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Bucksburn and Newhills

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



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Bucksburn and Newhills : Likes



Old Canal Wall



granite buildings



the bucks burn

Bucksburn and Newhills : Likes



flowerbeds



Donder hill



granite tenements



Gilbert Rd houses

Bucksburn and Newhills : Likes



Old Inverurie Road Houses



Bucksburn Academy

Bucksburn and Newhills : Dislikes



Former Snooker Hall



Britannia Hotel need more of these facilities



Old railway Bridge



A96

Bucksburn and Newhills : Dislikes



Mugiemoss rat run