



Your Town Audit: Troon

June 2023

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TOWNS
PARTNERSHIP

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Report produced by:



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For: South Ayrshire Council

1. Understanding Scottish Places Summary

This report presents a summary of the Your Town Audit (YTA) for Troon, conducted by Scotland's Towns Partnership and EKOS. The detailed YTA Framework and Data Workbook are provided under separate cover.

The YTA was developed to provide a framework to measure and monitor the performance of Scotland's towns and town centres using a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). It provides a comprehensive audit of Troon with data on up to 180 key performance indicators across seven themes – Locality, Accessibility, Local Services, Activities + Events, Development Capacity, Tourism, and Place + Quality Impressions.

In total, 45 YTA audits have been prepared for towns across Scotland providing consistent data across the range of KPIs. Where appropriate, this report provides comparisons for Troon against the YTA town average¹.

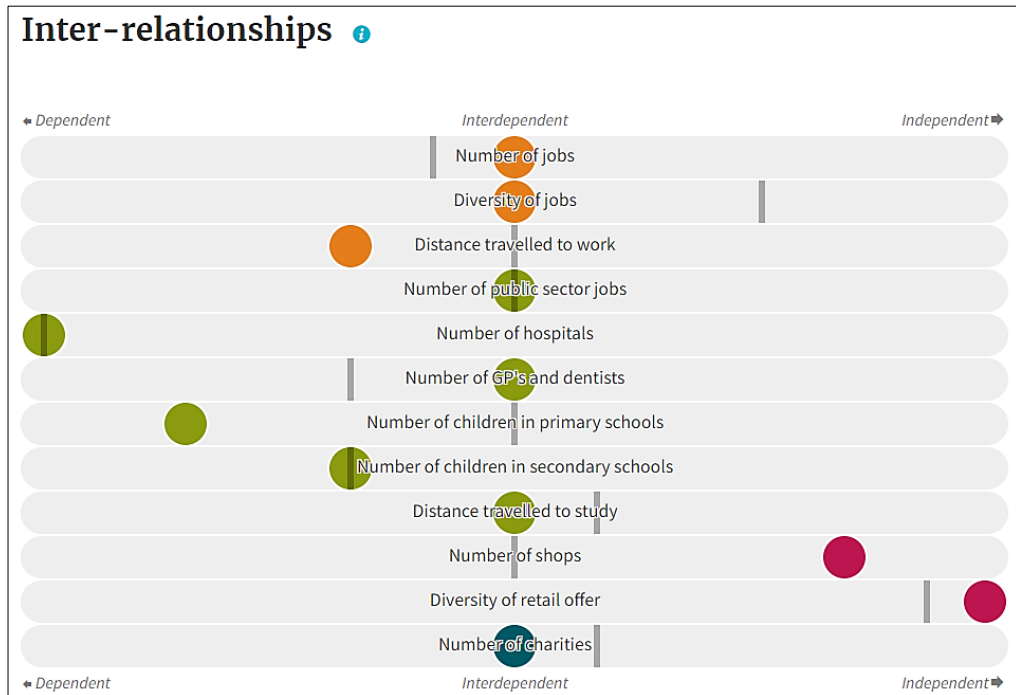
The [Understanding Scottish Places](#) (USP) data platform provides a summary analysis for Troon and identifies six comparator towns that have similar characteristics, with the most similar being Erskine, Newton Mearns, Carnoustie and Westhill (Aberdeenshire)². The USP platform – www.usp.scot – describes Troon in the following general terms:

Troon's Interrelationships: an *'interdependent'* town, which means it has a medium number of assets in relation to their population. Towns of this kind have an average diversity of jobs; and residents travel a mix of short and long distances to travel to work and study. These towns attract people from neighbouring towns who come to access some assets and jobs, although they are also reliant on neighbouring towns for other assets and jobs.

Troon's Typology: This type of large town is a suburban or commuter locality with a prevalence of higher income and private housing. A large proportion of the population are over 45, and many are retired. Many people own their home. There are also a high proportion of people in professional employment, with a high proportion of residents educated to HNC level or above. Many residents own two or more cars.

¹ It has not been possible to collect full KPI data for all towns – the number of YTA comparator towns therefore differs across this report.

² Other comparator towns include Milngavie and Bearsden.



Comparing Troon to towns with similar USP typology and interrelationships shows it has a similar number of charities, hospitals, secondary school children, jobs, public sector jobs, GP's, dentists and similar diversity of retail offer and distances travelled to work and study. Troon differs most from comparator towns in terms of its number of shops and primary school children.

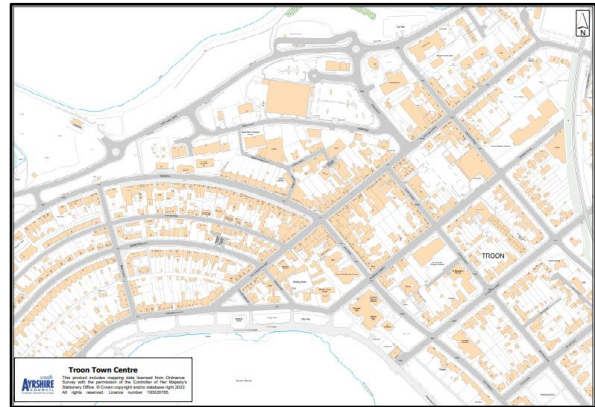
Building on the USP, this report presents the results of our detailed analysis of Troon based around STP and the Scottish Government's Town Toolkit – an online resource which provides advice and inspiration across five thematic areas: arts and culture; buildings and property; clean and green; enterprise and business; and streets and spaces. [The Town Toolkit](#) was revised and relaunched in 2021.

The report is designed as an audit of existing assets – physical and social – and concludes with a set of key findings and issues that will be important to the future performance of Troon. Although the report has been informed by the [Troon Together Community Action Plan \(2019\)](#) published by South Ayrshire Council, this report is not intended as a detailed strategy or action plan.

2. Accessible Town Centre

Tron is a popular tourist and residential town situated on the Ayrshire Coast in the south west of Scotland. With a total population of around 14,300³, Tron is the second largest settlement in the South Ayrshire local authority area behind Ayr. Historically, the town was a port which used to export coal and has had some ferry traffic.

Tron Town Centre



The town centre is relatively small and is focused on three main streets – Ayr Street, Portland Street and West Portland Street – with industrial and larger retail units situated to the north of the town centre.

To the south of the town centre, Tron beach is a key attraction with a large pirate-themed playpark, outdoor gym, minigolf, and grassy area. The space at the beach boasts ample seating opportunities, with a range of benches and picnic tables also accessible in the grassy area adjacent to the beach. This area is extremely popular with tourists, with some parking available directly adjacent to the beach and on a number of side streets – however, in busy summer months, demand for parking can outstrip supply.



The town centre has excellent access to good quality green and blue space – although the Tron Together Community Plan notes that greenspace in the wider settlements is relatively underused (outwith beaches and Fullarton Wood) (see Section 4.2 for more detail).

To the eastern edge of the town centre, Tron Railway Station is adjacent to Tron Links which includes the golf courses of Lochgreen, Darley and Fullarton.

³ Defined using the three 'Tron' intermediate zone areas of S02002351, S02002352, and S02002353.



Following a fire in July 2021, the B-listed Troon Railway Station is undergoing a process of redevelopment, with a commitment to be completed in time for Troon hosting the 152nd Golf Open in July 2024. Located on the Glasgow South West Line, trains typically run every hour and a half to/from Glasgow Central via Ayr during the day with considerably fewer services in the evening. The first service of the day departs Glasgow Central to Troon at 05:13 and the last service leaves at 23:01.

In the opposite direction, the first train to Glasgow Central leaves Troon at 06:02, with the last service at night departing at 00:15. The current cost of an anytime day return to Glasgow Central is £15.70, and off-peak £10.30. To the south, there are typically five rail services a day to/from Girvan.

There are hourly local buses around Troon during the day, as well as services to other regional locations such as Ayr (relatively high frequency of services)⁴, Kilmarnock, Irvine, and Glasgow. Issues raised with bus services include that: there is lack of services which take residents to shops and out of town; and there could be greater variety of bus providers, with Stagecoach running the vast majority of Troon's local bus services.

The main road into Troon is the A78 which runs along the outskirts of the town and towards Ayr and Irvine in both directions. The A77 turns to the A78 just shy of Troon and the A78 passes by the edge of the town, with access to Troon via the B746 and Dundonald Road which directs traffic towards the town centre. Troon is well connected to nearby airports being only a 15-minute drive from Prestwick Airport and a 50-minute drive from Glasgow International Airport.

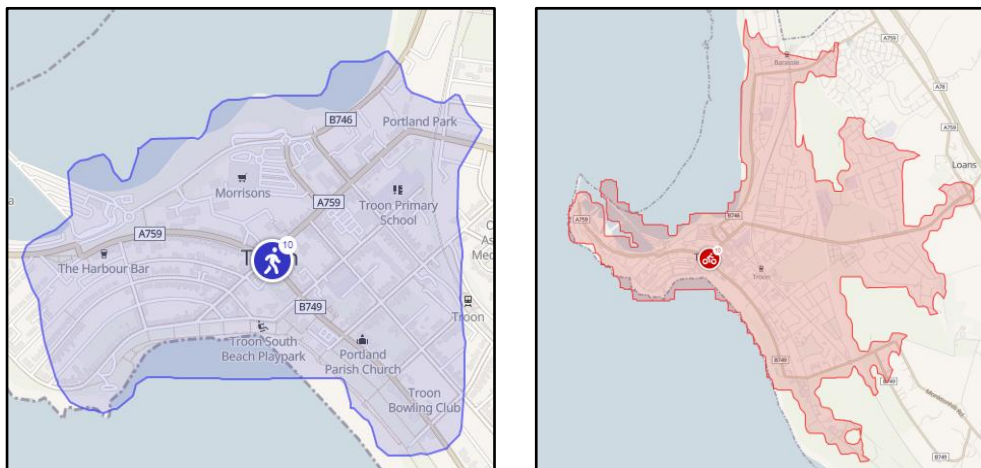
P&O, the ferry operator, ceased operation of the Irish Sea ferry crossing from Troon to Larne in 2016 – a ferry crossing is available further south (1 hour 20 minutes' drive) with Stena Line operating a service between Cairnryan and Belfast.

The concept of '20-minute neighbourhoods' has grown in prominence over recent years and is now a key priority for the Scottish Government's place and planning policy. This promotes the idea of people being able to reach all of their day-to-day needs within a 20-minute public transport trip or walk/cycle from home – i.e., a ten-minute journey each way. By cutting down on unnecessary car travel, this has benefits for health, wellbeing and the environment, as well as supporting the local economy.

⁴ Transport Scotland (2020) [South West Scotland Transport Study - Initial Appraisal: Case for Change](#)

Troon is relatively compact, and the entire town can be reached within a ten-minute cycle from the mid-point of the town centre, with most being accessible within a ten-minute walk, as shown on the map below. A considerable portion of housing in the town can also be reached within a ten-minute cycle. The town is therefore well placed to build on this potential for growing active travel trips.

Troon Town Centre – 10 Minute Walking and Cycling Distance



Source: [Commute Time Map](#)

However, accessibility issues highlighted in the [Troon Together Community Action Plan 2019](#) include that barriers line many street edges within the town centre and there are a lack of pedestrian crossings. This is a particular issue around the railway station, with the report highlighting that the lack of crossings – for example, in Barassie within the wider settlement, where there are only two crossing areas – mean that the railway line divides the town and causes accessibility issues for pedestrians. It is reported that these issues significantly increase walking distances and times, and on occasion can lead to a journey taking twice as long.

Additionally, the [Troon Together Community Action Plan 2019](#) shows that local amenities are relatively underused by both local residents and visitors. For example, the report states that many golf course users and beach goers do not make use of the town centre facilities during their visit. Similarly, some locals stated that they are more likely to travel by car to Ayr or Prestwick to access the beach as these have better facilities. This includes a lack of parking and public transport in and around the town centre.

In terms of on-street parking, there are limited spaces available around the main town centre shopping area, such as at Templehill and South Beach.

The [South Ayrshire Council Parking Strategy 2020-2024](#) notes that “demand for on street parking in Troon, [particularly in Templehill and during summer months] exceeds that which is available and changes in policy are needed to encourage more walking, cycling and public transport use, without making it unaffordable for those who need to drive”. The strategy proposes the introduction of a pay and display system, similar to Ayr, to generate greater turnover of parking bays and improve accessibility of local amenities and attractions.



Parking at Templehill

For off-street parking, there are medium sized free car parks situated at the retail units on Academy Street (adjacent to Church Street) which provides access to the main shopping area of Portland Street and West Portland Street, and South Beach Road (Ivy Cottage) car park which provides closer access to the beach. Similar to on-street parking, the strategy proposes the introduction of a seasonal pay and display system between April and September for off-street parking. A residents’ permit scheme in Templehill and Barassie Street is also proposed to allow access for residents and tradespersons.

In terms of digital connectivity, Troon town centre has good mobile connectivity, with 4G coverage from all four networks. There are some small areas which have average coverage indoors across the networks, namely around the town centre – Templehill, West Portland Street and South Beath. This is also prevalent within the wider settlement with some of these areas experiencing a few problems with 4G coverage. Ultrafast broadband (at least 50 Mbps) is available within the town.

Troon's town centre also includes access to Troon Swimming Pool, a range of pubs, cafes, restaurants, places of worship, a town hall and sports facilities – including the golf courses, a bowling club and tennis club. Opened in May 2023, Troon Banking Hub addresses the recent closures of banks within the town centre by offering a shared space with different banking providers on rotation.

Two of Troon's primary school's – Troon Primary School and St. Patrick's Primary School – are situated within the town centre. Within the wider settlement, there is Barassie Primary School, Muirhead Primary School, Struthers Primary School, and Marr College Secondary School.

3. Active Town Centre

3.1 Population and Housing

Just over 1,400 people live within the town centre area of Troon, 10% of the total settlement population. This proportion is lower than the average of 18% in other YTA town centres. Over the decade to 2020, the town centre population has decreased by 3%, and the whole settlement by 4%. Other audited town centres have generally experienced an increase in town centre living, with an average 10.5% increase across YTA towns.

In 2020, just over 900 houses were recorded within Troon's town centre. One-third of the housing in the town centre is flats (33%) followed by detached/semi-detached houses (27%) and terraced housing (14%) typically with three or more bedrooms. Almost three-quarters of the housing stock in the town is privately owned (64% in the town centre; 74% in the wider settlement) which is higher than the YTA average of 56%.

House prices within the town centre are much higher compared to the average of other YTA towns (£167,000 compared to £116,000). This is slightly lower than the wider Troon average of £196,000. Further, half of the properties within the town centre (50%) are in council tax bands A, B or C.

More up-to-date market information from property website Zoopla⁵ places the average selling price for residential properties across the whole of Troon at £227,600 over the last year.

In 2020, the residential town centre vacancy rate was 5%, higher than the average vacancy rate of other YTA town centres (3.8%). For Troon as a whole, the residential vacancy rate was 3%. There can be a number of factors influencing high vacancy rates for residential properties in the town centre. Often, this can relate to the type and quality of available properties, ownership issues and local economic conditions.

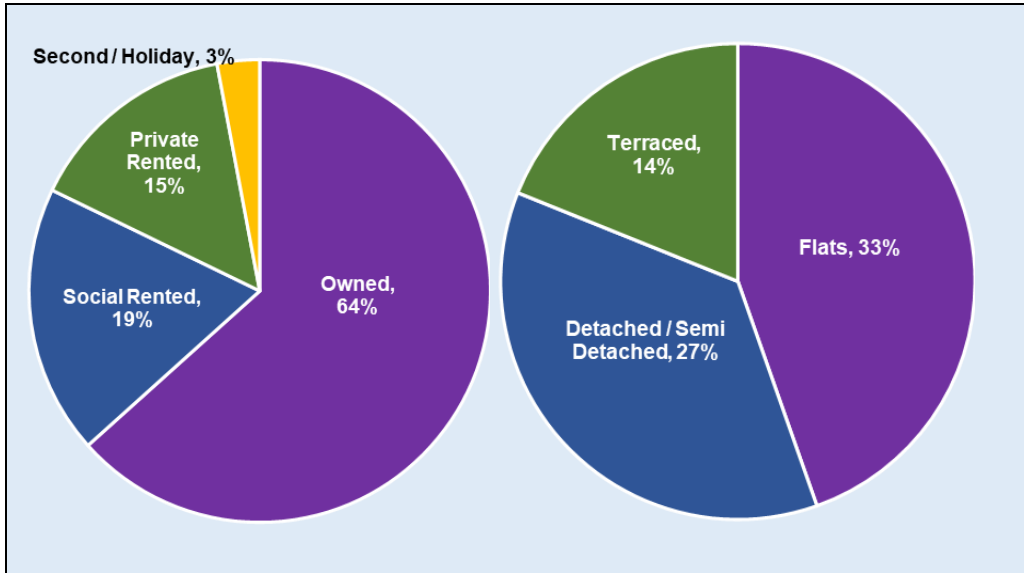
As town and city centres adjust to a changing retail climate, increasing town centre living is recognised as important throughout Scotland and is one of the key priorities for the Scottish Government's original [Town Centre Action Plan](#) (2013) and its most recent [refresh](#) (2020).

Given that there is strong demand for housing in Troon, renovations or new developments may present a sustainable (if initially expensive) solution to some vacant properties in the town centre.

In the wider settlement, the Troon Together Action Plan (2019) outlined that 750 houses were being developed in the northeast of Troon – it is important that active travel linkages are made to the town centre as often these edge, or out-of-town developments, do not build in the appropriate local services or transport variety and become car-dependent neighbourhoods.

⁵ <https://www.zoopla.co.uk/house-prices/troon/>

Troon Town Centre Housing Mix



3.2 Businesses and Employment

In 2022, national statistics recorded 260 enterprises registered in the whole of Troon, and 335 'local units'⁶. Around half (51%) of the 3,150 jobs in Troon are located in the town centre area⁷.

The town centre audit located 231 units within the town centre area, with 118 units of these being retail or retail service units. Compared to the YTA average, retail makes up a larger proportion of town centre use in Troon (51% compared to 45% across all towns).

For all units (both retail and otherwise, excluding housing), the vacancy rate was 11% in line with the YTA average. This equated to 25 vacant units which were almost entirely comprised of retail units – while most were spread throughout the town centre, there were a small cluster of vacant units at the cross between Ayr Street, Portland Street and Templehill.



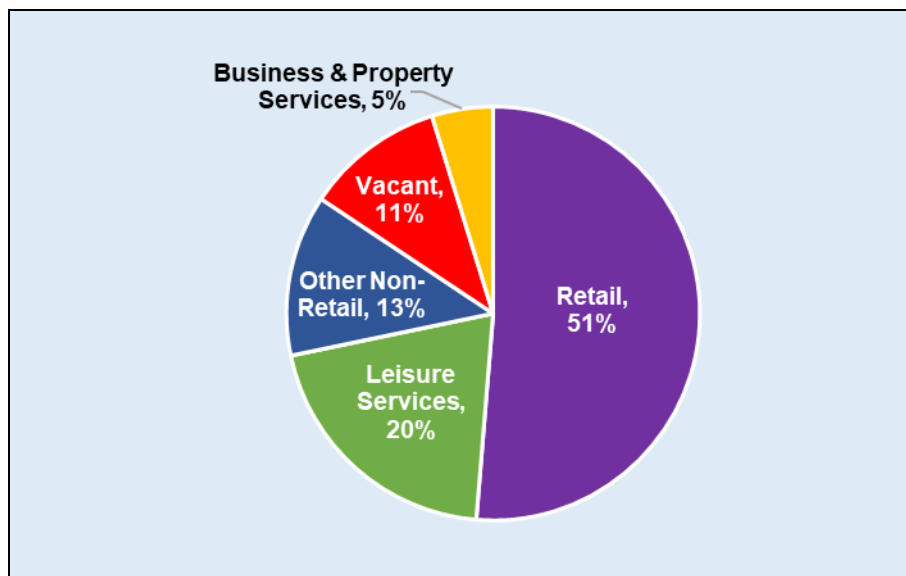
⁶ Source: UK Business Count

⁷ Source: Business Register & Employment Survey

As noted in the [Troon Together Community Action Plan 2019](#) and similar to other seaside towns, the town centre has experienced both a decline in domestic tourism and the increasing prevalence of online shopping, which in-turn has reduced town centre footfall. During the walk around, it was clear that some business units had been vacated relatively recently. It is important to note that this is only the fourth Your Town Audit conducted since the start of COVID-19 pandemic.

Leisure services and units classed as other non-retail, such as places of worship and community halls, comprised similar proportions of town centre unit use in Troon to the YTA average (leisure: Troon 20%, YTA average 22%; and other non-retail: Troon 13%, YTA average 14%).

Troon Town Centre Unit Mix



3.3 Retail

The retail offering in Troon reflects its role as both a residential and seaside town, with a wide range of smaller independent shops for both residents and visitors.

The retail offer is relatively well spread throughout the small town centre with most retail units on Portland Street and Church Street. We identified 118 retailer operators in the town centre area from a total of 231 units.

The retail vacancy rate in Troon town centre is 11.7%, equivalent to 24 units. This is slightly higher than average YTA retail vacancy rate of 10.8% across 41 towns (albeit mostly based on pre-COVID data).



Apart from a small cluster at the cross between Ayr Street, Portland Street and Templehill, vacant units tended to be spread across the different streets – Portland Street and West Portland Street had the most vacant retail units (total of 11 units) followed by Ayr Street (six units) and Templehill (five units). It is notable that no vacant retail units were recorded on Church Street.

Judging by the condition of the vacant retail units, most appeared to have been made newly vacant – if there is sufficient demand, pop-up shops/stalls in some of the key units may help to maintain footfall where shops have closed. The shared banking space of Troon Banking Hub, opened in May 2023, presents an innovative and practical solution to the provision of local services and helps to retain footfall in the town centre.

With 122 residents per town centre retail outlet, Troon town centre has an extremely high density of retail offering in relation to its population (YTA average: 224 residents per town centre retail outlet). Again, this reflects the fact that it serves both as a resident and visitor population.

122 residents per town centre retail outlet

118 town centre retail units in use

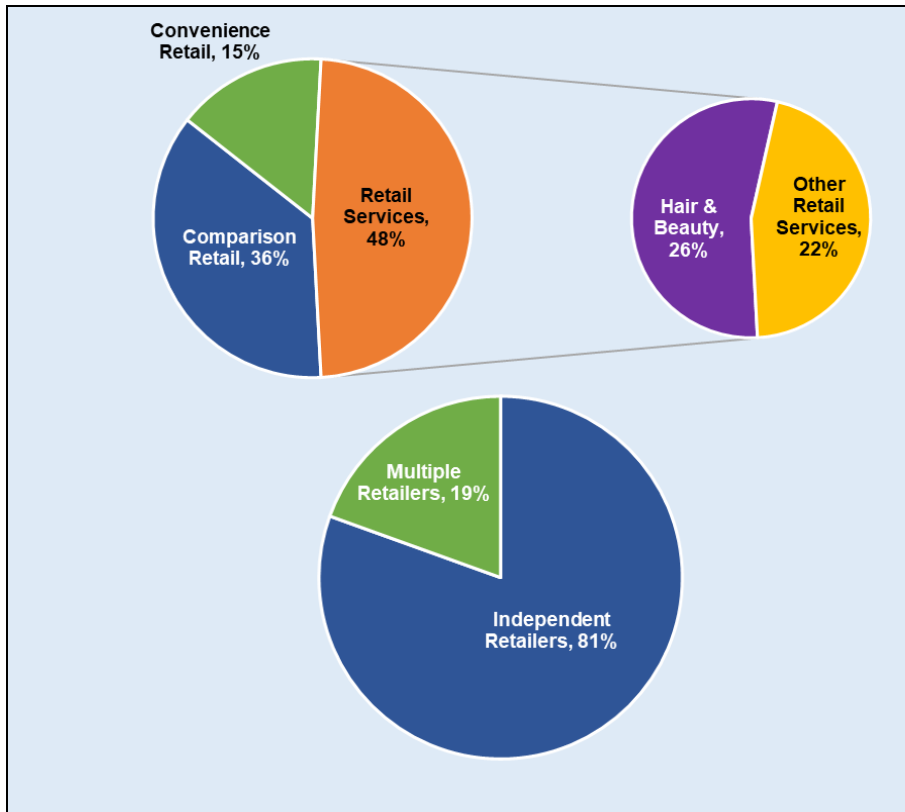
24 vacant town centre retail units

Retail forms the largest town centre unit use, amounting to 51% of all units. This is slightly above the YTA average of 46%.

The YTA analysis is based on the following retail definitions:

- **Convenience Retail:** primarily low cost goods that are typically bought out of habit or on impulse i.e., food, drink (alcohol and non-alcohol), news, tobacco, etc. – *18 convenience retailers identified in Troon town centre;*
- **Comparison Retail:** all other retail purchases comprising goods bought at infrequent intervals where consumers will compare and contrast products and prices – *43 comparison retailers identified in Troon town centre;* and
- **Retail Services:** services that consumers would expect to find in a town centre including hairdresser, beauty salon, repair of goods, hire of specialist clothing, health clinics, post office, travel agent, etc. – *57 retail service operators identified in Troon town centre.*





Independent retailers comprise 81% of the total in Troon, which ranks relatively highly (YTA average of 72%). The number of national comparison retailers with larger stores was relatively low – this included Boots, Poundland, WH Smith, The Original Factory Shop.

In terms of supermarkets, there is a large Morrisons supermarket located on Dukes Road in the northern outskirts of the town centre (with a Timpsons store located within). Elsewhere, Day Today, Spar and a few smaller convenience stores are located within the town centre.



4. Attractive Town Centre

4.1 Overview

Tron boasts an attractive town centre with a range of impressive Georgian and Victorian buildings (such as Tron Town Hall and Walker Hall, several places of worship and residential properties) which add to the character and history of Tron. More could be done to communicate the heritage and history of Tron through more interactive displays or trails beyond a few historic signs. This could help to significantly improve the attractiveness and vibrancy of the town centre for both residents and visitors.

In the Tron Together Community Plan, some opportunities and priority areas to enhance and improve the attractiveness of the public realm were identified by the community and its partners. Therefore, the issues facing the town centre are well understood and work is being progressed to make it a more attractive, active and accessible place.

For example, the promenade and South Beach Kiosk area could be improved and further utilised to strengthen the link between the beach and town centre facilities. Similarly, increasing the attractiveness of walkways could entice people to spend time and money in the town centre rather than only going to beach.



Shopfronts were generally in good condition. However, some small renovation works targeted at “sprucing up” specific parts of the town centre or buildings would make a big difference, although identifying owners and then incentivising (or compelling) them to make repairs can be a challenge.

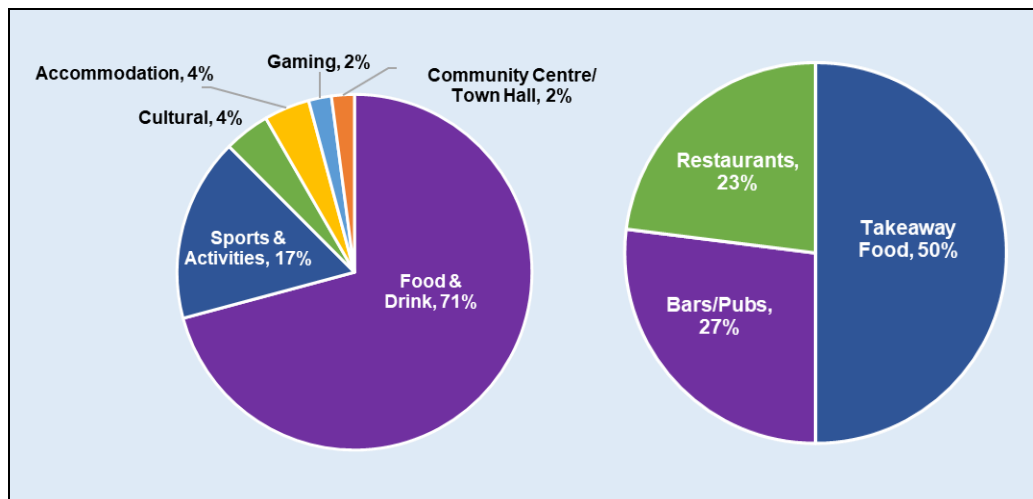
There are many rubbish bins (and dog waste bins) throughout the town centre, particularly on the beachfront which appear to have kept litter to a minimum. Although on some streets, such as West Portland Street, wheelie bins outside of shops cluttered the pavement.

Compared to other town centres, there is little in the way of public art with the focus on the views offered by the waterfront and the close proximity to Troon beach. Perhaps, exploring options for modern installations may be worthwhile to create points of interest to connect into the main retail area.

While there were some attractive flower displays and planters seen during the audit visit, greening the seafront is a priority within the Troon Together Community Plan to further increase the attractiveness of the town centre – this includes more planters, hanging baskets, street trees, and a rewilding dune restoration project.

A popular initiative adopted by many towns is the Royal Horticultural Society's [Britain in Bloom](#) – a Troon in Bloom (or similar) could be a useful and sustainable solution to improve (and then maintain) the attractiveness of the public realm and enhance pride in local area with volunteer and community buy-in.

4.2 Leisure Mix



Compared to other YTA towns, Troon has a slightly lower proportion of town centre units that are used for leisure services (20% compared to 22% average). Of the mix of leisure businesses in Troon town centre, the vast majority are food and drink outlets (34 of 48 leisure units).

The evening economy is comprised of 11 takeaways, six bars/pubs and five restaurants. Troon has a relatively high proportion of evening economy outlets (654 residents per evening economy outlet) compared to the YTA average (931 residents per evening economy outlet).



Although Troon has access to beaches and Fullarton Wood, the Troon Together Community Plan notes that “*greenspace in Troon is underused and poorly designed*” and largely comprised of its golf courses. Within the town centre, there is access to grassy areas beside the beachfront and several formal and informal gardens including Gordon Brown Memorial Garden (adjacent to Troon Library).

Throughout the town’s history, the leisure offer in Troon has been one of its key assets, particularly in terms of golf and water sports. Founded in 1878, Royal Troon Links Golf Club is a championships level, internationally renowned golf course and will host the 152nd Open in July 2024. In 2016, this major event brought 173,000 spectators to the area – almost half of attendees travelled from outwith Scotland for the Open – and generated £23million in economic impact to Ayrshire⁸.

At more than 6.5km in length, the Old Course is the historic championship course, with Royal Troon’s other courses being the Portland and Craigend (9-hole par 3 course). Tickets to play a round on the Old Course are priced at £340 per golfer.

⁸ Scottish Government (2017) [Economic benefit of The Open](#)



Source: [The New York Times](#)

Within the town centre, other golf courses include Troon Links, which encompasses three courses of Lochgreen (£37 per round in summer), Darley (£37 per round in summer) and Fullarton (£30 per round in summer). There is also the nearby course of Kilmarnock (Barassie) Golf Club located north of Troon town centre.

During major events such as the Open and throughout the year, it is important for the vitality of Troon that the links between the golf clubs and the town centre are strengthened to ensure more spend is retained within the local economy.

The proximity to the water adds to the diverse nature of the sporting offer in Troon with active kitesurfing, sailing and cruising clubs. In 2016, [Red Bull](#) named Troon as the 4th best beach for kitesurfing. However, it is recognised that more could be done to further develop water sports for local residents and to attract more tourists to Troon.



Source: [The Kite and Windsurfing Guide](#)

To this end, a social enterprise has been founded to establish Troon Water Sports Hub to enhance community and water sports facilities at both Troon and Barassie beaches. These plans have progressed with South Ayrshire Council granting

planning permission (December 2022) and approving Community Asset Transfer to encompass a main community hub near Port Ranald Drive and a satellite unit near South Beach Car Park. Planned facilities include changing and shower facilities, storage, slipway, training room, community space and café.

There is also Troon Cruising Club which has a clubhouse and 120 moorings for members – this is part of Troon Yacht Haven to north of town centre, which provides 400 fully serviced berths and was runner-up in the [UK Marina of the Year Awards 2022](#).

In the Troon Together Community Plan, more recreation and cultural facilities and activities were identified as a priority to make the town centre a more attractive and enjoyable space, particularly for young people. Suggestions included an active travel hub and bandstand. Progress is already being made – for example, at the site of the former paddling pool on the esplanade, the Sunset Beach Skate Park opened in June 2023 with many of features inspired by feedback from local school children.

Other sports clubs in the town include bowling, tennis, football, and walking clubs. To the northeast of the town centre, the semi-professional Troon Football Club has its own dedicated ground at Portland Park on Portland Street. South Ayrshire Council operates Troon Swimming Pool (25m with four lanes) and Gym.



4.3 Community Events and Festivals

Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic restricted the number of festivals and events in the last couple of years, large events which typically take place in the town include:

- Glasgow Taxi Outing '[Goin' tae Troon](#)' – annual charity event held since 1945 in which taxi drivers dress up in fancy dress and take over 300 children (and carers) from Additional Support for Learning Schools in Glasgow to Troon for “a fun packed day at the beach free of charge with lunch, funrides,

disco, beach toys and more provided⁹. It is scheduled to take place this year on Wednesday 21st June 2023.

- Troon Gala Day – organised by Troon Community Council and held on Sunday 25th June 2023 with family attractions including rides, music, stalls and a super sandcastle competition.
- Troon Round Table Fireworks display on North Shore Road on Bonfire Night weekend.
- [WinterStorm Rock Weekender](#) – an annual rock festival held in Troon Town Hall (850 capacity) which first took place in 2016. This year's edition has an additional day of music and is scheduled to run from Thursday 23rd November to Sunday 26th November 2023. Single full day tickets are priced at £75 with accommodation packages available partnering with local hotels.
- [Troon Wintertainment](#) – an annual family event with a town parade followed by music, dancing and switching on the festive lights. Following COVID-19 pandemic, the event returned in November 2022.

4.4 Attractions and Heritage

Troon has a number of visitor attractions on offer, particularly its coastline and beaches which draws tourists from afar. Troon Beach is one of Ayrshire's most popular sandy beaches and offers views of Isle of Arran, Lady Isle (with lighthouse) and Ailsa Craig. There are a range of traditional seaside activities such as a large pirate-themed playpark, minigolf and ice creams shops as well as the new skate park. There is also the opportunity to watch local wildlife including seals. A voluntary group – [Friends of Troon Beaches](#) – organise a weekly cleanup and has over 1,400 Facebook members.



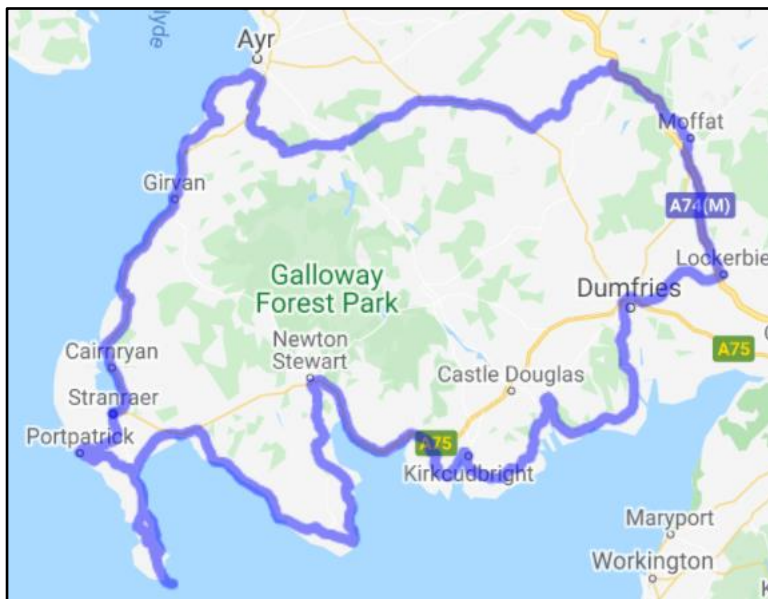
⁹ Just Giving – [Glasgow Taxi Outing Fund](#)

Located outside of the town centre to the north, Barassie Beach was recently designated as one of Scotland's newest bathing waters and has a 'good' bathing quality rating from SEPA. Both Troon and Barassie beaches were included in [Scotland's Beach Award 2023](#) which recognises the nation's top beaches as organised by Keep Scotland Beautiful.

Troon is increasingly being promoted as an outdoor destination for visitors with a range of walks, trails and paths. For example, the 100-mile long [Ayrshire Coastal Path](#) which is designated as one of Scotland's Great Trails passes through Troon at Stage 7 (8.5 mile path from Ayr) and Stage 8 (6 mile path to Irvine). Other local walking paths and trails include The Smugglers Trail, Troon Town Centre Circular, Fullarton Woods to Woodland Walk, Royal Troon Golf Course Walk, Loans Historic Walk, Past and Present Circular¹⁰.

In addition to the walking paths and trails, the [South West Coastal 300](#) has been developed to promote the region as a destination for road trips. It is a 300-mile scenic loop around the region from the coasts as well as towns as Dumfries and Moffat – Troon is located north of the SW Coastal 300 which passes below Ayr. It is the third route in the series of other driving routes in Scotland which have been developed over recent years, most famously the North Coast 500 and the North East 250.

South West Coastal 300 Route



Source: [Visit South West Scotland](#)

¹⁰ South Ayrshire Paths – [Troon Walks](#)

Regional bodies, such as [Destination South Ayrshire](#), market Troon within their own activity – but there is no local marketing body. It is important to ensure that there is a clear, shared and local vision for Troon and its promotion which draws on its unique selling points and are aligned to South Ayrshire Council's [Tourism and Events Strategy \(2022\)](#). The aims of the strategy are to:

- proactively market South Ayrshire as a destination of choice;
- align events more closely with the region's tourism assets to build events with a legacy impact;
- develop the area as a destination for holding large scale outdoor events and festivals, which will attract high levels of footfall and visitor spend into the area;
- integrate town centres into our events and festivals to ensure we are driving footfall and increasing spend;
- encourage and facilitate collaboration among providers to overcome fragmentation and offer stronger, packaged experiences, tailored to distinctive market segments through the Destination South Ayrshire approach;
- maximise quality and focus on excellent service for our visitors; and
- enhance our tourism offers and capitalise on opportunities.

4.5 Attractiveness Review

The YTA includes an independent review of place and quality impressions, with Troon scoring slightly below average in comparison to other towns.

Individual unit fronts and shop window displays were graded out of ten during the on-street audit, with a town centre average score of 6.7 for quality of window display and 6.2 for the condition of unit fronts. This is slightly below the average across other YTA audited town centres, of 6.8 and 6.7 respectively.





Business confidence in the town centre was gauged from a small sample of interviews undertaken with independent traders. On a scale of 0 (not at all confident) to 10 (very confident), scores averaged at 5 / 10, below the 5.8 average of other YTA audited towns – it is important to note that this is only the fourth Your Town Audit conducted since outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic which has undoubtedly impacted business confidence.

Recent closures, such as the closure of the Bank of Scotland branch in Templehill, were said to have reduced footfall in the town centre – businesses were positive about the proposal for a shared banking hub (where banks share premises) which has since opened in May 2023. In general, businesses were neither confident nor unconfident given the uncertain impact of global challenges, such as rising costs of living and doing business. and the extent to which this could impact their business and the town centre.

5. YTA Summary and Key Points

The following are offered as final comments on the Your Town Audit of Troon, within the framework of the Scottish Government's Towns Toolkit.

5.1 Accessible Town Centre

- Troon is relatively compact and much of the town is already a 20-minute neighbourhood – which promotes the idea of people being able to reach all of their day-to-day needs within a 20-minute public transport trip or walk/cycle from home. This is set to be a key national priority for planning and regeneration in future years, and finding ways to facilitate and encourage it will bring benefits for Troon's economy and population in terms of health, wellbeing, and the environment. Examples include facilitating greater active travel links with the wider settlement (to address issues such as road barriers restricting pedestrian access and lack of pedestrian crossings).
- Troon town centre has excellent access to good quality green and blue space – although the Troon Together Community Plan notes that greenspace in the wider settlements is relatively underused (outwith beaches and Fullarton Wood).
- Demand for parking, particularly during peak summer months, can often outstrip supply. South Ayrshire Council has proposed the introduction of a pay and display scheme in off- and on-street parking to generate a greater churn/turnover within parking bays.
- As the transition to net zero speeds up, the availability of electric charging points in the town centre will be increasingly important. Currently, there are five public charging stations with a total of 11 points spread around the town including at South Beach Car Park, Academy Street, Troon Railway Station, Troon Swimming Pool, and Troon Yacht Haven.

5.2 Active Town Centre

- Both total vacancy rate and retail vacancy rates were broadly in line with the average across all YTA towns – this is encouraging given that the YTA average is mostly based on pre-COVID data. In total, 25 vacant units were recorded in the town centre which was equivalent to 10.8% of total units (11% YTA average) - 24 of these units were vacant retail units giving a retail vacancy rate of 11.7% (10.8% YTA average).
- While most vacant units were spread throughout the town centre, there were a small cluster at the cross between Ayr Street, Portland Street and Templehill. If there is sufficient demand, pop-up shops/stalls in some of the key units may help to maintain footfall where shops have closed. For example, the shared banking space of Troon Banking Hub, opened in May 2023, presents an innovative and practical solution to the provision of local services and helps to retain footfall in the town centre.
- Troon's town centre is rooted in its independent stores, which make up 81% of the total and offer a wide range of goods and services – the importance of a quality local baker and butcher, for instance, cannot be underestimated. This is important in retaining a distinct identity for the town centre and supporting its appeal to visitors.
- There is a relatively high proportion of evening economy units in the town centre, likely reflecting the town's role as a destination for visitors.

5.3 Attractive Town Centre

- Many of the retailers in the town are dependent on the tourist market, which is largely seasonal (such as ice cream parlours and gift shops). Attracting day visitors to Troon is therefore very important for the survival of these businesses.
- While the range of retailers is a key asset, Troon is not immune to the long-term challenges of a declining domestic tourist market and changing retail climate, with the rapid growth in online purchases over the last few years likely to become the norm. Maintaining a vibrant mix of retailers, cafes and other services will be important in ensuring an attractive town centre in future years.

- Troon is in a strong position to grow its award-winning leisure offer by drawing on and further utilising its main key assets (beaches and golf courses) to improve the attractiveness of the town centre, particularly for young people. Progress is already being made with the opening of a new Sunset Beach Skate Park and plans underway for a water sports hub.
- During major events such as the Open and throughout the year, it is important for the vitality of Troon that the links between key assets (the golf clubs and beaches) and the town centre are strengthened to ensure more spend is retained within the local economy. For example, more attractive walkways and active travel links could entice people to spend time and money in the town centre rather than only going to beach.
- More could be done to communicate the heritage and history of Troon through more interactive displays or trails beyond a few historic signs. This could help to significantly improve the attractiveness and vibrancy of the town centre for both residents and visitors.
- A popular initiative adopted by many towns is the Royal Horticultural Society's [Britain in Bloom](#) – a Troon in Bloom (or similar) could be a useful and sustainable solution to improve (and then maintain) the attractiveness of the public realm and enhance pride in local area.