

Arran Public Drop-in feedback – collated and summarised

The below is a summary of the feedback received during two FLS public drop-in days on Arran in September 2025. The events were held in Brodick and Whiting Bay over two days and were attended by approximately 80 residents. Not all comments and feedback were legible, but FLS believes the summary is an accurate representation of comments and feedback received over the two days.

This feedback will be used to help inform decision making.

General timber transport feedback

1. Please rate what you think the **current impact of timber haulage** is on the day-to-day community and businesses on Arran.

Negligible				Significant
1	2	3	4	5
33%	33%	25%	9%	0%

2. In your view, **where** are the main impacts of timber haulage on Arran.

Brodick	44%
The String Road	22%
All over	22%
Lamlash	11%
Other	0%

3. In your view, **what** are the main impacts (if any) of timber haulage on Arran? (%s of respondent that selected the impact)

Damage to public to roads	87.5%
Frequency of lorries	29.0%
Congestion caused by lorries	12.5%
Speeding	1.0%
Schools	0.5%
Other	0.0%

Summary of general timber export comments on Arran:

Overall Sentiment

- Broad agreement to **maintain current arrangements**, with improvements focused on efficiency and minimizing community impact.
 - Strong preference for **industrialized sites like Brodick**, not scenic or tranquil areas.
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Key Points Raised

1. **Support for Status Quo**
 - Current system works well; avoid unnecessary changes.
 - Market Road in Brodick is effective—expand there if needed.
 2. **Efficiency Improvements**
 - Maximize existing infrastructure and export point.
 - Consider 24-hour operations to move timber during low-traffic periods.
 - Keep trucks on forest roads longer to reduce public road use.
 3. **Community Considerations**
 - Avoid upsetting residents in Kingscross; Brodick residents also shouldn't bear extra burden.
 - Do not develop unsuitable or scenic areas (e.g., Kingscross).
 4. **Alternative Ideas**
 - Encourage local timber use—e.g., community sawmill.
 - Explore ways to reduce export need by using timber on Arran.
 5. **Future Outlook**
 - By the time contingency facilities are built, export demand may decline.
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Recurring Themes

- **Stick with Brodick:** Industrialized, proven, and expandable.
- **Minimize disruption:** Keep operations efficient and away from sensitive areas.
- **Explore local timber use:** Reduce reliance on export.

Summary of general comments received about timber road haulage on Arran:

Key Points Raised

1. **Concerns**
 - Timber trucks are damaging roads.
 - Avoid sending timber lorries down Ross Road during Arran Farmers Show.
 - Consider smaller lorries to reduce road impact.

2. **Suggestions**

- Revisit Machrie as an alternative export point to reduce haulage distances.
- Use additional ports if it minimizes road impact.
- Add more road signs advising care for safety.

3. **Positive/Neutral Views**

- Some believe there is no significant impact; timber transport works fine.
 - Seen as a “necessary evil” for forestry operations.
 - Trust expressed in FLS to balance needs of island, people, and nature.
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Recurring Themes

- **Road wear and safety** are the main concerns.

Summary of the comments on the SWOT analysis for Brodick as the only export point

Overall Sentiment

- Strong consensus that **Brodick is the best and most suitable location** for timber export from Arran.
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Key Points Raised

1. **Support for Brodick**
 - Works efficiently, no bottlenecks observed.
 - Adequate capacity, especially with slipway and new ferries.
 - Located in an established industrial/commercial area.
 - Existing infrastructure should be further developed (storm-proofing, capacity increase).
 - Keeps timber movement away from public roads and minimizes disruption.
 2. **Criticism of SWOT**
 - “Bottleneck” entry considered inaccurate.
 - Analysis perceived as slanted and not comprehensive.
 3. **Alternative Options**
 - Machrie was considered the best option by some, but rejected due to local opposition (nimby-ism).
 - Some argue for **multiple export points** to reduce road miles and improve flexibility.
 4. **Operational Observations**
 - Brodick currently functions without traffic or ferry interruptions.
 - Investment and development should continue at Brodick rather than splitting resources.
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Recurring Themes

- **Efficiency & Capacity:** Brodick is already effective and can handle more.
- **Location Advantage:** Industrial area, minimal public impact.
- **Future-proofing:** Upgrade for storm resilience and higher throughput.
- **Skepticism about SWOT accuracy:** Seen as biased and not reflecting real conditions.

Summary of the comments on the SWOT analysis for “Whitefield Farm as a secondary export point

Overall Sentiment

- **Strong opposition** to Whitefield Farm as a secondary export point.
 - A few supportive comments citing job creation and diversification, but these are outweighed by environmental and community concerns.
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Key Points Raised

1. Arguments in Favor

- Could create more permanent jobs and boost local economy.
- Existing noise from fish farm suggests additional noise may be manageable.
- Some urge not to let “nimby-ism” block development.

2. Major Concerns

- **Noise Impact:** Significant worry about noise affecting Kingscross, Lamash Bay, and especially Holy Isle (a place valued for peace and meditation).
- **Visual Impact:** Industrial development would spoil scenic views and rural character.
- **Environmental Damage:** Loss of farmland, harm to wildlife (land and marine), and disruption of rural communities.
- **Traffic & Safety:** Poor road access, hazardous junctions, narrow roads with sharp bends, and proximity to residents.
- **Holy Isle Sensitivity:** Noise assessment seen as inadequate; very low noise levels are essential for its spiritual purpose.
- **Cost & Necessity:** No proven need for extra export capacity; Brodick already successful. High construction and maintenance costs for little gain.

3. Perception of SWOT

- Some felt the SWOT was fair in noting strong opposition.
 - Others criticized it as slanted or not comprehensive.
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Recurring Themes

- **Whitefield is the wrong location:** Non-commercial area, high environmental and social impact.
- **Noise and visual intrusion:** Core reasons for opposition.
- **Safety and infrastructure limitations:** Roads unsuitable for heavy timber traffic.
- **Alternative exists:** Brodick already meets needs effectively.

Summary of the comments on the SWOT analysis for In-forest haulage road from Dyemill to Brodick

Overall Sentiment

- **Mostly positive:** Many see this as a logical, beneficial solution.
 - Some uncertainty and skepticism about feasibility and suitability.
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Key Points Raised

1. **Supportive Views**
 - Great idea and opportunity; considered the most logical route for timber transport.
 - Reduces use of public roads, minimizing noise and traffic impact on residential areas.
 - Offers long-term benefits: potential tourism use and improved forestry network.
 - Likely lower cost than Whitefield Farm development.
 - Seasonal impact expected to be minimal due to mild climate.
 2. **Concerns & Caveats**
 - Must manage development carefully in **SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest)** areas.
 - Terrain challenges could make construction difficult.
 - Some doubt it will ever happen or question suitability of the route.
 - Should not be used as a “sweetener” to justify Whitefield Farm development.
 3. **Additional Considerations**
 - Cost comparison with Whitefield Farm requested.
 - Historical reliance on Lamlash noted; some suggest continuing if needed.
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Recurring Themes

- **Positive legacy:** Seen as beneficial for forestry and tourism.
- **Environmental care:** Development must respect habitats and sensitive sites.
- **Practicality:** Logical solution but requires careful planning and cost analysis.

Other comments received – general and related to visitor services

Overall Sentiment

- **Strong opposition to Whitefield Farm development** continues.
 - **Preference for Brodick and forest road solutions.**
 - **Community priorities** include better visitor services, improved signage, and local timber use.
 - Concerns about **costs, transparency, and environmental impact** remain dominant.
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Key Themes from Additional Feedback

1. Visitor Services (VS) & Access

- **Good:** Appreciation for access and heritage sites (e.g., Giants Graves).
- **Bad:** Blocked paths not cleared for years; poor signage (e.g., North Sannox, Dunan Mor/Beag).
- **Suggestions:**
 - More information on routes and better waymarking.
 - Join up forestry roads for tourism and biking.
 - Develop an integrated forestry road system (similar to Tweed Valley) for mountain biking and leisure—seen as a potential employment source.
 - Improve accessibility and work with Visit Arran.

2. Consultation Process

- **Good:** Drop-in events appreciated.
- **Bad:** Poor advertising; concerns about whether consultation is genuine.
- **Suggestions:**
 - Hold more events and improve promotion.
 - Increase transparency in decision-making and contract management.

3. Timber Export

- **Good:** Support for Brodick and in-forest road options.
- **Bad:** No perceived benefits in WFF proposals; high costs and environmental damage.
- **Suggestions:**
 - Continue export via Brodick; consider 24-hour operations.
 - Build forest roads to reduce public road use and leave a tourism legacy.
 - Avoid development at Kingscross; invest in Brodick instead.

4. Local Timber Use

- Encourage use of Arran timber for affordable housing, woodland crofts, and possibly a small processing plant on the island.

5. Environmental & Cultural Concerns

- Protect tranquil areas like Kingscross and Holy Isle.
- Avoid converting good farmland to forestry.
- Consider indigenous planting and maintain paths.

- Note cultural heritage (e.g., carved stone on beach).
 - 6. **Operational & Safety Issues**
 - Hazardous junctions and narrow roads flagged again.
 - Acoustic barrier design concerns (wind loading).
 - Maintain access to private moorings near fish farm.
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4. **Recurring Themes Across All Feedback**

- **Cancel WFF plans:** Seen as costly, unnecessary, and damaging.
- **Focus on Brodick:** Expand existing facilities and optimize operations.
- **Develop forest road network:** Reduce haulage impact and create tourism opportunities.
- **Improve visitor infrastructure:** Better signage, connected trails, and mountain biking routes.
- **Increase transparency:** Genuine consultation and clear economic justification.
- **Promote local timber use:** Affordable housing and small-scale processing.