

Hawick Campervan Welcome

**Year 1 Pilot Project 2012
Monitoring and Evaluation Report**

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1. Background

The Hawick Campervan Welcome initiative generated from tourists arriving in Hawick Common Haugh car park in Campervans looking for facilities to stay one or two nights to stop shop and explore in Hawick.

Consultation/discussions took place during 2011/12 in connection with the practicalities of putting together a formal plan for 2012/13. The following bodies were consulted and it was agreed at the Teviot & Liddesdale Area Committee that a pilot project over 2 years 2012/13 commence offering free overnight limited stays.

Glossary of terms:

Teviot & Liddesdale Area Committee
SBC Planning & Economic Development
SBC Councillors
Hawick Provost
Events Scotland
Campervan Scotland
Hawick Welcome Initiative
British Caravanners Club Scotland

2. 1st Year Pilot Project Delivery

a. Progress to date

Hawick Welcome Initiative are encouraged by the interest of campervan users during the 2012 season and look forward to continuing the pilot project in 2013.

The season was slow to start due in the main to the following:

- 1) Delay in designated painted areas due to Planning Permission
- 2) Inadequate signage and advertising of facility

Awareness of the project did increase after UK Motorhomes Net put an article on their website regarding the free overnight facility:

“Hawick has the first official stopover in Scotland (22/5/12)

Hawick in the Scottish Borders, has dedicated spaces in one of it's car parks for campervans to stay overnight. This is a 2 year trial which, if successful, will be made permanent. There are toilets and fresh water available.

The scheme operates from Easter to the end of September, stays are limited to one night and are free. It is not possible to stay on Friday nights because there is a Saturday market. Campervans will also not be able to stay in a 2 week period at the beginning of June each year because the site is used for a 2 week fair. It was instigated by the Hawick Welcome Initiative”

Testimonial from UK Motorhome website user

“Hawick (Scottish Borders) is the greatest. We were welcomed at the car park by a lady from the Local Authority telling us that they encouraged overnight parking of vans free of charge, with excellent bays right by the river. Available any night except Fridays and the first 2 weeks of June as there are major events in town. There is even a leaflet entitled Hawick Campervan Welcome. This must be the first time we have ever felt welcome in any car park anywhere. It is usually indifferent or hostile. Deserves to be publicised to help the economy. ”.

b. Statistics

Weekly usage of overnight campervans stays

Week Commencing	20/4/2012	3
	27/4/2012	1
	04/05/2012	6
	11/05/2012	2
	17/05/2012	2
	24/05/2012	4
Closed 2 weeks	Common Riding	
	22/06/2012	9
	29/06/2012	5
	06/07/2012	4
	13/07/2012	7
	20/07/2012	10
	27/07/2012	14
	04/08/2012	11
	10/08/2012	8
	17/08/2012	11
	24/08/2012	21
	31/08/2012	14
	7/09/2012	10
	14/09/2012	10
	21/09/2012	3
Total		155

These figures are for campervan users who stayed overnight and were welcomed by the Hawick Hosts. Figures do not include campervan users who parked during the day and moved on.

c. Benefits - Local Spend

Several comments were made on local spending during visit. On average an estimate of £50 per campervan per stay= £7750.

3. Service Delivery

The project was managed/supported by the four Hawick Hosts. There has been a steady flow of testimonials via email and from feedback on the Hawick Welcome Initiative questionnaire.

A snapshot of some good feedback:

a) Questionnaires

- 1) *Steve and Debbie Ancell – Portslade – “appreciated the friendly welcome. Spent £250 during our stay “Brilliant Hawick”.*
- 2) *John Bruce – Roker “thank you for letting us stay. Hawick Sings in Burns Club most enjoyable”.*
- 3) *French family – St Julians France – Enjoyed Hawick will come again.*
- 4) *Graham Russell – Edinburgh – Spent £69.78 (in local shops).*
- 5) *Les Symonds – North Wales. Enjoyed Hawick Sings and will visit again.*

b) Emails

6) **Thomas (Switzerland)**

“I am sitting in my motorhome in your campground integrated in the big parking in the idle of your town. It is my need to tell you that I am not used to getting so warmly welcomed to a town like yours.

I had not levelled by RV as Jake came, welcomed me and gave me a prospective of your town. Once installed I recognised that I even have a free of charge hot spot which is always something important on a trip. I could work “at home” and do all the homework, answering letters, making payments etc.

Jack asked if I had a quiet night, and indeed it was very quiet I stay now one day more in your beautiful town.

I am not used for such a noble service in England, France and Italy is much more alert for campers. I am by the way from Switzerland where we do have very much campers as the weather is more like yours.

One little thing what is a big thing for us campers would be electricity”

7) **Terry and Cynthia (Dorset)**

“We drive a campervan and were welcomed by Vicki at one of your car parks. She explained the facilities available in a most helpful and friendly way. An excellent ambassador for the town.

We congratulate you on the Hawick Campervan Welcome initiative and will do our best to publicise it. This must be the first time we have ever felt welcome in a town car park. We are often met with indifference or even hostility. We frequently encounter height barriers, we tend to move on to spend our money elsewhere.

4. Complaints

The Hawick Hosts monitored the project daily to ensure the campervan users were satisfied with the service. The following is feedback from a couple of complaints and one from the Saturday Market Provider.

1) Meiklejohn – Kilmacolm

“Boy racers went on till late. Stopped and played very loud music and started kicking a ball about. Reported this but will visit Hawick again. “

2) *An anonymous campervan user complained to Visit Scotland about feeling unsafe with the boy racers. This was emailed to HWI secretary and forwarded to the Community Police - action has been taken and it is hopeful that this will not occur in 2013.*

3) *Email received from SBC Estate Management following a complaint about some campervans parking on Friday nights and refusing to move early Saturday mornings.*

Hawick Welcome Initiative looked into this problem and as a result our signs were removed and will be altered for 2013 incorporating the No parking on Friday evenings. No amendment was required on the website and advertising material. An apology has subsequently been sent to SBC for the market site operator.

5. Conclusion

The following points have been raised by campervan users which will require to be discussed for the Pilot Project 2013.

- 1) Electricity – in most overnight sites in France charge 1 euro per night also 1 euro for water.
- 2) Waste Disposal
- 3) Toilets

It is Hawick Welcome Initiative's intention to plan and implement a new website which will incorporate a Campervan link. This campervan project will also feature in the 2013 Hawick Welcome Brochure which will be available from Easter 2013.

To conclude, the service has been deemed a success as a pilot and has huge potential to increase tourism awareness of Hawick Town, its facilities and a boost to the economy. However funding will be required to manage and support the project and increase awareness through additional marketing and improved publicity and project management.