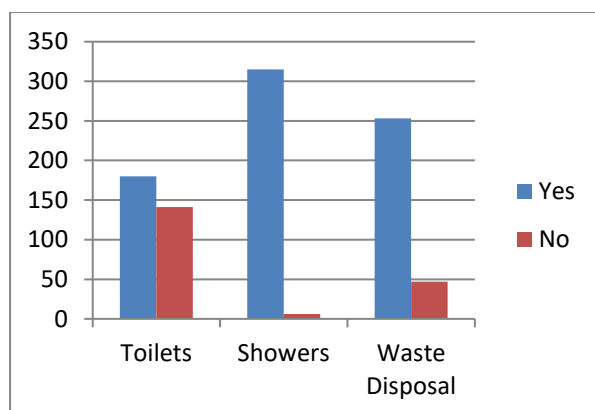


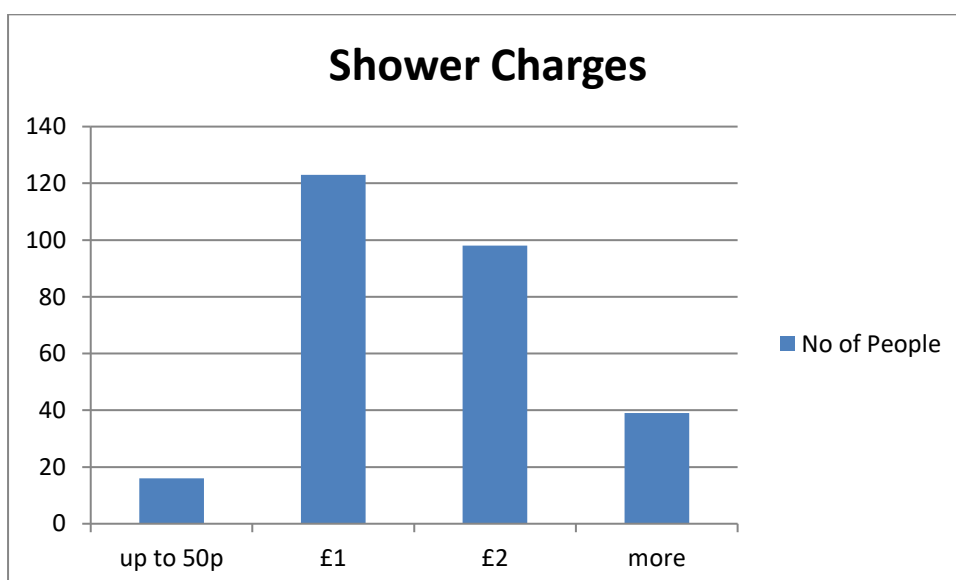
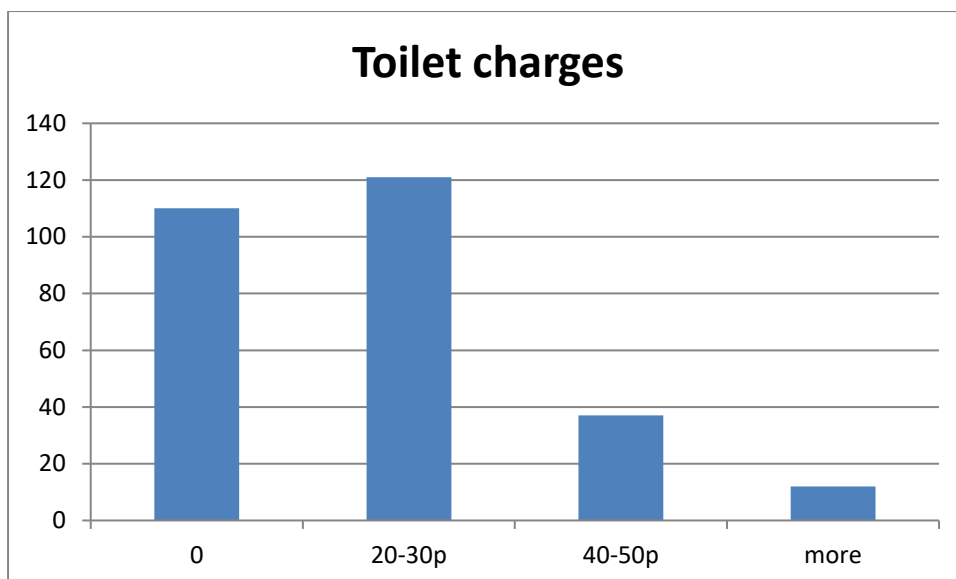
## IMPROVEMENTS TO VISITOR FACILITIES LOCALLY

Thanks to all those who completed our survey last month. A total of 354 responses were returned, and this has given us some really useful information to work with. You can access the full survey results online from <http://www.mmcca.btck.co.uk/news> .

We have now submitted our application to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF). Unfortunately, as the budget was limited, and there are still ongoing issues over access, we had to remove the potential new facilities at Morar, and concentrate on refurbishing Traigh (toilets only), and the new build at Mallaig (toilets, showers, fresh water and campervan waste facilities). We have applied for almost the maximum (£299,460) from RTIF and are in the process of putting together a LEADER funding application for another £120,000, and looking at other funding sources for some smaller amounts to allow us to make the project as effective as possible. We still have a lot of work to do between now and 5<sup>th</sup> September to get all the permissions and formal quotes etc. in place but we're over the first hurdle! We won't hear whether our bid has been successful until October, and while we would love to be able to complete the works over the winter and have both facilities up and running for next season, we know this is optimistic.

We asked in the survey whether we should charge for facilities and if so, how much, and the following graphs show the answers people gave:





By far the majority of people thought 20-30p reasonable for toilets, and we've used this to inform our business plan. We would have loved to charge 20p, but unfortunately, we don't think that this will cover the costs of operating the toilets (electricity / cleaning / toilet rolls / insurances etc.) and so we think we will have to charge 30p and £2 for showers. If anyone would like to see a copy of the business plan submitted with the funding application, please ask your local community council.

There were some really useful comments submitted with the surveys, not just about toilet facilities, but about facilities in general. Lots of people commented on the lack of parking, and the lack of litter bins. While this is not something we can control, the comments all add weight to our discussions with The Highland Council. There were also lots of suggestions for a French-style aire – a relatively inexpensive space with hard standings, electrical hook-ups and washroom facilities for campervans, and this is something that the community councils or local community Trusts could consider in the future. It was suggested that we look at the West Harris Trust model, <http://www.westharristrust.org/camping/> where five spots have been identified to prevent the roadside from erosion, and again, this is something we might be able to look at in the future. West

Harris Trust have the benefit of owning their land, whereas lots of the trouble spots around this area are on private land, and we would have to work with the landowners to develop these.

It was also clear from the survey that, while as locals we have all had frustrations with what we consider inconsiderate behaviour from visitors, the majority of visitors to the area feel just as strongly about protecting the area as we do, and that, as is often the case, the minority are spoiling it for everyone. We do need to welcome visitors to the area, and hopefully providing better facilities will help alleviate some of the existing issues.

Arisaig, Morar and Mallaig Community Councils