



Glascairn Business Units, Culbokie Business Plan 2024-2026



Culbokie Community Trust May 2023

Culbokie Community Trust
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1. Executive Summary

- Culbokie Community Trust (CCT) has aspirations, formed over a number of years, for a community-owned, energy-efficient building to be used as business units yet designed in such a way that it could be flexible for a range of uses to match community needs on an ongoing basis.
- The business units would be sited at Glascairn, an area of land in the centre of Culbokie, owned by CCT. A key aim of the project is to address issues of environmental impact and improve the provision of locally available services.
- CCT was set up in 2014 as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status (SCO45867). It has a board of 9 directors and more than 270 members.
- CCT has already achieved a good measure of success in progressing the Glascairn Community Project including the creation of Culbokie Green, a biodiverse, car-free community gathering space with a wild-flower meadow, paths, community orchard, natural play area and timber shelter for community events and learning.
- CCT has also been instrumental in a number of other local initiatives including a monthly community market, a sharing shed, a cycling club and, working with Sustrans, the community consultation and design of an active travel route (now being taken forward by The Highland Council).
- There has been significant community consultation on how the land at Glascairn could best be developed to the benefit of the community, with 5 different community engagement

initiatives between 2011 and 2018. A review of these consultations shows three specific development priorities which appear on a consistent basis: local health service provision, business/retail units and a café.

- Following the Covid-19 pandemic, CCT agreed to revisit its development plans for the site to better understand how or if community aspirations might have changed.
- Further community consultation was commissioned in November 2022 to seek community views on the development of business units/retail on the site. This was followed by a formal feasibility study and options appraisal. The results of the consultation showed good support for the development of a building for business use on the site. Community priorities for the use of the building are health service provision, retail, co-working space with hot desking and a digitally connected meeting room.
- The feasibility study and options appraisal reviewed two different development options for the business units. Option 1: A 100m² new, highly energy efficient building; Option 2: recycled portacabins.
- The CCT board agreed that the focus of the business case should be Option 1 as it was the most economically advantageous, highly energy efficient option, with lower running costs and a longer life span.
- The need for this facility is evidenced by a number of factors: good community support; a strong fit with national and regional strategies including Scotland-wide ambitions for 20-minute neighbourhoods as set out in the Scottish Government's Fourth National Planning Framework, and The Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan (published 2020) which sets out a target date for net zero of all greenhouse gas emissions by 2045; and the rise in the population at Culbokie not matched by a corresponding growth in local service provision.
- A provisional cost plan in February 2023 gives development costs as £440,730 ex VAT. Financing the development is likely to come from a portfolio of funders and, possibly, via a community share offer.
- Provisional financial forecasts show income generation from the new facility as £9,640 in year 1 rising to £18,060 in year 3. These projections are based on modest growth.

2. Background

For almost a decade Culbokie Community Trust (CCT) has been developing, in phases, the 0.5ha of land it owns at Glascairn, to create a vibrant new heart in the village of Culbokie with a mix of community facilities based on local needs and aspirations. A central aim of the project is to address issues of environmental impact and social and economic benefit.

CCT has already achieved a good measure of success in progressing the Glascairn Community Project, as it is known, including:

- Establishing a legal agreement with Tulloch Homes who were building houses on the adjacent site which led to an advantageous land swap and development of the community site infrastructure.
- Development of architectural and landscape designs for the whole 0.5ha site at Glascairn. This includes Culbokie Green and a courtyard development comprising a café, toilets and potting shed (tool store and volunteer base), and small business units along with car and cycle parking.
- Securing full planning consent for the café and toilets/potting shed and outline consent for the building reserved for business use.
- Creation of Culbokie Green, a biodiverse, car-free community gathering space with a wild-flower meadow, paths, community orchard, natural play area and timber shelter for community events and learning. The shelter is already being used by several local groups

including Beavers, Scouts, and the Culbokie Community Cycling Group. The green is managed and cared for by a volunteer group, The Green Team, which meets weekly. CCT is also developing a partnership with Highlife Highland to run events and collaborate with the Highlands Meadows Project.

- Finance from a portfolio of funders, including The Highland Council Place Based Investment Fund, Inspiring Scotland RCIA fund and The Highland Council Community Regeneration Fund towards a new toilet block and potting shed – the latter to be used as a base for The Green Team.
- A one-off £5k award from SWARCO towards the toilets. SWARCO are a private company that will install a rapid electric vehicle charger on the site. They will retain the profit and will pay CCT an annual rent of £1000.
- Provision of 6 affordable houses for rent by local people through negotiating the sale of the land to Cairn Housing for housing development. These houses are now complete and fully occupied.

This business plan sets out the case for the next phase of development which would be the creation of a new, energy-efficient building on land, owned by CCT, for flexible community and business use. A key priority for CCT is to ensure that the building is designed in such a way as to give maximum flexibility for future uses as the needs of the community and the business market change over time.

The plan is designed to inform potential sources of grant funding on the merit and scale of the development and illustrate how it would be achieved and operated.

3. About Culbokie Community Trust

Culbokie Community Trust (CCT) was set up in 2014 as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status (SCO45867). It has a board of 9 directors which meets monthly and with skills including project management, managing volunteers, construction, accessing funding and finance. CCT is a membership organisation with 272 full members, 12 junior members, 61 associates and 6 associate organisations.

The main purposes of CCT, as set out in its governing documents, are:

- Managing community land for the benefit of the community
- Improving recreational facilities and activities
- Advancing community development
- Advancing community education about its environment, culture, heritage, and history
- Enhancing environmental protection.

CCT instigated the Glascairn Community Project a number of years ago, and it is being developed in phases. The project aims to create a vibrant new heart in the village of Culbokie with a mix of community facilities based on local needs and aspirations. A central aim of the project is to address issues of environmental impact and provide clear social and economic benefits.

The next stage of the Glascairn project that CCT wishes to progress is the development of flexible business units which could be used for a variety of purposes as needed by the community both now and in the future. These might include offices, retail space, co-working space, a meeting room, and/or space for therapeutic/health services. The building would be sited on land, owned by CCT, in the heart of the village and would form part of the wider Glascairn Community Project.

In addition to the Glascairn project, CCT runs other initiatives aimed at supporting the general well-being of the community. These include:

- **Community market** CCT runs a monthly community indoor market at Findon Hall selling high-quality local food and crafts directly from producers.
- **Sharing Shed** CCT has established a Sharing Shed with books, games, films, toys, food and toiletries in a 2.4 x 3m shed on land owned by Cairn Housing at the East end of the village. Anyone is welcome to take items and leave a financial donation if they want. This is well-used and supported and addresses both environmental and social roles as it can be accessed by anyone without stigma. It will eventually be moved to the Glascairn site.
- **Active Travel Route** A Sustrans project under their Places for Everyone scheme developed by CCT in 2018. It looks to develop an active travel route through the village for walking, cycling and mobility aid, widening pavements, traffic calming, 20 mph limit and 'placemaking' interventions which might include small meadows, tree planting and play-on-the-way spaces. It has been designed to integrate fully with Culbokie Green and the village hub through landscape and path design. In 2022 CCT agreed to hand the leadership of the project to Highland Council to streamline regulation and procurement issues. Highland Council is currently making a funding application to Sustrans for the implementation of the project with the expectation of implementation in 2023. Sustrans would fund 75% of the costs with indirect match funding from The Highland Council. In the longer term is hoped to extend the active travel route out to the A9.
- **Cycling Club** Set up in 2019 to support behaviour change around the active travel route development. The club has 46 members and 10 trained ride leaders and runs weekly rides throughout the year. It also runs training in ride leading, bike maintenance and a couch to 20 km programme.
- **Culbokie Woods** The woods are owned by Forest and Land Scotland and wrap around the south side of the village providing woodland recreation opportunities to support the health and well-being of residents and visitors. CCT has developed and mapped paths and developed information about the wood. It also undertakes regular work parties to keep paths open and has established a permanent orienteering course there. CCT has a Memorandum of Understanding with FLS regarding the vision for the woods, roles and responsibilities and activities. There is an access point just behind the Glascairn Development providing opportunities for this to be a 'wild extension' to Culbokie Green.
- **History Group** This was established by a group of CCT volunteers to research and promote the history of the area. It has led to the creation of a separate and very popular Culbokie History website at <https://history.culbokiect.org/>.

4. Project outline

As part of the Glascairn development, CCT has aspirations, formed over a number of years, for a community-owned, energy-efficient building to be used as business units and designed in such a way that it could be flexible for a range of uses to match community and business needs.

The concept for the business unit development was included in the original feasibility study carried out in 2014 to demonstrate the case for the community right to buy and land purchase in 2015. However, this part of the plan was originally to be phased after Culbokie Green and the development of the café, so was put in a 'slow lane' for further development. The current tough funding climate has (for now) stalled the café development and has led to a review of priorities and phasing. As a result, CCT decided to revisit its plans for the business units to gain a better

understanding of changes in working patterns and behaviours resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and to learn whether its original proposals were still relevant.

This led to the commissioning of a fresh feasibility study and options appraisal, combined with community and stakeholder consultation which was carried out in the latter part of 2022 and early 2023. The work was carried out with support from Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Scottish Government's Just Enterprise programme. The work also included a review of other community-based business hubs including North Harris Trust, Dornoch Hub, Claddach Kirkibost in North Uist and the Cheviot Centre run by Glendale Gateway Trust.

The community consultation showed support for the creation of a business hub which would attract a variety of users but with a particular emphasis on the following:

- Health room for services such as podiatry, physiotherapy, alternative therapies;
- Small retail space;
- A co-working space with hot-desking;
- Dedicated office unit; and
- A digitally connected meeting room.

Following this community consultation, two options were considered for the available site, namely:

Option 1: A 100m² energy-efficient new-build utilising low-energy technology. The space would comprise a meeting room, private office, one or two treatment rooms and/or a small retail space, hot desking spaces and a small kitchen area.

Option 2: Re-purposed end-of-life portacabins giving a total space of 75m². The space would comprise 2 x treatment rooms, a hot desk/meeting room and a third room for up to 4 desk spaces which would be used as a private office.

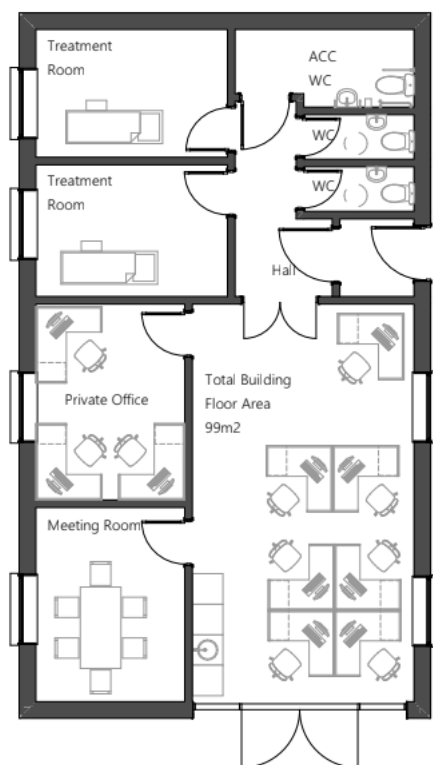
Following the findings of the feasibility study and options appraisal CCT, after discussion both internally and with possible funders, agreed to pursue Option 1. The decision was based on:

- The option was felt to be the most economically advantageous both in terms of build costs (an indicative cost plan suggests a new build to be around just £20k more than re-purposed portacabins whilst also providing a larger building) and income generation potential.
- It would provide CCT with a fixed asset and income stream.
- High energy efficiency.
- Lower running costs.
- Longer life span of the building.

Option 1: LDN Architects drawing of 100m² new build with metal roofing, timber clad and highly insulated skin with minimal heat demand.



Option 1: Floor plan showing indicative internal room layout



The plans, at this stage, remain indicative and may be subject to change and further refinement. CCT's intention is that the building will have the potential to offer a combination of service units (for instance for the provision of health/therapeutic-related services), retail unit(s), commercial and community meeting space, and office space(s).

It is also the intention to design the internal space in such a way as to give maximum flexibility for different uses, in order that the space can adapt to the changing needs of the Culbokie community in

the future, and to allow for easy adaptation for retail provision as this was a key element that the local community wanted to see as part of the development.

5. Assessment of demand

The demand for the business units has been established through several means, as detailed below.

5.1 Community support

CCT has carried out extensive consultation and engagement with its community over a number of years to gauge views and gather support for developing the land at Glascairn. This has included:

- 2011: Community survey which attracted 85 responses from 410 households.
- 2014: Stakeholder engagement and drop-in session: interviews with 30 representatives from community groups followed by a drop-in session to gain additional insights on community needs and views.
- 2014: Full community postal ballot on the proposals for Glascairn to demonstrate support for community purchase resulting in 81% approval.
- 2017: Glascairn project consultation carried out to gather local views on CCT approaching Tulloch Homes for the transfer of land to the community.
- 2018: Open space consultation to gather views on the design of the open space at Glascairn.
- Monthly CCT newsletter emailed to members giving regular updates of Glascairn progress plus regular social media posts and articles in the village newsletter providing a chance for members and all residents to feedback comments.

A review of these consultations shows three specific development priorities which appear on a consistent basis as follows:

- Health services
- Business units/retail
- Cafe

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, CCT agreed to revisit its development plans for the business units to better understand how or if community aspirations might have changed.

It commissioned further community consultation in November 2022 via a survey sent to people living within the Culbokie Community Trust area (which corresponds closely with the Culbokie Datazone) and which, at the time of the 2011 Census, had a population of 1,166.

The purpose of the survey was to help establish what levels of support and likely demand there might be within the Culbokie community for the suggested uses of a new business unit and gather other ideas about how the building might be used.

The online survey responses were combined with interviews with a number of local businesses who expressed early interest in renting space. The survey format was a mix of open and closed questions and drew a total of 104 responses. This response rate, which accounts for around 10% of the population, indicates good community engagement with and interest in the project.

The main findings of the 2022 consultation are given below, and the full results can be found in a separate report if required:

- **Provision of health and therapeutic services:** This was the facility felt to be the one Culbokie would benefit most from. This was the preferred option for 75% of respondents and is

consistent with the findings of a previous consultation the Trust ran, as part of a Community Right to Buy application, which also showed support for the provision of non-statutory health and therapeutic services in the village.

- **Retail space:** The second most popular option was retail (57%) although when asked what types of retail people wanted many of the answers given would potentially conflict with what is already available at Culbokie Stores. This local shop attracted a number of comments indicating high levels of support, with concerns expressed that any retail outlet at the business unit should not displace or duplicate what's already available. That said, there was support for something which would complement what is clearly a valued local store.
- **A co-working space with hot-desking:** 29% of respondents felt that Culbokie would benefit from having hot-desking facilities.
- **Digitally connected meeting room:** Over a third of respondents in the survey thought that a digitally connected meeting room would be a useful inclusion in the space, though care needs to be taken that this doesn't displace existing provision in the area. Potential uses for a meeting room included a shared space with a part-time library facility, a shared learning space, and a venue for workshops and training sessions, reading groups and language lessons.

In addition, interviews with local businesses suggested reasonable interest in renting the space including, potentially, an anchor tenant. A key factor to be considered would be the affordability of the units, and this was a caveat to the responses from stakeholders when their interest was explored further. Capturing interest and assessing it at a given point gives an indication of what might be realised once the units are built. Evidence from elsewhere suggests that taking the leap based on some level of interest usually results in actual tenants upon completion. In order to maximise the potential of the development, CCT will continue to raise awareness of what is proposed and maintain a high profile of the forthcoming opportunities the development presents.

The proposed building, which would be highly energy efficient and with good digital connectivity, would have the potential to offer a combination of a retail unit(s), service units (for instance for the provision of health-related services), commercial and community meeting space including provision for hybrid meetings, and office space.

5.2 The local area

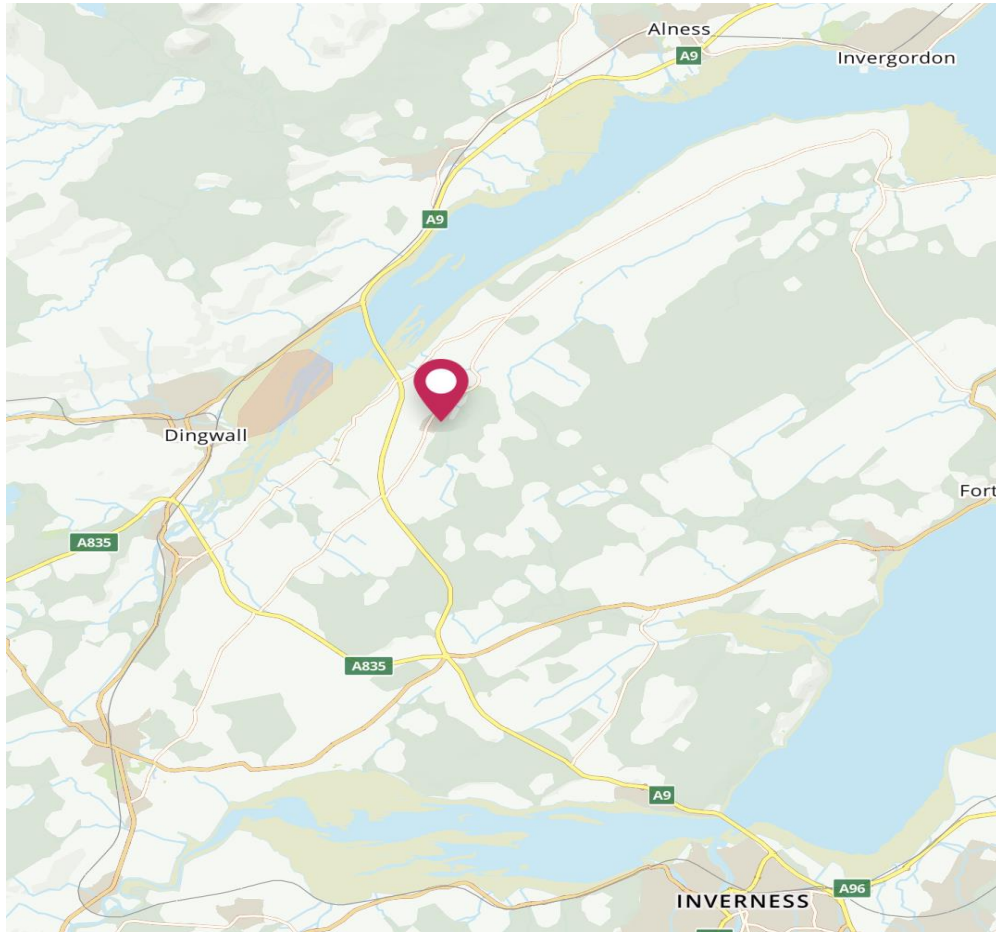
Culbokie is a village of around 1,166 people. It was a scattered farming/crofting village which expanded rapidly after the construction of the A9 north from Inverness in the early 1980s. Growth took the form of a series of new housing estates branching off from the main road – the most recent of which added 39 homes at Glascairn, completed in 2022.

The population soared from a few hundred to its current level and the village evolved into a 'dormitory' for Inverness and Easter Ross. However, as the village has grown, the provision of local services has failed to keep pace. The 2011 census showed that the village had a more significant number of people over 65 than the Scottish and Highland average - and we believe that the population is continuing to age. Until the establishment of Culbokie Green in 2022 there was no village focal point. There is still no GP, dentist or pharmacy and minimal business premises. Previous discussions with local medical centres confirmed that there are no plans for providing surgeries or clinics in the area. Most people, therefore, access everyday services by travelling to either Dingwall or Inverness. Poor local public transport means accessing these services requires a car journey.

Culbokie is now strung out along 2km of the B9169 which is the main through-road to the north side of the Black Isle carrying moderate volumes of heavy vehicles. This road dominates the village making it relatively unattractive for walking and cycling so that most people access existing village

services (the small shop, church, school and village hall) by car adding to traffic noise and pollution. Although there is a very high level of community spirit and activism, the consensus from community consultations is that Culbokie needs a focal point for community services and business use.

Map showing the location of Culbokie in relation to Dingwall and Inverness



5.3 The wider market

While there is yet to be any formal appraisal of the growth of community-owned hubs, there is a growing body of anecdotal evidence from recent years that suggests that these facilities play an increasingly important role in the provision of local services and helping communities towards greater resilience.

Across the Highlands and Islands there is a rise in the number of hubs which are either now fully operational or are at the planning stage:

- **Dornoch Hub:** Owned and operated by Dornoch Area CIC, the hub, formerly the police station, opened in 2021. Facilities include offices, studios and workshops for rent and conference plus meeting and hot desk rooms for hire.
- **Cromarty:** Privately-owned by Cromarty Estate, Cromarty Links Hub has 4 offices which are fully occupied. Meanwhile, Cromarty Community Development Trust is exploring the potential of re-developing East Church Hall as a business hub.
- **Claddach Kirkobost, North Uist:** Owned and operated by Ùrachadh Uibhist. Four rooms are available for hire in the Centre, which also houses a gym and café and soft play area for children.

- **North Harris Trust:** The Trust owns and operates 3 business units in Tarbert. Demand is high and the units have not been empty since the target group was changed to permit indigenous businesses to use them.

5.4 Fit with national and regional strategies

A key aim of the project - and CCT's wider aspiration - is to enhance the provision of locally available services. This project fits well with the following national and regional strategies:

- Scotland-wide ambitions for 20-minute neighbourhoods as set out in the Scottish Government's Fourth National Planning Framework. These are places designed so that residents have the ability to meet the vast majority of their day-to-day needs within a 20-minute walk of their home via access to safe walking/cycling routes or public transport. The Glascairn Community Project, of which these proposed business units will be part, has already incorporated some of the main principles of 20-minute neighbourhoods via the provision of some affordable housing and the creation of Culbokie Green and plans for good active travel links and facilities.
- The Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan (published 2020) which sets out a target date for net zero of all greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.
- The Highland Council's Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy to 2050 which states that "By 2050, Highland will be an exemplar carbon action region by optimising its unique, rich and diverse assets to lead national emissions reduction targets. Our unmatched land, coast and water environment and natural, built and cultural heritage – which define the character of Highland – will be safeguarded, enhanced and internationally celebrated. Highland will have transitioned to a green, circular economy which maximises the value of existing core industries, helps attract new and emerging sectors and diversifies jobs and skills. Highland communities will function as networks of locally resilient and self-supporting places with equality of access to housing, education, healthcare, work, food, energy, transport, culture, recreation, leisure and virtual connections." The Glascairn development meets many of these aspirations with its focus on the environment and the local provision of services through the proposed business units.
- The National Strategy for Economic Transformation for Scotland states "Our vision is to create a wellbeing economy: a society that is thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions, and that delivers prosperity for all Scotland's people and places. We aim to achieve this while respecting environmental limits, embodied by our climate and nature targets." The aim is to ensure that this vision applies to the whole of Scotland, with a particular focus on rural and island communities. The Glascairn development fits with this strategy through the provision of facilities that would contribute towards local prosperity. This national strategy has been adopted and applied locally by HIE in its Operating Plan for 2022-2023. This plan includes a number of objectives which are pertinent to the Glascairn development in general, but also the business units in particular, with their focus on providing workspace, office and therapy units in the local community. For instance, HIE states it will have a focus on: supporting and promoting socially productive use of land and assets; supporting social enterprises to develop new opportunities; and making remote working/working within the home community more widespread.
- The Highland Council Programme from 2022 to 2027 includes a priority to build more resilient communities by "helping our communities to be prosperous, sustainable and resilient, making a positive difference to the lives of people", to "support communities to help each other live well and independently", and to "work with partners to develop a community wealth building strategy". The Glascairn development is working towards all of these aims.

6. Finance

The estimated build costs as per McLeod & Aitken cost plan (provided as a separate document), as of February 2023, is £440,730 ex VAT. The cost per m² is £4, 407. This includes allowances for a car park area for any proposed future buildings and minimal landscaping work, as well as an element of contingency.

6.1 Capital funding

A number of funders have been identified which are a good fit between fund priorities and the proposed development, as detailed in the table below. Funding is a changing landscape, and new opportunities are constantly on the horizon.

Funder	Key points
SSE Sustainable Development Fund.	Opens Autumn 2023 with panel assessment in March 2024. Single process application and business plan must be submitted with any application. No maximum or minimum amount of grants although £100k is considered 'a reasonable amount'. Projects seeking support need to demonstrate a strong element of Net Zero.
Local Energy Scotland Let's Do Net Zero Building Fund	Open and runs until the end of March 2025. The fund supports community organisations to reduce building energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions by installing renewable technologies such as heat pumps. Funding is available for a range of community-owned buildings including village halls, community hubs and community centres. Funds up to 80% of eligible costs up to a maximum of £80,000. Where CARES funding is limited, it will prioritise funds to be used for retrofitting existing buildings. CARES can fund measures that exceed all regulatory requirements, but it is the responsibility of the applicant's professional design team to have a robust method that shows the extra measures going beyond any regulatory requirements and explains the rationale for these. They must also have a method to evidence costs related to the difference between compliant installations and the additional measures – i.e. be listed on a bill of quantities or verified by the design team etc.
Garfield Weston Foundation	Fund is open. For capital projects the award amount is typically under £30,000, though in some circumstances it can be higher but no more than 10% of the total costs of the project. They recommend you have half your funding secured before applying. Relevant planning permissions need to have been secured ahead of any application. Applications for building projects need to demonstrate, amongst other things, energy efficiency measures.
Highlands and Islands Enterprise	Support from HIE will be contingent on the business case and assurances that other funders are backing the project. It has indicated it would be open to supporting capital costs for either a new build or modular, re-purposed unit.
Community Shares	This option would need CCT to establish a different legal structure specifically for this purpose as only a co-operative or community benefit society can issue community shares. These are distinct legal structures, governed by the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2013 and registered with the Financial Conduct Authority. Would also require considerable community buy-in which would need to be generated by CCT.

6.2 Additional funding

There is potential for additional support for specific areas of the project. These include:

- HIE Supporting Communities Framework: This provides community-led organisations and social enterprises access to expert help and practical support to deliver local projects. Areas of support can include project development, project management, financial support (e.g. securing investment, development of funding applications), procurement and performance management. The services are delivered by consultants approved by HIE.
- The Scottish Government is currently supporting delivery officer posts which are being made available to DTAS members. Applications to the programme are made by HIE on behalf of an organisation.

6.3 Revenue costs and income generation

(Cash flow tables have been removed for commercial sensitivity reasons)

The tables below show the estimated running costs as £5,526 in Year 1, rising to £6430 in Year 3. These are very rough estimates, particularly in terms of heat and light costs. They also assume no staffing costs, other than a cleaning service. At this stage the financial projections are indicative only but clearly show the occupancy/rental levels needed for the building to be viable.

On this basis, the total estimated gross income is £9,640 in Year 1, rising to £18,060 in Year 3, giving an estimated net profit of £4,113 in Year 1 rising to £11,630 in Year 3. The cashflow projections have been prepared based on modest growth over the three years, and even at the end of the three-year period, the units are not operating at capacity within the projections, giving scope for further growth in the future.

7. Management Team

The CCT Board has nine trustees who collectively bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the running of the charity. Full details on the skills and experience of the team are included in Appendix One.

Directors:

- Richard Fyfe - Chair
- Alison Petch - Vice-Chair
- Jillian MacKenzie - Company Secretary and Treasurer
- Marilyn Richards - Minute Secretary
- Penny Edwards
- Mark Douglas
- Angie Morris
- Paul Wadge
- Sebastian O'Dell

In addition to the main board, there are two working groups which are made up of board members and others with relevant expertise and two key volunteers who make a significant contribution to the running of the charity.

Glascairn Project Management Group – meets weekly and involves Penny, Mark, Richard and Paul.

Fundraising Group – comprising Angie (who leads) and Alison as well as some other members who are not on the Board. The group raises invaluable funds to support CCT’s work.

Additional key volunteers:

Lesley Murray – who is supporting our work with the business units and also sits on the fundraising group.

Chris Little – Chris offers his services as an advisor to CCT as a Mechanical and Electrical Engineering expert.

8. Risk Assessment

Risk	Level of Risk	Level of Impact	Risk Mitigation
Challenges in securing funding	Medium	Project delayed or unable to start.	Build good relationship with the strongest potential funders from an early stage
Volunteer time limited to progress the project	Low	Project delayed	CCT’s board of directors already has some valuable project management experience. For this project, there are designated directors to help oversee the project and combined with specific input from volunteers with relevant experience. Taken

			together, this reduces the risk of volunteer burn-out.
Challenges in securing sufficient users of the building with an impact on revenue	Medium	Project viability threatened and reputational risk	Securing tenants for a building that does not yet exist can be difficult. Conversations with those who have expressed an early interest will need to be ongoing and regular. CCT may also wish to speak with other community hubs (e.g. Dornoch Hub which is owned and managed by Dornoch Area CIC) to learn about its approach.

9. Conclusions and next steps

CCT has adopted a careful, responsive approach to this project and adapted its original plans in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the drive towards net zero and the changing needs of its community.

The development of business units has, over a number of years, been proven to be a consistent community priority. It will enhance local service provision, meet the needs of a growing and ageing community and provide CCT with a revenue stream. It will also address emerging policy directions at a national level, for instance, the 20-minute neighbourhood.

The immediate priorities in terms of the next steps are:

- Continue proactive engagement with the community.
- Seek planning permission and building warrants.
- Initiate early conversations with funders including seeking support for a possible delivery officer. This will boost capacity to help move the project forward.
- Continue proactive engagement with those who have expressed an interest in becoming tenants.

Appendices

Appendix One - The Management team



Richard Fyfe - Chair

Richard has been on the board since 2014. He has lived in Culbokie since moving from Dingwall in 2001. Prior to his retirement in 2021, he worked for SEPA in Dingwall as a Chemist before becoming a specialist in environmental regulation. He also has experience in dealing with planning and Scottish Water issues and has a keen interest in environmental issues. He is an active member of the Culbokie Church of Scotland. Richard has a keen interest in the outdoors and his hobbies include hillwalking, cycling and kayaking as well as gardening.



Alison Petch - Vice-Chair

Alison joined the board in 2016, after returning to live full-time at the family home in Culbokie when she retired in 2015. After training in planning and in social work, she spent her working life in health and social care, initially as a university-based researcher. Latterly she led two third sector organisations which tried to ensure that what is learnt from research gets put into practice. She is currently Chair of the Dunhill Medical Trust and a Trustee for the Life Changes Trust and for C-Change Scotland. Her core interest is in trying to ensure that everyone is able to access a good quality of life.



Jillian MacKenzie - Company Secretary and Treasurer

Jillian is a Chartered Accountant who joined the board in 2014. She is originally from Sutherland but moved to Ross-shire and then Culbokie in 2006. Jillian is from a farming family and this area of work remains much of her professional focus in a long-standing accountancy practice she runs with her fellow directors. She specialises in new business start-ups and advises and assists family businesses to survive, flourish and develop across a range of sectors, working with large multi-million pound businesses to the local crofter. As well as being a trustee with CCT, Jillian also volunteers for several other community initiatives.



Marilyn Richards - Minute Secretary

Marilyn retired to Culbokie in December 2013 having spent her whole life living in small communities and since then has been involved in a variety of volunteer roles within the community, including joining the board of CCT in 2014. For 30 years she worked as a maths teacher, firstly near Greenock and then in Kirkwall, including 4 years working with local businesses to support disadvantaged young people into work. Before retiring she had a senior management post in local government. She also held a variety of positions in a Community Council, School Board, and other voluntary organisations.



Penny Edwards - Director

Penny joined the board in 2014. Her career has been in rural development, countryside management and forestry. Previous jobs have included Head of Strategy with the Central Scotland Countryside Trust, Chief Executive of the Sussex Wildlife Trust and Field Officer with the British Trust for Conservation volunteers. She also ran her own environmental consultancy and local hardwood timber business in Falkirk. She moved to Culbokie in 2008 and established an upholstery and woodworking business. She worked with Ferintosh Community Council to start the Culbokie Development Group in 2011 and was the first chair of CCT from June 2014 until Dec 2017. She is a Trustee of The Pebble Trust which supports sustainable lifestyles and a reduction in fossil fuel use with a focus on Highland Scotland.



Mark Douglas - Director

Mark joined the board in 2015. He is a Chartered Quantity Surveyor, and has worked in the construction industry for the past 30-years. He moved to Inverness in 2000 having worked in the Highlands and Islands for a number of years, whilst commuting on a weekly basis from Glasgow. Mark and his family moved to Culbokie in 2005.



Angie Morris - Director

Angie has lived in Culbokie for 19 years and joined the board in 2018. Her background is in education and the performing arts. Now retired, Angie has more time for volunteering as chair of Ferintosh Volunteers Steering Group and as an active member of the CCT Fundraising Team.



Paul Wadge - Director

Paul is relatively new to Culbokie having moved here in December 2019 and he joined the board the following year. Now retired, Paul is a volunteer with Black Isle Cares Meals on Wheels and a member of the FCC Volunteer Steering Group. His interests include Club Audi (Chairman & Newsletter Editor), photography, technology, walking and cycling. Paul is invaluable in project and grant management. He also brings community development, environmental and land management, and grant aid experience and has been involved in a number of construction projects.



Sebastian O'Dell - Director

Elected 28/03/22. Sebastian lives in Culbokie with his family since moving here from Edinburgh in 2017. He joined the board in 2022. He works as an IT Project Manager delivering large-scale regional and national projects. Sebastian has previous experience as an international athlete, has a keen interest in travel and outdoor activities - including running, cycling, hillwalking and open-water swimming - and regularly explores the woodlands around Culbokie with his two young daughters.