

18 March 2024



Community Asset Transfer Manager
Forestry and Land Scotland
Apex 1, 99 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5HD

Dear Rebecca

AVIEMORE AND GLENMORE COMMUNITY TRUSTS APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER OF THE GLENMORE VISITOR CENTRE AND CAFE

We wish to thank all individuals and organisations who took the time to submit representations in respect of our asset transfer application for the Glenmore Visitor Centre and Café. We recognise the importance of considering all viewpoints and there are some common themes raised in the representations, which we would like to respond to:-

Preserving the Status Quo with regards to the Cobbs Concession:

The Trust's model and vision for the visitor centre and café is very different from the existing model.

Currently the café is operated by Cobbs as a concession from Forestry and Land Scotland and in addition to the café, Cobbs look after the toilet facilities. Forestry and Land Scotland continue to own the building and the car parks.

AGCT's application is to purchase the visitor centre building as well as three associated car parks. As owners of the visitor centre, we will be able to improve the energy performance of the building and in doing so we aim to reduce the buildings carbon footprint and energy costs. We have successfully implemented such measures at Aviemore Ice Rink and in doing so we halved the rink's energy consumption. This has been key to the rink's continued success during a cost-of-living crisis. Put bluntly, the ice rink has survived due to such measures having been taken and it must be one of a very few such facilities nationally which has managed to both stay in profit whilst receiving negligible revenue funding from the state.

Our vision is to enhance the Visitor Centre, drawing on both the rich local heritage and culture as well as the natural environment. Glenmore has a central role to play in the story of the Cairngorms, the peoples who have made it their homes, and the preservation of one of the largest areas of continuous native woodland in the UK and its restoration.

There is a great opportunity to enhance the Visitor Centre as a facility for locals, and for arts and events and in which both holiday makers and locals can enjoy. The café offering will be diversified and enhanced for that market.

During holiday periods we aim to have in place a car park warden who can act as a first point of welcome and visitor information, as successfully shown at Rothiemurchus for decades.

Aviemore and Glenmore Community Trust (AGCT)

Registered Office: 15-17 High Street, Kingussie PH21 1HS
Correspondence: 7 Slochd Court, Aviemore PH22 1TS
info@aviemoreglenmoretrust.org

AGCT is a private company limited by guarantee
Registered number: SC578898 | SC051417

It is important to note that in November 2022 Forestry and Land Scotland tendered for a service provider to deliver catering concession at its various visitor centre sites. The Glenmore Visitor café was removed from the procurement process following an expression of interest from AGCT for the Glenmore Visitor Centre and Café. Forestry and Land Scotland retained the ability to offer the operation of Glenmore Café to the winning bidder without further tender. Cobbs secured a temporary extension for the operation of the café whilst discussions were ongoing for the community asset transfer of the visitor centre.

AGCT are a *Living Wage Employer* and we take our responsibilities to our employees seriously. We believe that TUPE applies to the café and as such the employment of all relevant employees must be transferred to the Trust's employment under the same terms which they are currently employed.

Business Plan and Financial Stability of AGCT:

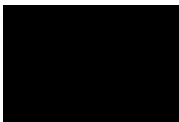
AGCT has an experienced and highly skilled board, with multiple directors who have founded, grown and continue to run successful businesses in the Aviemore area.

Our business plan was compiled based on our plans by a highly qualified consultant and reviewed by several independent business individuals with expertise in tourism and the food and drink sectors. A business plan shows intent and acts as a checklist that all major income streams and expenses have been considered. A business plan is rarely set in stone. The business plan from AGCT sets out or intent to increase spend from existing visitor numbers, and to extend the operating hours at the Glenmore Visitor Centre from the current levels.

Clearly all these increases necessitate additional staffing and expense. Should these increases not be forthcoming within the intended timescales then those costs will be reduced. While we remain flexible in adapting to evolving circumstances, our proven ability to operate the ice rink under challenging conditions highlights our capability to navigate economic challenges and ensure sustainable operations.

In closing, we confirm our dedication to developing community engagement, promoting sustainability, and delivering tangible benefits to our community.

Yours faithfully



Duncan Swarbrick, Chair
*For and on behalf of the Board of
Aviemore and Glenmore Community Trust.*