

# Community Purchase of Kenmore Church

## Feasibility Report

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## Background

Kenmore Parish Church dates back to 1760. The building acted as a parish kirk for the Kenmore and District community. The building comprises a traditional masonry structure in cruciform shape with transepts to the north and south. The building forms an important feature of the village square and is a landmark for many miles. The surrounding graveyard is now owned and maintained by Perth and Kinross Council.

There are two principal floors; a ground floor and some first floor levels which include a store room located behind the organ to the west side of the Kirk, and a balcony to the east side of the Kirk. The tower can be accessed from the balcony, and within this, there are an additional two storeys, essentially forming small second and third floors.

The building has been a much loved and valued icon and hub of village life for hundreds of years. Many residents were baptised or wed there, or have attended the funerals of their loved ones there. So there is a very strong local emotional attachment to the church, regardless of belief.

Due to falling congregation numbers the current owner, the Church of Scotland (CoS), has decided that the kirk is now surplus to its requirements and it has offered the building for purchase on an exclusive basis to the Kenmore and District Community for a limited period.

This offer arises at a time when some feel that opportunities to mix as a community, and to attract new visitors, have reduced in recent years, eg with the temporary closure of the Kenmore Hotel and boating business. Recent moves to encourage more social interaction, support more vulnerable people in the community, and engage young people, have been successful but are limited by our current facilities.

While we can't reverse the closure decision, we can try to preserve the church as a flexible asset for the community.

This presents once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for the wider community to benefit socially, environmentally and economically, but these opportunities also come with risks, particularly for a very small community such as ours.

The recently completed 2025-2035 Loch Tay Area Community Action Plan includes two relevant commitments:

- Development of a masterplan for the continued regeneration of Kenmore Village with a focus on enhancing access to amenities.
- Conduct a Feasibility Study to identify possibilities for alternative uses of Kenmore Kirk to support the aims of the Community Action Plan.

This feasibility report was commissioned by the Kenmore and District Community Council to look at the key issues involved and identify opportunities, costs and risks to help make an informed decision on both the desirability and feasibility of a purchase.

The CoS has given us just six months from valuation date to closing in end December 2025.

All figures are estimates and for guidance only at this stage.

# Part 1 - Desirability - do we need or want the Kirk?

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## 1. Contribution to our Community Action Plan

A Loch Tay Area Community Action Plan (CAP) was commissioned in 2024 by Kenmore and District Community Council and Glen Lyon and Loch Tay Community Council. The CAP was based on extensive consultation with local residents, community groups and organisations, visitors, elected representatives and businesses. It summarises the communities' views about:

- The Loch Tay area now, including the positive aspects and challenges
- The issues that matter the most to those who live, work and visit the Loch Tay area
- The vision for the future of the Loch Tay area
- The priorities for action needed to achieve this vision
- The The overarching vision for the area included:

*"...a friendly, well-connected community offering opportunities for all age groups to engage in community life."*

Use of the church as a community space would clearly Improve social cohesion across all parts and ages of the community and contribute to meeting this vision.

In addition, a well run community centre could help attract and retain more visitors and so support local businesses and provide economic benefits.

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## 2. Alternative ownership scenarios

Should the community decide not to purchase the Kirk there is the possibility that the Kirk either falls into disrepair and becomes an eyesore and liability (see Aberfeldy Church as an example) or it goes into private ownership.

Clearly, the former is highly undesirable.

The acceptability of the latter option may depend on the uses to which any new owners might intend but, except for planning consultation, this would be beyond the influence or control of the community.

The location of the Kirk within the graveyard may discourage some buyers and limit commercial options.

Blocking alternative ownership scenarios should not alone be a motivation for purchase but should be a consideration in the decision. Transfer to, or purchase of the Kirk by the community seems the only option that provides some guarantee of retaining the Kirk as an attractive and useful village asset.

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### 3. Current demand for community space/events

Recent activities in the Reading Rooms organised by the Community Council and Reading Rooms Management Committee indicate that there is a growing demand for community functions and events.

The first Warm Welcome season in 2024 attracted 177 members of the community over 12 sessions, supported by 11 volunteers.

In its second season, over 11 sessions, attracted 213 members of the community, an increase of 26 over the previous year. In addition, there were visits from 35 pupils from Kenmore Primary School over 5 sessions. We were supported by 9 volunteers.

Although these sessions were free of charge a donation box was introduced in the second session and this realised £586.28.

The regular music nights, which began in October 2024, have proved an enormous success, with regular attendances varying between 30 and 35. The most well attended event on 7 May drew 45 attendees - both musicians and audience.

Winter quiz nights average 36 participants per event.

Other activities which draw a large number of folk are the Easter and Christmas events where people are constantly entering and leaving the building.

A great many other events have taken place including crafting; first aid training; history talks; book club; McMillan Day; Taymouth Castle open day events; visits by history pupils from Breadalbane Academy; MP/MSP constituency meetings; and election voting.

Meetings of the Community Council (and various subgroups), Reading Room committee, Loch Tay Association, and the Crannog Centre take place there regularly.

Although hardly used for many years, the Reading Room has seen 78 events since December 2023.

Since the music nights began last October, excluding Christmas in Kenmore, donations from the these and other events, have totalled £2,267.82.

The rooms once again play an important role in the community but have significant limitations. Issues that hamper activities include:

- Limited capacity to expand attendance numbers
- A very small kitchen, with difficult access when events are busy
- Access to the toilets and space to move around can be difficult during busy events such as the music nights
- The rooms have next to no insulation and energy costs are very high
- Opportunities to improve energy efficiency are limited by space and conservation regulations
- The community has no ownership of the rooms and therefore no guarantee of future use, and limited say in its future or management.
- The building will require significant works in future years which will require grant applications or fundraising.

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## 4. Projected demand

Although the number of local residences remains fairly static, there is increasing capacity for holiday stays and therefore more visitors. Taymouth Marina and Mains of Taymouth both have plans for expansion. The development at Taymouth Castle will bring 140 new holiday homes to the area.

The new Crannog Centre is a national attraction and brings thousands of new tourists to the area.

As an added attraction for visitors the Kirk could help bring more visitors, helping to support our hospitality businesses and our tourist economy, especially if it can be operated as wedding/culture centre. This could help encourage more visitors in the off season when visitor numbers are much lower.

A newly formed Kenmore business group has been working to improve marketing and attractiveness of the area. The aim is to provide synergy between the various businesses and create a new generic promotional campaign. A new location brand 'Explore Kenmore' is in production. The Kirk could form an important component of this project.

In addition to the Reading Rooms, the Kenmore Village Hall, which primarily acts well as the primary school hall, provides a venue for social use but the hall is small, limited in function and has little atmosphere. Operating hours are restricted by school use.

*"Local people told us that the re-opening of Breadalbane Reading Room has had a hugely positive impact on village life, and the Village Halls across the settlements are highly valued assets. " - Loch Tay Area CAP.*

The small neighbouring settlements of Acharn and Fearnan manage to sustain regular social events in their village halls.

In the past Kenmore has been an attractive option for the wider communities such as Aberfeldy and Fortingall to come together. A new cultural centre might help restore this.

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## 5. What might we use it for?

Possible community functions and uses, based on discussions within the community and local businesses include:

- Community space: for local events including current Christmas and Easter celebrations
- Community gatherings, social nights etc, and meetings
- Children's creche, playgroup, after school care (need identified in the CAP)
- Sports activities such as badminton or table tennis, not already catered for in the sports pavilion
- Community resilience centre
- Cafe
- Summer camp for youth groups
- Space for local small business startups
- Local art, craft and food galleries or markets
- Formal events such as weddings, family birthdays or anniversaries
- Cultural events: music nights, festivals; recitals and readings, plays and talks

- Occasional religious ceremonies
- New opportunities for young people in the community

Although our community may be small, during the holiday months there is a captive market of holidaymakers looking for local activities or ‘things to do’. Opportunities to provide income may only be restricted by our imagination.

A hybrid church/community option may prove possible where both share the same space for church and non-denominational community use, also sharing overheads. On the downside, some funders won’t provide grants for religious activities. Sharing a space with two very different needs may create tensions and competition between them. Financially, such an option would not provide the significant cost savings required by the Kirk Session.

The lack of availability of affordable and mid-market housing for local people and workers was identified as a priority in the CAP. It appears most unlikely that the Kirk might provide suitable opportunity for such accommodation but this should be considered.

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## 6. Synergy with the Reading Rooms

As noted above, the Reading Rooms are limited in size and function and lack the capacity for events to develop further and expand.

The Community Council has considered alternative use of the rooms, for example as a local heritage/visitor centre.

There may be opportunity to use the rooms as part of a wedding package centred on the Kirk, for example as a staging reception area while the Kirk interior is transformed from ceremony to dinner and evening reception. Pre-Covid there were around 6 weddings in the Kirk per annum, and another 14 or so on the hotel grounds. Measures to improve the Kirk interior, taken with more active marketing, could increase these figures. Similar community developments in nearby towns, such as Comrie, report significant income streams from wedding venue and facility hire.

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## 7. Business and partnership opportunities

The opportunity of community purchase was shared with the newly formed ‘Explore Kenmore’ business group - a network of local businesses, mostly in the hospitality sector.

Managing the Kirk for many of the reasons listed at section 5 above would help attract visitors and add value to their stay. Opportunities may exist for full-service festival or wedding packages working with local accommodation and catering providers.

Full and early consultation with the Kenmore Business Group will be essential.

Partnerships with the community-run Birks cinema in Aberfeldy, and the very successful Pitlochry Festival Theatre, may also be possible and might help to bring acts and entertainment to the Kirk venue.

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## 8. Possible internal development

Local architects, McKenzie Strickland undertook an initial feasibility study of the church for the Community Council to investigate possibilities for internal adaptation.

Their report is available on the CC website (link?).

## Summary of Key points:

- The varied levels of the floors make flexible use and accessibility difficult
- Getting permission to remove the pews may prove a challenge
- Upper floors cannot be made fully accessible
- New lighting would present opportunities to create a sense of ambience
- A utilities survey will be required to identify the location, path and size of services
- Energy efficiency measures can be made
- The church may accommodate up to 300 people but given practical considerations 100 people is more realistic
- The open space of the nave and transepts lends itself well to a range of functions and most of those identified by the CC (see section 5) are feasible
- Minimal intervention designs should be pursued
- It is preferable (possibly mandatory) to avoid irreversibly altering the tiered and sloping floors by raising the floor
- Storage requirements would be significant

The interior of the Kirk lends itself to various permutations of flexible layout depending on its intended use. To function legally and practically as a hospitality/community venue it would require:

- New accessible toilets
- A full disability/accessibility audit
- Fire alarm system
- Emergency lighting
- An asbestos management plan
- Broadband installation
- Buildings, contents, and public liability insurance
- Extensive building works
- New flexible seating arrangements

In addition, and depending on intended use:

- Building works for internal segmentation for storage and possibly a small kitchen
- Conversion of the sanctuary to flat floor or stage area
- Storage space for crockery, cutlery, tables and chairs and linen
- A functioning semi-commercial kitchen
- Possibly a bar area or temporary bar

To function fully as an effective and attractive entertainment venue the building may also need sound and stage lighting equipment installed.

There is little scope to extend the building due to its proximity to the graveyard and its listed status, but there is an opportunity to utilise the store rooms, balcony area and space below, and the south and north transepts to form accessible toilets, kitchen and bar, and equipment storage. Architect plans would be required to ascertain costs for these measures. Planning, building and listed building permissions would be required.

In addition, the building would require new light fittings and energy efficiency measures - see section 14.

[Guidance - Access to the Built heritage \(HES\)](#)

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## 9. Community consultation

It is vital that community support for a purchase, and sustainable future for the Church, be properly assessed, and that this is assessed as soon as all the salient facts are available.

The Community Council must consider:

- How to best carry out an effective and inclusive consultation process
- How widely it must consult beyond KDCC residents
- How we engage younger people and business owners
- Whether to include regular visitors, and holiday home owners
- Venue for a community meeting
- Advertising and communication opportunities - social media, email, traditional media
- Consultation with other groups - Sports Association, School, Loch Tay Association, Crannog Centre, Reading Rooms Committee and neighbouring Comm Councils
- Methodology of collecting opinions/feedback and reporting

An online survey would seem to be a sensible option. To ensure it is inclusive for those who may not have access to such systems there may have to be alternative means of collecting information.

An outline consultation process is suggested at Annex 5.



## Part 2 - Feasibility - can we make it happen?

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### 10. General restrictions on use

The Church of Scotland has relaxed its constraints on use of former churches following disposal and, while negotiation with the CoS has yet to start, it appears unlikely that any restrictions on use will be imposed.

Depending on the intended use of the premises, music performance, alcohol and food hygiene licences may be required.

Change of use from church to community space would require planning permission and introduce new regulations and registration requirements.

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### 11. Restrictions on development as a listed building

*“The best way to protect our buildings is usually to keep them in use – and if that isn’t possible, to find a new use that has the least possible effect on the things that make the building special”, encouraging the practice of adaptive reuse as a means of ‘managing change’ in the historic built environment”* - Historic Environment Scotland

The Kirk is category B listed - a building of special architectural or historic interest which is a major example of a particular period, style or building type. It is also a very beautiful building with unique features such as the stained glass and etched arched windows. Future designs must find a balance of providing flexible space and maintaining the building’s traditional and special features.

It is a criminal offence to materially alter, extend or demolish a listed building without consent. Any structural changes, changes to windows and doors, cleaning of stonework, changing the colour of external paintwork, or display adverts and new signage would require permission. This may prove to be a significant constraint on development for community use. But that does not prohibit refurbishment or adaptation development. Early engagement with planning and historic environment bodies will be required to ensure policy and guidance are complied with.

From early discussions with architects our understanding is that there is a strong preference for any material internal changes to be reversible. Although it seems most unlikely that the building would revert to a church again this may prove to be onerous.

Getting permission to remove the pews may be a challenge. Building some of the pews into the new design may help gain planning permissions.

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### 12. Building condition

A building inspection report was professionally prepared for the Kirk in December 2024.

The report concluded that in respect of the building fabric, Kenmore Kirk is considered to be in ‘fair’ condition overall. The property is generally well maintained and has had substantial recent investment, however, various maintenance issues were identified as now becoming due, including the overhaul of the slate roof, the renewal of the lime paint to the harling and some isolated cracking to stone elements which have the potential to pose a health and safety hazard.

## Services

Mechanical and electrical services were considered to be in a 'fair-to-poor' condition due to various mechanical and electrical elements nearing or reaching the end of their serviceable lifespan. Replacement of the following items was identified as required or recommended:

- Heating system
- Lights
- Lightning conductors
- Fan
- Water heater
- Sewage pump
- Metal sockets
- Repair of clock

The total cost of this work is estimated at £81k, of which £34k is for replacement of the heating system. £44k of this total was identified as required in year one. However, if major internal works are to be carried out then all items should logically be replaced during that process.

Some of the heating system and lighting replacement costs may be recovered under energy efficiency grants - section 14.

## Building

Internally, the building is in decent condition but will require external repairs, particularly to the roof, stonework and tower.

Works costing in the region of £370k were identified for the next 10-year period. Of this figure, £290k is attributable to the building fabric, and £81k to building services.

Some building works may be phased over a 1-10 year period.

Work identified:

Year 1	£59k
Years 1-3	£255k
Years 4-10	£58k

All figures ex VAT and fees.

Clearly, regardless of any development work to make the building function as an effective community space, significant future funding will also be required to maintain it to a decent standard over above the items included above . This should be a major consideration in the purchase decision.

Repair and maintenance grants up to £500k aimed at non-profit organisations may be available from Historic Environment Scotland.

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## 13. Purchase, development and running costs

### Purchase

The Kirk is being offered at market valuation - £80k.

Funds to cover this cost may be available through the Scottish Land Fund, part of the National Lottery Community Fund but this requires an extended process that may not be suitable given our limited timescale. A suitable incorporated body would also need to be setup or identified to be able to apply. The Breadalbane Trust may qualify.

From the community feedback we have so far received, there is sentiment that the CoS is depriving the community of an existing asset, and that no charge should be made for the transfer.

Through networking, we understand that a simple no-cost transfer of CoS assets is not uncommon.

From the community's point of view, this would provide some compensation for removing what many consider is a community asset anyway, and it would help to offset the transfer to the community of some small part of the very significant ongoing building costs that the CoS might otherwise need to bear itself.

This would also simplify and accelerate the transaction to mutual benefit of both parties - no special body would need to be set up to qualify for SLF funds as the CC could take ownership, and there would be no delay in sourcing purchase funds.

The deal could then be completed more easily within the CoS imposed 6 month deadline, which seems highly optimistic.

### Development and adaptation

The costs of the adaptation works identified at section 8 need to be factored in.

The costs of internal development will depend on the work required to meet intended uses. At the very least the cost of tables and chairs, kitchen equipment and sound system must be included.

### Running Costs

Kenmore Kirk running costs for 2024 were:

PAT Testing	£155	
Fire Inspection	£140	
Roof repair	£350	
Electricity Kirk	£1,411	
Electricity Floodlight		£3,600
Insurance	£1,700	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,755</b>	

Electricity costs were based on heating and lighting for one day every other week - equivalent to 26 days or £54 per day. In recent years the church was unusable for some periods in the winter due to the cold.

We might expect to have the building operating at least two days per week with occasional additional use - say 120 days in total - with projected costs of £6.5k pa but this figure is dependent upon many variables: usage frequency; kind of use; time of year; energy rates; and efficiency measures adopted.

Clearly, the more successful the project is in hosting events, the higher the energy costs will be.

The floodlight costs were substantial and based on daily night time use. Although the illuminated Kirk makes for an attractive feature in the village, and more cost efficient lighting and scheduling will be possible, this cost may not be sustainable and is not included in the total figure. However, this may present a sponsorship opportunity.

Water and sewerage costs, and business rates are not included above.

As long as we have an income of less than £300,000 we may be eligible for a full or partial exemption on our water and sewerage charges. Depending on our activities we may also be eligible for 80% mandatory relief on business rates and possibly an additional 20% discretionary relief, meaning we could pay no rates. Both need to be confirmed.

We should factor in increased insurance premiums plus third-party liability cover once the Kirk changes use. Sufficient funds would need to be available immediately after sale or transfer to cover insurance and energy costs.

Energy will likely continue to dominate running costs.

The cost of event, alcohol, performing and copyright licences needs to be added but we have no figures for these at this time.

### Estimated capital costs (k)

Items	Cost	Notes
Purchase (inc legal costs)	85	
Building repairs	327	Non-services items identified as required in years 1-3 in bldg report.
Internal adaptation	250	Estimate based on immediate needs - installing new toilets and levelling floors.
Services	37	Assuming £44k heating systems replacement costs are included under Energy efficiency below.
Energy efficiency measures	75	See section 14.
Catering and function equipment	15	Tables, chairs, cutlery crockery, kitchen equipment, linen.

## Estimated capital costs (k)

AV Equipment	12	Sound system, stage and lighting. Projector and screen.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£726</b>	

Costs ex Vat and fees. No figure for installation of new lights is available.

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## 14. Energy efficiency

Energy is expected to be a major overhead in the running of the building.

There is no gas supply to the building and little prospect of accommodating an LPG tank.

An independent energy assessment of the Kirk would be required to inform actual opportunity and costs for energy efficiency improvements. Initial enquiries suggest this should be obtainable free of charge through the government Energy Saving Trust but we may need to own the building to take advantage of this.

As a priority, the current heating system would need to be replaced with more modern and energy efficient systems. Removal of the pews would necessitate replacement or relocation of radiators in any case.

Initial talks with energy efficiency experts familiar with similar projects identified a number of potential measures for improvement:

- Loft/roof and underfloor insulation
- Secondary glazing - some already fitted but possibly scope for more
- Air source heat pumps
- High efficiency fans (destratification ventilation system fans etc)
- Radiant heating units
- Energy efficient lighting
- Solar panels with battery storage
- Internal segmentation of the space

Solar energy with battery storage has great potential for making significant savings. However, fitting solar panels on listed buildings is generally confined to low visual impact areas. For the kirk that might restrict possibilities to only a section of the tower roof.

Investment sums would be substantial - estimated in the region of £80-100k - but could provide significant savings with a possible payback over 8-10 years.

Similar projects for churches with annual energy costs of £20k using the above measures, projected a £14k annual saving with a carbon reduction of 74%.

Financial support for energy and carbon-saving upgrades is available through the Scottish Government's SME Loan Scheme. Interest free loans from £1,000 to £100,000 are

available to eligible SMEs, including charities. We might also receive a cashback grant of up to £20k. Loans are unsecured, and repayments are made over an 8-year period.

Loan repayments would need to be factored into running costs.

[Case study - Kilmelford Church Pilot Study on Church Heating](#)

[Case study - Wells o' Wearie, Thermal upgrades to walls, roof, floor and glazing.](#)

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## 15. Funding sources

Possible sources of income include:

- Historic Environment Scotland grants for listed buildings
- Scottish Government's SME Loan Scheme for energy improvements
- SSE Windfarm funding
- Other grant funding sources
- Local businesses
- Sponsorship
- Fundraising activities
- Community Cafe
- Hall rental
- Event ticketing
- Weddings
- Community share scheme
- Crowdsourcing
- Payment in kind - local business and tradespeople contributions

Although there are many sources of grant aid, it should be noted that applications can be very time consuming; that grants commonly do not cover 100% of project costs; and that there is enormous competition for available funds. In some cases volunteer time may be counted towards the community's contribution to costs.

However, being dependent on grants is unlikely to form a sustainable business model, and an income stream is vital.

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## 16. Community involvement

Sustainable management of the Kirk would require substantial commitment from the community.

While it may become the case that the community centre could employ part-time staff for management, cleaning and other services, in the early stages at least volunteers would be required. Fundraising activities and general maintenance works will also require volunteer support.

The small size of our community might restrict volunteer numbers. however, the Reading Rooms Management Committee has shown considerable success in recruiting people to help with Winter Warmer events, quiz nights and other functions. Similarly, the Community Council has had very healthy volunteer turnouts for its Christmas and Easter celebrations, and the Sports association for the Highland Games. 'Volunteer fatigue' may become an issue though.

Many older local people speak very fondly of the former Holder Hall which served as the village social centre for many years. Our aims would include returning to that era of healthy social interaction.

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## 17. Ownership structure

Should the Kirk be gifted to the community then this simplifies and accelerates the transfer process. The Community Council could take ownership, possibly transferring this to another body or trust should that become desirable. Perth and Kinross Council has confirmed that section 16 of the Community Council's constitution allows us to own property. In the short term, at least, this may prove an attractive option, with the possibility of transfer of ownership at a later stage to a more appropriate body, such as a charitable trust.

Should purchase funds be required things become more complicated. To be eligible to receive a grant under the Scottish Land Fund for the purchase of land, land asset or a building, an organisation must be a corporate body. This means it has a separate legal identity from its members and can enter into contracts and hold property in its own name. This includes Community Councils. Another structure would be to use the Breadalbane Development Trust, or form an entirely new body, although this would take time.

### Pros and cons

Body	Pro	Con
Breadalbane Trust	<p>Ready to use.</p> <p>No delay.</p> <p>No cost.</p>	<p>May need revision of constitution.</p> <p>Perhaps not inspiring for the community.</p> <p>Detached from the CC and other groups.</p> <p>Not known.</p> <p>Yet another body to coordinate with.</p>
New Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)	<p>The SCIO is a legal form unique to Scottish charities and is able to enter into contracts, employ staff, incur debts, own property, sue and be sued.</p> <p>It provides a high degree of protection against liability.</p> <p>New and inspiring.</p>	<p>Cost attached in creating.</p> <p>Yet another body.</p> <p>Time consuming process.</p> <p>Delay in completing may jeopardise purchase.</p>

Community Council	<p>Ready to use. No delay no legal impediment.</p> <p>Involved and coordinating already with other groups: Business Group; Resilience Comm; Taymouth Castle.</p> <p>Has established relationships with other key players, eg PKC.</p> <p>Already successfully operating a sub-group management model.</p> <p>Option to transfer ownership to an alternative body later.</p>	<p>Perhaps not inspiring for the community.</p> <p>Currently non charitable status and no financial benefit.</p> <p>Members may already be overloaded.</p>
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## 18. Management structure

There are two stages:

### Stage 1 - Purchase or transfer

A sub-group will be required to oversee the purchase or transfer process. Members could be selected for their specific short-term skills and knowledge and the group could report directly to the governing body (CC, BDT or new Trust body).

In addition, a short-term advisory group could be established to support the sub-group throughout the process. This could include individuals from external agencies and local businesses or individuals in the community who have skills in required areas such as project management, finance or business development.

The amount of supervision required to carry out the purchase and building works is substantial and should not be underestimated. The temporary appointment of a project manager with appropriate skills, and possibilities of sourcing funding for this, should be considered.

### Stage 2 - Running

While the Community Council or other board could own and provide the governance of the building, day-to-day management could be more effectively vested in a separate management committee drawn from members of the community who bring valuable skills and experience in areas such as:

- Building maintenance
- Contracts
- Finance and accounts
- Hospitality
- Communications and marketing
- Event planning
- Festival planning



Models already operate successfully under the Kenmore and District Community Council umbrella concentrating on: roads safety and improvement; resilience preparation; Christmas and Easter events; and liaison with Taymouth Castle. Some of these groups include the participation of non-elected members of the community.

Consideration should be given to appointing a project manager for a limited period. It is likely that grant funds for this will be available.

Managing the premises may prove to be beyond the scope of volunteers and require the appointment of a full or part-time manager. The cost of this would need to be built into any business plan should that need arise.

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## 19. Timing

The CoS has put a six month window for completion of a sale from time of formal offer. This would close at the end of December. 2025.

Given the work required this seems very challenging, particularly if a sale, rather than transfer, is required.

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## 20. Options

The community is presented with five main options, each with its own benefits and risks:

Option	Action	Benefit	Risk
1	Do nothing	Low/no risk.  No commitment or further resources required.	Opportunity is lost.  No benefit to the community.  Possibility that the building falls into disrepair.  Building is completely outwith community control.
2	Offer the project to another community group	Church may still be saved for the community  No commitment or further resources required	Groups' bid may fail
3	Wait till the church is put on the open market	May purchase at much lower price	Church may be sold to a higher bidder  May need to find funds much faster

4	Purchase the church, make the building good, take time to develop plans, find funding as we go	Building is made safe and taken into community control but with limited initial financial risk or resource commitment.  Plans develop along with funding opportunities.	Slow to realise full benefits.  Piecemeal approach to development.
5	Purchase the church, go for the 'Big Picture' - full development.	Maximum benefits in shortest time.  One big push for funds.	Possibility of moving too fast creating a facility that is underused or is financially unsustainable.  Harder to find substantial funds required.

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## 21. Conclusions and recommendations

- a) The Kirk provides scope to be adapted as a viable and practical community centre with multiple uses.
- b) The project could provide significant benefits to local communities, visitors and businesses.
- c) The timescale imposed by the CoS is very restrictive. Obtaining funding in this period will be challenging.
- d) The building fabric of the Church is considered to be in fair condition overall but there are some pressing items that will need attention soon.
- e) Most mechanical and electrical services are considered to be in a 'fair-to-poor' condition and are rapidly reaching the end of their serviceable lifespan.
- f) There will be restrictions on adapting the building to a new use but these are not insurmountable.
- g) Significant funds will be required to purchase the church, make urgent repairs, adapt the building to its new purpose, and maintain it. Ten-year costs, excluding running costs, are likely to be in the region of £850,000.
- h) If sufficient funds and community support can be found the project appears feasible.
- i) A professional energy efficiency study, and consultation with Historic Environment Scotland and PKC Planning Dept, should be high priorities should the project move ahead.
- j) A realistic and viable business plan is crucial for success and for obtaining grant funding.
- k) Resourcing the purchase and adaptation projects will be challenging. Expert assistance may be required, and consideration should be given to appointing a project manager.
- l) The willing and sustained support of local volunteers will be absolutely essential. not just to the acquisition process but also to the long-term sustainability of the project.

The scale of the support required should not be underestimated and a clear community commitment to providing support will be required before moving forward.

- m) Over-ambition to do too much too quickly may be a temptation, but a staged approach would allow demand and requirements to be fully assessed before committing to longer term internal changes. Smaller scale staged funding may also be more achievable. (Up for discussion).
- n) The venture needs an exit plan to ensure that no lasting liability on the community is created should the project fail. The building may form a sellable asset if no longer required.

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## 22. Possible next steps plan

Proposed purchase and development process (should purchase be desired).

- Consult with the community
- If agreed to go ahead, appoint a working group for stage 1 - purchase, including a dedicated fundraiser.
- Consider hiring a project manager.
- Seek specialist technical assistance (under DTAS/SLF?)
- Obtain letters of support from the community, businesses and local politicians.
- Agree an ownership model and, if required, appoint office bearers
- Clarify needs, building specifications and adaptation requirements
- Commission an energy efficiency survey. Seek firm cost estimates for all works.
- Prepare a costed Business Plan with clear vision, aims and objectives
- Submit funding applications
- Appoint a legal adviser and architect

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## 23. Annexes

### Annex 1 - Preliminary Risk Assessment

No	Type	Detail	Likelihood (5=High)	Impact (5 = High)	Mitigation
1	Financial	Inability to raise the capital funding required to complete the building causes the project to be unsuccessful.	3	5	Consider alternative income sources.  Seek expert advice on drafting an effective business plan.
2	Financial	Inability to generate enough revenue to meet the costs of running the organisation leads to financial difficulties.	3	4	Develop diverse income streams, including sources of unrestricted income from fundraising and commercial activity.  Ensure marketing is effective.
3	Operational	Taking on the building stretches the capacity of volunteers, causing individuals to be unable to continue in their roles.	3	3	Recruit additional volunteers for the board and to fulfil specific roles, carry out a skills audit, raise funding to employ staff.
4	Financial	Financial assumptions in budgets and estimates are inaccurate.	3	4	Obtain accurate estimates for work and allow for margins of error.  Resist project creep.

5	Operational	Community lacks the capacity to manage the venue.	3	4	Consider employment options - costs and benefits.
6	Financial	Energy costs rise significantly.	2	4	Seek expert advice on energy conservation and efficiency to reduce overheads.  Make allowance for possible increases in business plans.
7	Legal	Visitor accident results in legal case.	4	3	Ensure adequate public liability insurance is in place.
8	Financial	We are unable to realise benefits for the community and the project becomes financially unfeasible	3	5	Seek expert advice and assistance from similar other project experiences.  Prepare an exit strategy in early stages.
9	Financial	Building is damaged/burnt	3	5	Ensure adequate buildings and contents insurance.
10	Governance	Inability to appoint trust or management board.	2	5	Identify and recruit individuals with right skillsets.
12	Governance	The project does not have the support of the community.	3	4	Carry out full consultation and take heed of community needs and wishes.  Communicate fully and frequently.  Take a staged approach.

13	Governance	The Comm Council becomes overwhelmed in focusing on the Church acquisition, to the detriment of the many other community affairs it is involved in day to day.	2	5	<p>Others in the community play active roles in the project.</p> <p>Consider hiring a project manager for a limited period.</p>
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## Annex 2 - SWOT Analysis

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>Political support - Project accords with Gov policy on empowering communities.</p> <p>SURF Awards 2024 strengthens our hand in seeking funding.</p> <p>Already have structures such as the CC and BDT that allow us to move quickly.</p> <p>Strong community spirit and availability of volunteers.</p> <p>CAP in place and supportive</p> <p>Supportive business group.</p> <p>Mix of skillsets within the community that could be harnessed.</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>No current funding streams.</p> <p>Need to augment existing CC skillsets.</p> <p>Uncertainty over demand and income projections and cost estimates.</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>Chance to obtain a valuable and flexible community space.</p> <p>Contributes to social and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>Many options for use.</p> <p>Significant benefits to local people, businesses and visitors.</p> <p>Contributes to 'Explore Kenmore' campaign.</p> <p>Plenty sources of expert advice available.</p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>Sustaining finance to adapt and run the building is uncertain.</p> <p>Building is old and may require frequent and significant upkeep costs.</p> <p>Higher use means higher costs.</p> <p>The Comm Council may become overwhelmed in focusing on the Church acquisition, to the detriment of other priorities, and day to day community matters.</p>

### **Annex 3 - Comrie White Church Case Study**

Two members of the working group visited the White Church at Comrie in May, as their situation bears some resemblance to ours.

Built in 1805, The White Church is a Grade A listed building lying at the heart of the historic conservation village of Comrie.

In 1965 the Church of Scotland General Trustees handed over the building to local trustees to serve the village as a community centre.

In 2000 the centre underwent a major refurbishment with funding from the Millennium Commission, many other funders and an enormous fund raising effort on behalf of Comrie residents.

The building has been totally stripped inside and segmented into three halls on two floors. The main hall has a stage, sound system and theatre style lighting.

A mobile bar can be wheeled out when required and the building has alcohol, and performing licences.

The White Church is the central feature of what is undeniably an exceptional, lively community. There are in excess of 50 community groups within the village of approximately 2,000 people. Many of these groups use the centre for regular activities, fundraising or social functions.

It also hosts a plethora of events throughout the year and is the ideal venue for weddings and parties. A Friday night pub with pool tables, darts etc is a regular feature.

The centre is managed by a part-time paid manager and a cleaner. All other duties, including bar services, are provided by volunteers. This keeps the running overheads to a minimum.

Ownership of the centre rests with a trust board and there is a separate Management Committee of 9 people to look after the day to day running of the centre.

There are currently around six weddings hosted per year and the takings of the rental and bar covers the annual energy bills. Local people are entitled to a 25% discount on rental costs.

Overall, the income stream pays for all the running costs. The costs of one-off projects are met from grants and fund raising activities.

The active participation of volunteers is key to the financial sustainability of the community centre.

Many thanks to Jaclyn Wilson, the Comrie Community Centre manager for her advice and assistance.

Other case studies are listed in Annex 4.



## **Annex 4 - Case studies and sources of funding, information and advice**

[Development Trusts Association Scotland \(DTAS\)](#)

[Community Ownership Support Service \(COSS\)](#)

[Aberfeldy Town Hall \(COSS\)](#)

[Kilmaronock Old Kirk Trust - How to take a kirk into community ownership.](#)

[Guidance - Managing Change in the Historic Environment \(HES\) -Use and Adaptation of Listed Buildings New uses for Former Church Buildings](#) - Scottish Civic Trust case studies

['Crossing the Threshold Toolkit'](#) Diocese of Hereford step-by-step guide to managing a church building project.

NCVO guidance on [Writing a Business Plan for community groups](#)

[SCVO Index of funding organisations](#)

[Historic Environment Grants \(HEG\) programme](#)

## **Annex 5 - Proposed consultation process**

### Target audiences:

#### Local

Residents  
Schoolchildren and young folk  
Businesses  
Community groups  
Church

#### Wider interest

Nearby community councils  
Holiday home owners  
Visitors

While obtaining the views of a wider groups of interest will be valuable, appropriate weighting should be given to local interests in reaching a decision.

### Process:

1. Advertise the consultation in social media, traditional media, CC website, posters - starting 17 July
2. Hold a public meeting - possibly in the church - 24 July
3. Hold online survey - immediately after meeting 24 July to 7 August
4. Report - 10 August
5. CC Special meeting for a decision on purchase or other options - (per Standing Orders) - 12-15 August

## **Annex 6 - Acknowledgements**

McKenzie Strickland Architects  
David O'Donoghue, Taymouth Castle  
Jon Iddon, Kenmore Reading Rooms Management Committee  
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Lorimer Gray, Kirk Session  
Gillian Spence, Kenmore Hotel  
Robert Lee, Church of Scotland  
Scottish Land Fund  
Kimberley Laidlaw