

Coilhalla Community Woodland

Feasibility Study – Market Analysis

1. Methodology

This document reports a market analysis for Coilhalla Community Woodland. Various processes have helped to achieve this:

- A market and needs assessment was carried out by looking at the local Callander economy, traffic figures and tourism data.
- Existing data and research was examined. For example, information from of a Community Survey (carried out in 2016 to inform the Community Action Plan for 2017-22) was referred to, to gain an understanding of local opinion at this preliminary stage.
- Possible end use options for Coilhalla Community Woodland were examined by carrying out secondary research, looking at the initial feasibility of each. This includes an analysis of each option’s competition and comparators.
- Those that were still rated as being viable at this stage were further analysed through primary research involving a Community Survey focusing on Coilhalla Community Woodland, what people use it for and would like to see done with it.



2. Market and Needs Assessment

The 'Invest In Stirling' website¹ (established by Stirling Council in 2017) states that; "A possible long-term development opportunity is identified at Callander for a large-scale tourism resort of international significance. This would directly contribute to the Government's Scottish Tourism Framework for Change and also enhance the role of Callander as a tourism gateway to the National Park. ...These areas are capable of successfully absorbing further tourism development to help improve their visitor offering and deliver economic benefits to communities.

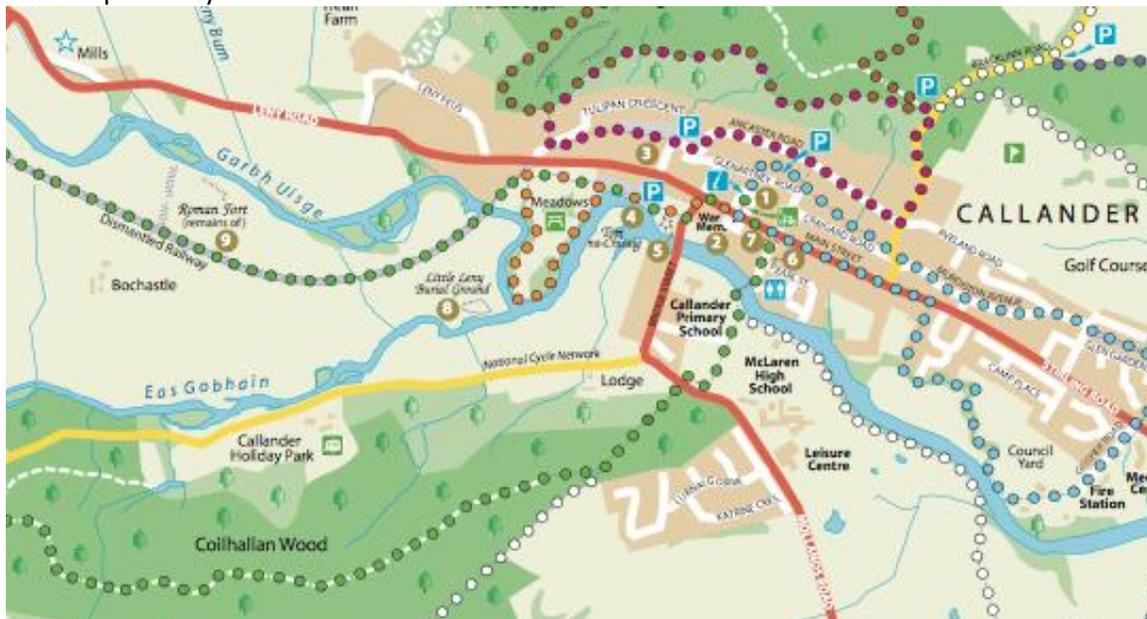
Any such development would have exceptional opportunities to capitalise on the major trends in Scotland's tourism. The rise in popularity of adventure tourism and outdoor pursuits in particular creates an unprecedented opportunity for Scottish tourism.

The UK Tourism Survey calculates the volume and value of Scotland's key outdoor activities including walking, wildlife watching, adventure sports and mountain biking at approximately 3.7million trips and worth £850m in expenditure.

Working closely with our partners in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park authority, we can offer an attractive investment opportunity to create something special in one of Scotland's most beautiful locations."

2.1. Background Information / Location

Map 1. Taken from 'Callander Paths' map, showing various walking routes and Coilhallan Wood's proximity to the town



¹ <http://www.investinstirling.com/key-sectors/tourism/resort/>

Coilhullan Wood is currently owned and managed by Forestry Commission Scotland.

Almost two-thirds of the woodland site was recently felled, and is naturally regenerating with species such as birch, gorse and broom, as well as self-set conifers. The majority of the remaining areas of the site remain covered in pine trees, of which a large number have been wind blown. Under the current long-term Forest Plan, there will be no felling until 2065. There are also a few pockets of mature broadleaf trees, one in particular at the East end of the site being particularly interesting and accessible.

The site has a good location, being close to the town centre and adjacent to McLaren High School / Leisure Centre. The National Cycle Route 7 passes along the Northern border of Coilhullan Wood, giving immediate or very close access at both ends of the site. It also has an existing network of forestry tracks that are well used by walkers and cyclists, including some core paths.



Photo 1. Signage at the entrance to Coilhullan Wood

2.2. Is there a need?

Local traders and residents have shown concerns over recent years that Callander is stagnating, with little investment or growth in visitor numbers.

“It’s the same old story with Callander....when the sun is out the day trippers and tourists stop off but when it is rainy they drive straight through.”

Quote from Rita Kyle, owner of the Auchenlaich Farmhouse guest house, taken from <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/visitors-flood-callander-heat-wave-2083246>

The following information examines these concerns in more depth.

2.2.1 The Callander economy

The Edinburgh Woolen Mills Group closed down four stores on Callander Main Street in 2016 after a 25-year tenancy. Businesses were concerned that bus tours – crucial to the town’s tourism industry – would stop using the town as a destination for their clients.

Whilst new businesses have opened in the disused stores, there is clearly still concern from all quarters. For example, the minutes² from a meeting at Stirling Council on the 31 March 2016 to discuss the Callander Economic Action Plan, states that:

1. At its Special Meeting on 25 February 2016, the Council agreed that **given the current issues in the Callander economy, there was a need to provide support for diversification and new activity there.**
2. The Council agreed to provide this support, subject to a report and plan coming to the Finance & Economy Committee. A budget of £35,000 has been allocated from the 2016/17 Revenue Budget to this end.

It goes on to say that; “Officers from Communications, Marketing and Events, and Economic Development will work with the Callander community to help develop and support a range of events and projects to support and develop the local economy. Any such events will showcase and celebrate the Callander and wider area as a tourism destination, attracting increased visitors and stimulating the local economy.”

In the document, “Stirling Council Area – Brief Evidence Overview³”, various life stage impacts in different towns and areas within Stirlingshire are examined. With regard to Callander’s economy, the illustration shows that the following comparisons in Callander are recorded as being statistically significantly ‘better’ than the Scottish average:

2

<http://minutes.stirling.gov.uk/pdfs/finance%20%26%20economy/Reports/FE20160331Item09CallanderEconomicActionPlan.pdf>

³ http://www.stirling.gov.uk/__documents/temporary-uploads/employment,-community-_and_-youth/communitiesteam_outcomes_partners_evidenceoverview.pdf

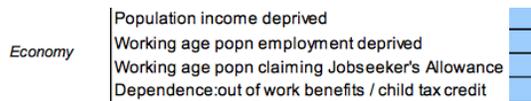
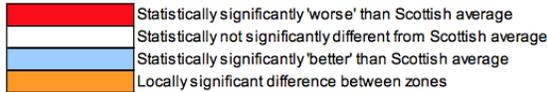


Figure 1. Stirling: A section of the 'Community and life stage 'traffic light' comparison chart'

Key:



Rural Stirlingshire generally has lower unemployment and income deprivation than the rest of the council area, with good employment figures coming from managerial/professional level workers who commute, through to those employed in hospitality and retail (generally lower paid). There is also more self-employment and entrepreneurship.

In summary, the above data suggests that Callander's economic figures are above average because of people commuting to their place of employment, which usually is at management level. However, there is concern that the local economy is in danger – as noted by Stirling Council – because of lack of recent investment in the town.

2.2.2 Callander traffic figures

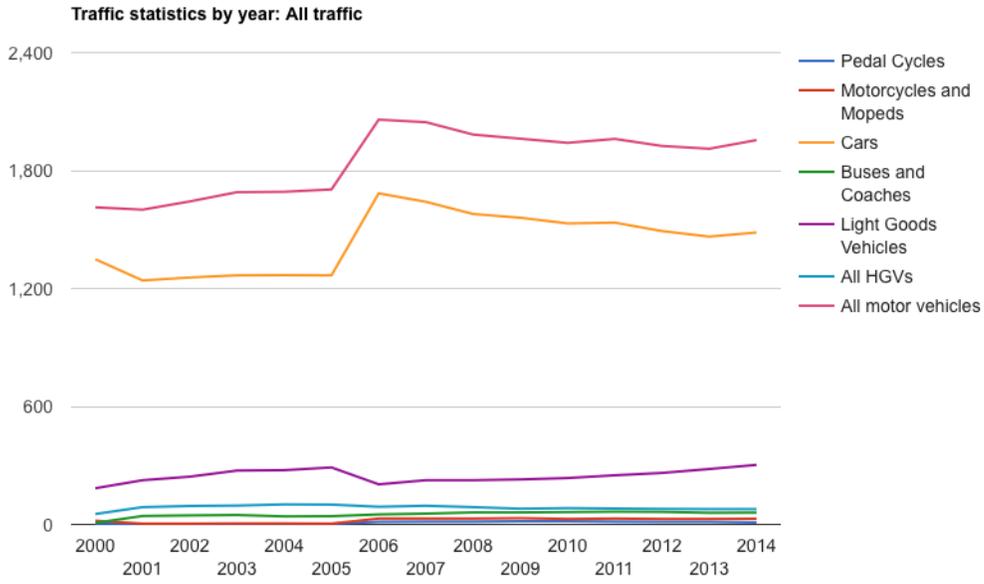
Data for traffic statistics for all vehicle types⁴ has been obtained (please see below) at two traffic census points: A) the A81 between A873 and A84 and B) the A81 between C-road to Gartchonzie and A84.



Map 2: Census Point Coverage: A81 between A873 and A84

Vehicle Types - Average Daily Flow for Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Pedal Cycles	4	3	3	3	3	3	13	14	14	16	16	14	13	13	10
Motorcycles and Mopeds	19	4	4	5	5	4	30	30	30	32	28	30	28	28	29
Cars	1349	1241	1256	1267	1268	1267	1684	1641	1579	1560	1531	1535	1492	1464	1485
Buses and Coaches	8	43	46	48	41	42	51	55	61	61	63	65	64	59	60
Light Goods Vehicles	184	225	243	274	276	290	204	225	225	229	236	250	262	282	303
Two-axle Rigid HGVs	24	25	25	25	25	25	52	57	54	49	51	51	52	51	51
Three-axle Rigid HGVs	14	13	15	15	17	17	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5
Four-axle Rigid HGVs	7	26	29	31	35	36	5	6	6	6	5	6	7	8	8
Three-axle Articulated HGVs	0	9	9	9	8	7	20	18	16	14	16	13	9	7	7
Five-axle Articulated HGVs	1	6	6	5	5	4	6	7	5	4	4	4	4	4	3
Six-axle Articulated HGVs	7	9	10	11	12	12	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
All HGVs	53	88	94	96	102	101	90	95	88	80	83	81	79	78	78
All motor vehicles	1613	1601	1643	1690	1692	1704	2059	2046	1983	1962	1941	1961	1925	1911	1955

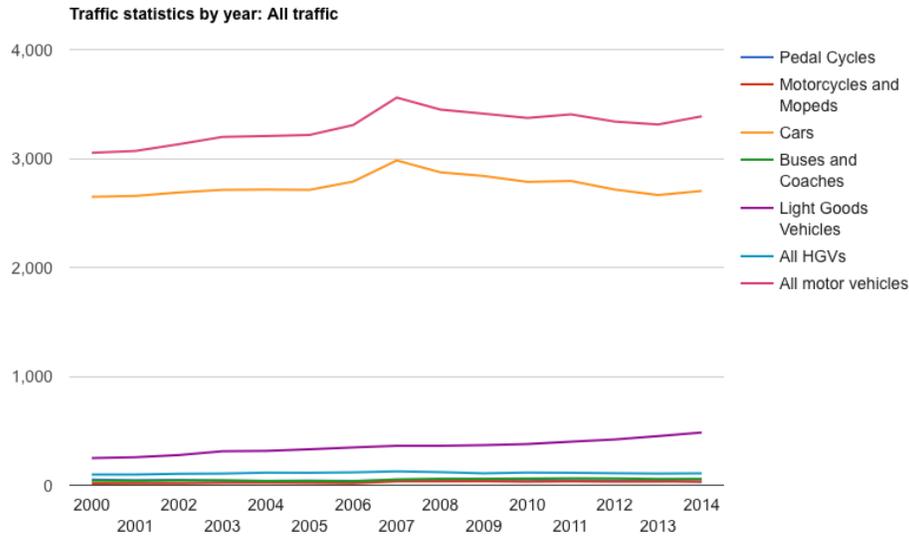
Callander Community Development Trust



Map 3: Census Point Coverage: A81 between C-road to Gartchonzie and A84

Traffic statistics by year: All traffic

Vehicle Types - Average Daily Flow for Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Pedal Cycles	51	45	48	40	39	41	39	43	43	49	50	44	41	41	32
Motorcycles and Mopeds	16	18	18	22	23	21	18	35	35	36	32	35	32	33	34
Cars	2648	2656	2688	2712	2715	2712	2788	2982	2873	2839	2785	2793	2715	2664	2702
Buses and Coaches	41	40	43	45	38	39	36	53	59	59	61	63	62	57	58
Light Goods Vehicles	249	257	277	312	315	330	347	362	362	368	378	400	420	451	484
Two-axle Rigid HGVs	58	57	59	58	60	59	60	74	70	63	66	68	69	68	68
Three-axle Rigid HGVs	6	7	8	8	9	9	9	17	17	17	17	19	21	22	24
Four-axle Rigid HGVs	32	32	36	39	44	45	48	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
Three-axle Articulated HGVs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	30	26	30	24	18	13	13
Five-axle Articulated HGVs	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Six-axle Articulated HGVs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
All HGVs	98	98	105	107	115	114	118	127	120	109	116	114	110	107	109
All motor vehicles	3052	3069	3131	3198	3206	3216	3307	3559	3449	3411	3372	3405	3339	3312	3387



As both sets of figures and graphs show, traffic in and out of Callander has maintained a similar level between 2000 and 2014 apart from 2007/2008 which saw a steep increase, particularly on the A81 between A873 and A84. This increase has, however, once again levelled off, and has actually decreased slightly.

2.2.3 Receipts for Callander car parks

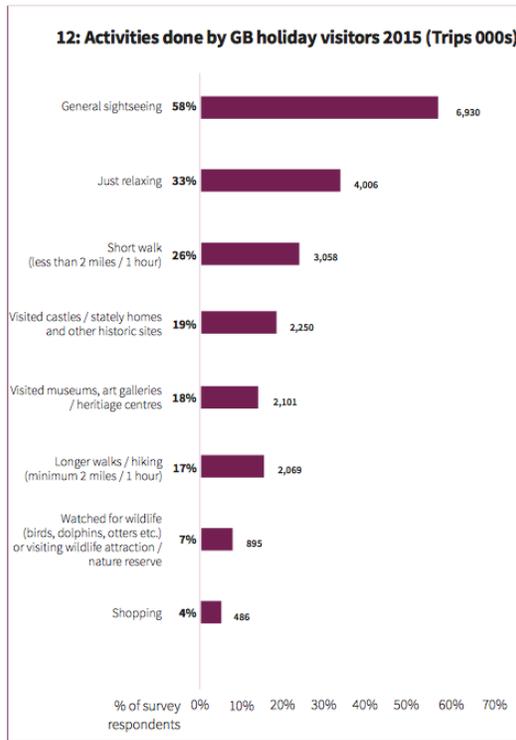
Data from Stirling Council gives the receipts for the two car parks in Callander: Meadows and Station Road (2014/15 actual and 2015/16 Budget and Projections (in early 2016) – see Appendix One.

From this we can see data for the most and least number of cars, the number of paying visitors to those car parks being between 77,538 and 50,801 vehicles, which gives an average of 64,165 vehicles parking per year in the paid car parks in Callander. There is clearly considerable income from these car parks. In the Community Survey carried out (Appendix Three), 19% of respondents said they would like improved car parking. 33% said they would be prepared to pay for car parking at Coilhallan Wood, 45% said they wouldn't and 22% said they don't know.

2.2.3 Tourism Overview

Visit Scotland's document, 'The Key Facts on Tourism in 2015⁵' (published in June 2016) notes that in 2015 just under 14.9 million overnight tourism trips were taken in Scotland, for which visitor expenditure totaled over £5billion. The following graph from the document records the most popular activities undertaken by GB holiday visitors, with walking / hiking and wildlife watching or visiting wildlife attractions / nature reserves being done by 50% of the respondents.

⁵ <http://www.visitscotland.org/pdf/Tourism%20in%20Scotland%20Factsheet%202015.pdf>

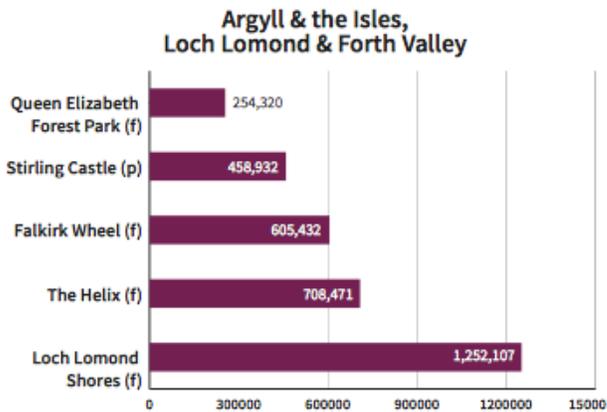


The report, 'Tourism in Scotland's Regions 2015⁶' (published in October 2016), looks at figures for different areas in slightly more depth, but unfortunately individual town data is not available.

It records that sustainable tourism employment in Stirling (2013) was 4,800 and its gross added value was £107.1 million.

The graph below shows the top attractions in Argyll & the Isles, Loch Lomond & Forth Valley in 2015:

⁶ <http://www.visitscotland.org/pdf/ScotlandRegional%20-%20MarketStats%20Oct2016%20-Final.pdf>



It is interesting to note that the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park (near Aberfoyle) is the fifth most popular attraction in this, rather wide, area.

Further insights from Visit Scotland⁷

The following trends are seen as being important to consumers and tourists:

- Micro adventures – activities that allow for escapism but don't need much planning.
- Easy escapism – consumers don't need to travel far to experience 'off the grid'.
- The older generation shouldn't be forgotten – many within this age group want to rediscover their youth by engaging in activities normally associated with younger demographics.
- Authenticity – consumers are seeking authentic experiences from their holiday.

2.3 Community Survey 2016

A Community Survey was carried out in 2016 by the Town Coordinator (Sheila Winstone) to inform the Community Action Plan for 2017-22 (see Appendix Two for full survey). It revealed that among the things residents like about Callander are its beautiful surroundings, but that improving access, paths, signage and activities in the surrounding countryside would make it better. Mountain bike trails, active travel and cycle links/paths were specifically mentioned.

Theme 5: Outdoor Capital	
Providing & maintaining outdoor activities	Total Votes
Extend the offering at McLaren Leisure to promote outdoor activities	22

⁷ <http://www.visitscotland.org/pdf/Insights%20Trends%202016.pdf>

Install a skatepark	17
Improve and maintain walking, cycling & all abilities access routes	27
Develop Mountain bike trails close to town	13
Visitor centre/ museum displaying Callander heritage	13
Provide more water-based activities	11
Establish an outdoor centre offering the best activities, including cycle facilities	19
Develop at least one destination play park for visitors and residents - outdoor capital	7
Champions: Callander Enterprise, CCDT, Callander Landscape Partnership, Businesses & Social Enterprise, Outdoor Activity Providers, McLaren Leisure, MTB Trail Group, Callander Heritage Society, Forth Environment Link, Trossachs Mobility, FABB Adventure, CC, SC.	
Marketing & information	
Promote Callander & the surrounding area as an outdoor activity destination	20
Better signage/maps to activities, attractions & heritage	24
Champions: Callander Enterprise, Destination Callander, CCDT, Callander Landscape Partnership, Businesses & Social Enterprise, Outdoor Activity Providers, Callander Heritage Society, Stirling Cycle Hub	
Tourism	
Develop wet weather/ indoor attractions incl soft play at McLaren Leisure	12
Acquire premises for the Heritage Society for public display/museum	10
Improve information/signage to attractions, activities & heritage	7
Create more visitor focussed events and festivals all year round	6
Develop outdoor attractions	5
Attract a large hotel/spa	2
Champions: Heritage Society, Callander Landscape Partnership, Callander Enterprise, Businesses, McLaren Leisure, NPA, SC, CTP, Stirling City (and Region) Deal	

2.4 Community Survey | Coilhallan Community Woodland

The above survey (section 2.3) is useful, but unfortunately the questions asked and information gathered is not sufficiently focused on Coilhallan Woodland for this analysis. A new survey was therefore carried out in May 2017 to establish current usage, what the community would like to see happen to the woodland and to measure levels of support of CCDT if it was to take over the management /ownership.

The survey had 107 responses with 77% living in Callander, 7% up to 10 km outside the town and 16% more than 10km outside Callander. Please see the full analysis of this survey in appendix 3 of this document.

In summary:

something extra for children. Could also link in to local bike hire etc.”; “Callander should be promoting all of it's natural Woods already has several good walking trails, excellent Callander Paths leaflet available from really promoted anywhere.”; “People need to know it's there in the first place and not just drive by.”; “People are always looking for places to take their kids. If marketed properly it would work.”; “If there was good mountain bike trails people would come from all over central Scotland, possibly further if they were very good.”.

- 77% of respondents said they supported CCDT seeking to take over management / ownership in an attempt to initiate and manage this process on behalf of the community.
- Additional comments at the end of the survey include: *“I'm sure more could be done there, it would be good for the town, but needs organising.”; “It is an important resource that needs to be protected and CCDT have a good record of managing projects in the community interest and represent a broad spectrum of Callander.”; “Providing management is sensitive to the environment , it could prove to be a very positive asset to the community. It could provide a very active and positive experience for many visitors and locals alike. Prices need to be realistic for families.”; “The wood is fine as it is. Why does everything have to be managed?”; “It's a lovely wood and at points I've walked there weekly or more. Development could spoil it depending on plans. It's not very big so unsure.”; “Avoid over development. No theme parks please!!! Natural beauty is the main attraction :).”;* *“Buy it. Replant it. Leave it. Allow cyp to use the wood for land manager training and woodland skills in order to maintain healthy woodland.”*

3. Possible options for Coihallan Woodland

The following have been identified as being possible end-use options for Coihallan Community Woodland:

- Zip Wires (eg Go Ape)
- All ability / access destination
- Managed woodland walks / educational experiences
- Mountain Bike destination
- Natural burial ground / pet burial ground
- Café
- Wild camping

Each of these options will be examined, looking at competitors, comparators and whether on initial investigation they are a possibility for the woodland. We will then go on to carry out primary research on the options that are still considered viable.

It is worth noting that the CCDT is examining these possible options with a view to a partner organisation managing the activities.

3.1 Zip Wires

The popularity of zip wire adventure parks has grown considerably in recent years, with the company 'Go Ape', for example, having sixty one locations in the UK and three in Scotland: Aberdeenshire, Peebles and Aberfoyle (12 miles from Callander / 20 minutes by car).

3.1.1 Competitor / comparator: Go Ape

<https://goape.co.uk/days-out/aberfoyle>

Go Ape Aberfoyle is based in the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park, near The Lodge (Forest Visitor Centre). It has *'some of the longest zip wires in Britain...at 120 ft high and 426m long the grand finale at our first Scottish adventure is an exhilarating and memorable experience!'*. The highest platform is 22m tall, the longest crossing is 11.5m and the total length is 1,171. The price for a 10-15 year old is £25 and for 16+ is £33.

(They also offer Forest Segway Experiences, for a forest adventure on an all-terrain Segway in the forest. It costs £35 per rider (7stone+) for 60 minutes.)

Is a zip wire adventure park a possible option for Coihallan?

An initial investigation of the area raised concerns with regard to the stability and safety of the wood. It is unfortunately deemed unsuitable for these types of activities, as they require short, very stable trees, not in Coihallan Wood.

This option is therefore not viable and will not be explored further. However, raised walks, hammocks and bungee ropes do not need to use trees as support (using poles instead) and may work well to attract people to the site.



Photos 2 and 3. Examples of woodland walk ways





Photos 4, 5 and 6. Examples of woodland hammocks and seat structures



3.2 All Ability / Access Destination

This refers to areas where access is possible and available to all ages and abilities. It includes older people who are not as physically fit as they used to be but still want to access outdoor destinations; people with a long-term illness; deafness / hearing loss; mobility impairment; blind or partially sighted; mobility impairments and people with learning difficulties.

Visit Britain has identified this market⁸ as a growth area (nb, no comparative reports by an equivalent Scottish body (eg VisitScotland) were found). Approximately £12bn is spent by people with health conditions and impairments and their travelling companions on overnight and day trips in England alone each year (and is known as the 'Purple Pound'). They also recommend seeking out possible partners and finding out who is doing what within the destination area, which this document will now undertake for Coilhallan Wood.

3.2.1 Possible Partners

Fabb Scotland

<http://www.fabb.org.uk>

Fabb Scotland works to give disable children and young people access to sport, leisure and outdoor adventure. They have 'an excellent reputation for creating and sustaining partnership projects in the field of social, leisure and educational provision. These projects act as a stepping stone for young people into a range of opportunities and act as a catalyst to create new partnerships for Fabb Scotland in the future.'

They administer the project Blazing Saddles – an all-ability mobile cycling project that provides regular bike sessions in the pilot areas of Edinburgh, Fife and Dundee. It has a central hub in Callander, and last year carried out an inclusive cycling project (On Yer Bike – proving the opportunity to learn more about bikes and have a cycle). Fabb Scotland also offered a summer camping programme (Crazy Camping – a three day programme including outdoor cooking, tent pitching and night walks) using the Callander hub.

Trossachs Mobility

<http://www.trossachsmobility.com>

Trossachs Mobility was set up following funding in 2016 by Stirling Council to support tourism-focused business in the Callander area. It provides the use of all-terrain chairs for anyone with limited mobility, hiring them out per hour / day and suggesting routes around the Callander area. They have been featured recently on the BBC's Reporting Scotland and in social media.

Wayne Johnson, who runs Trossachs Mobility, was contacted, and is keen to explore the possibility of using Coilhallan Wood as a base for the organisation. At the present time they use Callander Square to show people how they work, give safety briefings etc, but this is on concrete so obviously not ideal. Wayne said that Coilhallan Wood would be the ideal place to run the initiative from. Although they do not have funding to set this up at the moment, he is confident that if this location was available to use he could obtain funding which would provide an income for Coilhallan Wood.

⁸ https://www.visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/vb-corporate/dmo_guide_final.pdf

Additional needs: local centres

Facilities could also be shared with similar third sector organisations such as Camphill Blairdrummond (a charity providing residential homes where people with learning difficulties can live in family groups alongside co-workers and support staff based outside Stirling) and Scottish Autism (which has a residential school based in Alloa and services throughout Scotland). This would ensure that usage was maximised and funding opportunities developed.

Callander Youth Project

<http://callanderyouthproject.co.uk>

The Callander Youth Project is an independent, voluntary youth organisation that aims to improve the quality of life of young people in Callander and the surrounding rural area. They deliver a wide range of activities for young people including youth clubs, study support, job club and a 'steps to work' programme. On Sunday afternoon they hold their 'Go Wild with CYP', which is a partnership with Go Country to offer outdoor activities including rock climbing, water sports and mountain biking.

Goups for Older People

Stirling Council suggests a range of clubs and organisations that assist older people, such as the Stirling Walking Network.

Is an All Ability / Access Destination a possible option for Coilhallan?

Whilst a wood poses obvious access and navigational problems for this possible end-use, it would be possible to offer different 'levels' of access ie level 1 access – or a sensory trail. This option is something Fabb Scotland is exploring with the Forestry Commission, but would work independently of any further development. This could, however, dovetail (or be seen as the first phase of) any future path / access improvement programme.

3.3 Managed woodland walks / educational experiences

As the Visit Scotland data in section 2.3 above shows, visitors to Scotland enjoy 'mini-adventure' excursions, with the Queen Elizabeth Forestry Park being the fifth most popular attraction in Argyll & the Isles, Loch Lomond & Forth Valley in 2015.

3.3.1 Comparators / competitors

Queen Elizabeth Forestry Park

The Lodge Forest Visitor Centre⁹ near Aberfoyle has a large visitor centre, café, shop and red squirrel hide. It has numerous signed walks and an impressive waterfall within a short distance of the Lodge. There is a 'nestcam' on site (in partnership with the RSPB) where the public can watch nesting Ospreys during the spring and summer. It is also

⁹ <http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/forest-parks/queen-elizabeth-forest-park/the-lodge-forest-visitor-centre>

home to Go Ape. Car parking at the Lodge costs £1 for up to an hour, £3 for all day and £12 for minibus and coaches (all day).

The Forestry Commission, which owns the forest and the Lodge, organises frequent events, such as 'Meet the Deer', 'Bat Hunts' and 'Dawn Chorus'. The price for these are; adults £8, children (under 16) £5, family ticket (2 adults and 2 children) £20

RSPB

The RSPB has developed new trails at its Loch Lomond base at Gartocharn¹⁰, where it offers Nature Walks etc. A 1 ½ hour Weekend Nature Walk costs £5 for adults and £2.50 for children.

3.4 Mountain Bike Destination

Callander has a keen and active mountain bike group; Wheels Cycling Centre¹¹ which offers cycle hire, sales and servicing; Wheelology¹² (bike hire, shop and repair service) and obviously sits in the middle of many spectacular cycling routes around the Trossachs road system.

However, there is a lack of specific, designed mountain bike trails in the area with Aberfoyle and Carron Valley being the only two within reasonable distance. The results of the Community Survey carried out last year (see section 2.3) also indicates a desire amongst residents to improve and maintain walking, cycling & all abilities access routes and Develop Mountain bike trails close to town.

3.4.1 Possible Partners

Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland

Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland¹³ (or DMBinS), which is hosted by Scottish Cycling and supported and funded by many national bodies, aims to; *“increase participation in mountain biking, to increase tourism and economic development and for Scotland to achieve greater sporting development and success.”* It developed an Advocacy Pack in 2010, which details the various benefits Mountain Biking – and clusters of it – could bring to Scotland.

It notes that the current economic impact of mountain biking to the Scottish tourism market is £119m per year and that it and associated businesses provide employment to 3,479 people. Also, that the potential growth for the market over the five years from 2010 – 2015 was estimated at £36m per year.

¹⁰ <https://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/events-dates-and-inspiration/events/details.aspx?id=tcm:9-440637>

¹¹ <http://www.scottish-cycling.com>

¹² <http://www.cyclehirecallander.co.uk/home.html>

¹³ <http://www.dmbins.com/developing/clusters>

Other benefits include:

- Improved physical and mental health of residents in Scotland.
- Greater exposure to biodiversity in green and natural environments.
- Opportunities for everyone to develop in the activity to reach their potential, and for success at a local, national or international level.
- Greater social integration in the local community.
- Family friendly activities that can help strengthen the family unit.
- Appealing to young people, particularly girls and young women, encouraging a healthy lifestyle.

Forestry Commission Scotland

<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/activities/mountain-biking>

The Forestry Commission Scotland have the following mountain biking trail centres: Glentress and Innerleithen near Peebles; Kirroughtree and Glentroll in Galloway; Forest of Ae, Dalbeattie and Mabie near Dumfries; Newcastleton near the Borders; Witch's Trails near Fort William; Laggan Worltrax near Aviemore; Learnie Red Rock Trails near Inverness; Moray Monster Trails in Morayshire; Carron Valley near Falkirk and Balblair in the North Highlands.

The nearest trail to Callander is Carron Valley, a fifty-minute car journey (27 miles).

3.4.2 Local Comparators / Competitors

Comrie Croft

<http://www.comriecroft.com>

Comrie Croft promotes itself as 'Scotland's award-winning green destination including a farmstead hostel, group accommodation, camping, Nordic tents, summer tea room, walking trails, wildlife viewing and some of the best compact mountain-biking in the country'. They also hold weddings.

Mountain biking was its original usp, and now there are '16 km of free hand-crafted blue, red and black single mountain bike track trails' at Comrie Croft. There is a bike wash, showers (small charge), toilet and car parking. They also appear to have diversified into a specific bike service (<http://www.comriecroftbikes.co.uk>) which offers bike hire, shop, mending, classes and events.

Comrie Croft is a 45 minute car journey (30 miles) from Callander.

Strathyre Outdoors

<http://strathyreoutdoors.org>

Strathyre Outdoors a Community Interest Company and organises outdoor 'events' or 'mini-adventures for groups, including wildlife trails / trecks; fishing; orienteering and cycling. Prices range from £25 per adult (£15 per child) for a 2hour Bush Skills Experience to £75 per adult (£40 per child) for a Mini Expedition Adventure lasting approximately 4 – 5 hours.

Strathyre is approximately 10 miles from Callander (a 25 minute car drive).

Go Country

<http://gocountry.co.uk>

Go Country provides a range of outdoor activities to suit all ages and interests. Based on Loch Ard, within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park activities include gorge walking, a waterpark, canoeing, climbing/abseiling, cliff jumping, archery, mountain biking and orienteering.

Loch Ard is approximately 15 miles from Callander (a 30 minute car journey).

Comparators / Competitors Summary

The area surrounding Callander is an obvious location for businesses offering outdoor activities, due to its natural beauty and geography, and also being just over an hour from Edinburgh and Glasgow. There are competitors in the area, but it does not appear to be saturated, leaving plenty market share open. Also, although all three companies mentioned above say that they offer mountain biking, they do not have trails or an apparent specialism in the sport, so this is a niche that Coilhallan could fill either independently or by piggy-backing / partnering the existing businesses to offer the location and skills.

Is a Mountain Bike Destination a possible option for Coilhallan?

There appears to be the desire for the use of Coilhallan Wood as a mountain bike destination from local residents, and it would provide a valuable attraction to the area for tourists and adventure sport advocates, boosting the local economy, which is set up for more visitors to the town.

This option is therefore explored further during primary research.

3.5 Natural Burial Ground

The Natural Death Centre¹⁴ offers independent funeral advice. It *“would like to see burial grounds set up with the aim of improved choice for the local community, enabling more environmentally friendly funerals to take place, and the establishment of schemes that preserve and enhance biodiversity with a long-term sustainable future”*. It lists possible obstacles to obtaining planning permission to change the use of land to this provision as: risks to ground water, a sustainable transport policy, archaeological disturbance, ecological scoping surveys and visual splays.

¹⁴ <http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk>

3.5.1 Stirling Council Cemetery Plan

Stirling Council states on its website¹⁵ that it is intending to apply for full planning permission to develop a new cemetery in the Callander area. Please see the full transcript of this information page in Appendix Four.

It identifies the need for this facility due to the existing Callander cemetery being expected to reach its capacity within the next 3 years, with no opportunity to extend it. The proposed location is to the east of Braes of Greenock and the A81, approximately 1.5km to the south of Callander. The site, which is already owned by Stirling Council, is currently farmland. This is the same location for which 'planning permission in principle' has previously been granted for a similar development.

3.5.2 Comparators / Competitors

Sites that belong to the Association of Natural Burial Grounds in Scotland are:

- Binning Memorial Woodland, Tynninghame, East Lothian
- Cloverly Woods of Rest, Turriff, Aberdeenshire
- Craufurdland Woods, Kilmarnock, East Ayrshire

Sites not registered with this association are:

- Ardrossan Cemetery, Saltcoats, North Ayrshire
- Birkhill Cemetery, Dundee
- Brisbane Glen Cemetery, Largs, North Ayrshire
- Cockpen Cemetery Woodland Section, Rosewell, Midlothian
- Corstorphine Hill Cemetery Woodland Burial, Corstorphine, Edinburgh
- Cothiemuir Hill, Alford Aberdeenshire
- Delliefure, Grantown of Spey, Morayshire
- Glenley Green Burials, Kirkcudbright, Dumfries and Galloway
- Hundy Mundy Wood, Kelso, Borders
- Killearn Woodland Cemetery, Killearn Stirling
- Langaulds Cemetery, Glasgow
- Meadow Woodland Burial Site, Galston Cemetery, Galston, East Ayrshire
- Monkton Woodland Cemetery, Monkton, South Ayrshire
- Roucan Loch, Dumfries, Dumfries and Galloway
- Shawfield Woodland Burial, Selkirk, Scottish Borders
- Strowan Woodland Cemetery, Crieff, Perth and Kinross

They are owned and managed by the Council body in their area.

¹⁵ <http://my.stirling.gov.uk/services/council-and-government/birth,-marriage-and-death/death/death-funerals-and-cremations/cemeteries>

The closest natural burial sites to Callander are in Crieff¹⁶, a 26 mile car journey (taking approximately 40 minutes) and in Killearn¹⁷, a 22 mile car journey (taking approximately 35 minutes).

Is a Natural Burial Ground a possible option for Coilhallan?

The nature of the site does not easily lend itself to a woodland burial ground, and with Stirling Council due to apply for planning permission for a new cemetery close by, this option is not particularly attractive.

3.6 Pet cemetery

Planning permission would obviously be required for this option, with the following guidelines:

- at least 250 metres away from any well, borehole or spring supplying drinking water or water for use at farm dairies
- at least 30 metres from any other spring or watercourse
- at least 10 metres from any field drain
- more than 200 metres away from any [Site of Special Scientific Interest \(SSSI\)](#)

SEPA can provide more guidance on the viability of using Coilhallan Wood as a pet cemetery.

3.6.1 Comparators and competitors

There are a number of pet cemeteries in Scotland, but not many pet burial grounds. Those found (which carry out both crematoriums and burials include:

<http://windyparkpetcemetery.co.uk> - Gartocharn

<http://www.rosehallpetcemetery.co.uk>.

3.7 Café

If Coilhallan Wood is to be marketed as a 'destination' for the area, a café would be a good additional facility to offer to visitors. A permanent building would be a significant investment and is unlikely to gain planning permission so a temporary structure may be a more viable option.

This was discussed with Wayne Johnson of Trossachs Mobility/Applejacks, who is keen to explore this further as a separate enterprise. He feels that a wood cabin or airstream caravan would offer a great solution.

¹⁶ <http://www.ecoburial.me>

¹⁷ <http://www.kcfc.co.uk/wc.html>

3.7.1 Comparators and competitors

There is a good supply of coffee shops in Callander, including: Applejacks, Pips Coffee House, Mhor Tearoom, Café Circa, Dun Whinny's, Taste of the Trossachs and Deli Ecosse.

If a café at Coilhallan wood was created, it is not envisaged to directly compete with these businesses in the village, but merely offer simple refreshments (soft drinks, tea and coffee, sandwiches, soup, crisps, sweets) for people using the wood. It is thought that this extra facility might encourage people to visit the wood ie, create a 'mini-adventure'.

3.8 Toilet facilities

After extensive discussions, it is thought that basic toilet facilities at least would need to be provided at Coilhallan Wood, if other facilities are introduced which attracted more visitors, to avoid the woodland being spoiled. Other woodland owners¹⁸ use 'natural' toilets that do not require water supply such as long drop and composting. The best options depend on the water table levels etc.

There is extensive advice on line as to the best options and how to build them:

Long Drop-

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pit_latrine

<http://www.showusyourlongdrop.co.nz/long-drop-tips/>

Composting-

<http://www.sustainablebuild.co.uk/composttoilets.html>

<http://info.cat.org.uk/questions/water-and-sewage/how-can-composting-toilet-be-designed-and-managed/>

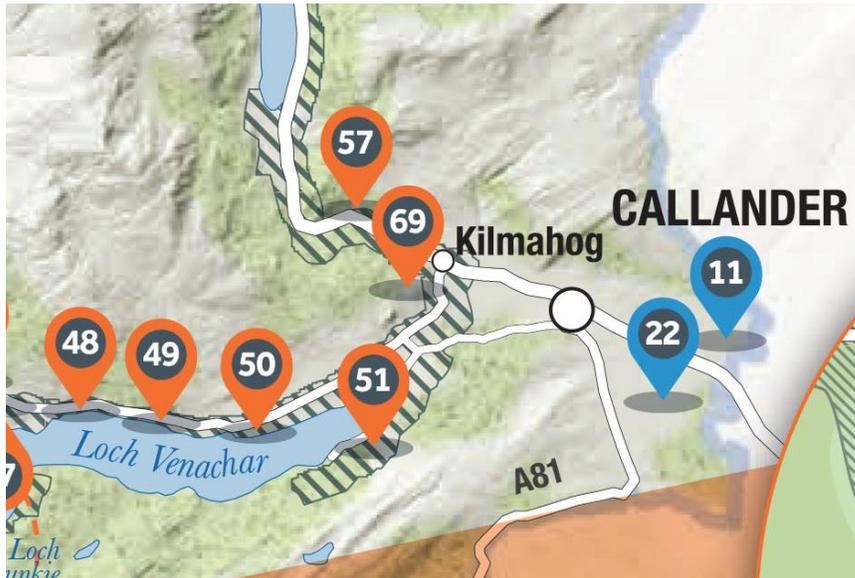
3.9 Wild camping

As part of Scotland's access legislation, the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, you are allowed to camp on most unenclosed land¹⁹. However, areas to the east of Loch Lomond are subject to [wild camping byelaws](#) due to overuse.

From March to September, within the Camping Management Zone – which Coilhallan Wood is partly in (see map below) – wild camping is only allowed by booking into a permit area or campsite.

¹⁸ <http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/woodland-toilets/#>

¹⁹ <https://www.visitscotland.com/accommodation/caravan-camping/wild-camping/>



Map 4. Camping near Coilhullan wood.



= Camping Management Zone

Camp Sites

Tents, Motorhomes & Campervans

11. Keltie Bridge Caravan Park

Motorhomes & Campervans

22. Gart Caravan Park

Camping Permit Areas

Tents

48. Loch Venachar North Shore A

49. Loch Venachar North Shore B

50. Loch Venachar North Shore C

51. loch Venachar South Shore

57. Falls of Leny

Tents, Motorhomes & Campervans

69. Bochastle

Appendix One

Consultant's Brief – Callander Car Parks/Play Parks /Lower Woods

Appendix 1

Income & Expenditure Statement for Callander Car Parks

Meadows Car Park Callander - Profit and Loss

	2014-2015 Actuals	Budget 2015- 2016	2015-2016 Projection	Comments
Employee Costs	24,723	26,251	22,875	Allocation of Mgt & Admin, plus parking attendant costs
Property Costs	18,717	14,348	14,341	Rates & road sweeping
Supplies & Services	832	874	885	
Transport & Plant	829	615	1,417	
Third Party Payments	16,948	4,910	4,910	2014/15 car park had repair works + gritting costs
Capital Charges	117	0	0	
Total Expenditure	62,166	46,998	44,428	
Car Park Income	(86,304)	(84,920)	(89,310)	
Excess Charges Income	(1,580)	(1,854)	(1,854)	
Total Income	(87,883)	(86,774)	(91,164)	
(Surplus)/Deficit	(25,717)	(39,776)	(46,736)	

Station Road Car Park Callander - Profit and Loss

Callander Community Development Trust

	2014-2015 Actuals	Budget 2015- 2016	2015-2016 Projection	
Employee Costs	18,543	19,688	17,156	Allocation of Mgt & Admin, plus parking attendant costs
Property Costs	18,583	15,321	15,316	Rates & road sweeping
Supplies & Services	1,163	656	664	
Transport & Plant	621	461	1,062	
Third Party Payments	3,336	3,511	3,511	Gritting costs
Capital Charges	72	0	0	
Total Expenditure	42,318	39,637	37,709	
Car Park Income	(60,103)	(59,140)	(62,196)	
Excess Charges Income	(968)	(1,136)	(1,136)	
Total Income	(61,071)	(60,276)	(63,333)	
(Surplus)/Deficit	(18,753)	(20,639)	(25,623)	
Aggregate Charges	(146,406)	(144,060)	(151,506)	Average = £147,324

Best case @ £1.90 per visit = 77538 vehicles
Worst case @ £2.90 per visit = 50801 vehicles
Mid point = 64165 vehicles

Appendix Two

Help Shape Callander's Future Community Survey

To help develop a new 5-year Community Action Plan we really want to know what **you** think about our community.

1. What **three** things do you like most about Callander?

2. What **three** things don't you like about Callander?

3. What would make our community a better place for residents, businesses or visitors.

4. At the 2011 charrette local people agreed a 25-year vision for Callander to become the 'Outdoor Capital of the National Park'.
Do you think this is still a good thing to aim for?

Yes

No

If no, what do you think the vision should be?

5. What actions or projects would you like to see developed first?

Thank you for your views. The Community Action Plan belongs to the whole community. If you would like to be kept informed of its development and how to get involved then please provide your details below.

<p>Name : _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Email: _____</p> <p>Phone: _____</p>	<p>Who is completing this form? Please indicate how many people from each category this survey represents.</p> <p>Age Range: 5-11, 12-17, 18-24, 25-44, <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 45-59, 60-69, 70+ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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By providing your email address you consent to its use for Community Action Plan activities in Callander. We will not use it for anything else. We are a steering group of local people including members of the Community Council, Callander Community Development Trust, McLaren High School and Callander Youth Project.

Please drop your completed form into a collecting box at Callander Library, Spar Shop, East End News, VisitScotland Information Centre, Callander Youth Project, McLaren High School, McLaren Leisure or the Lade Inn. If you have difficulties with this call 08952 1066605 to have the form collected.

Please return by 30th June 2016 at the latest.

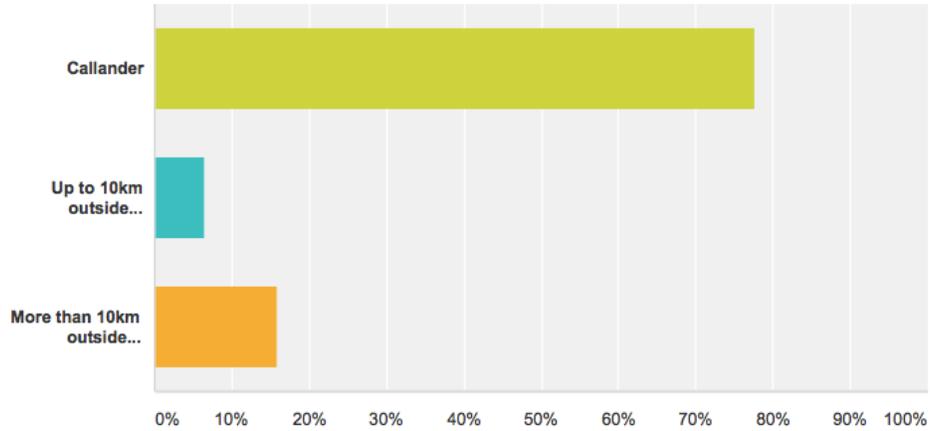
An online version of this form is available at: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CCZSRXQ

Appendix Three

SURVEY | Coilhallan Community Woodland, Callander

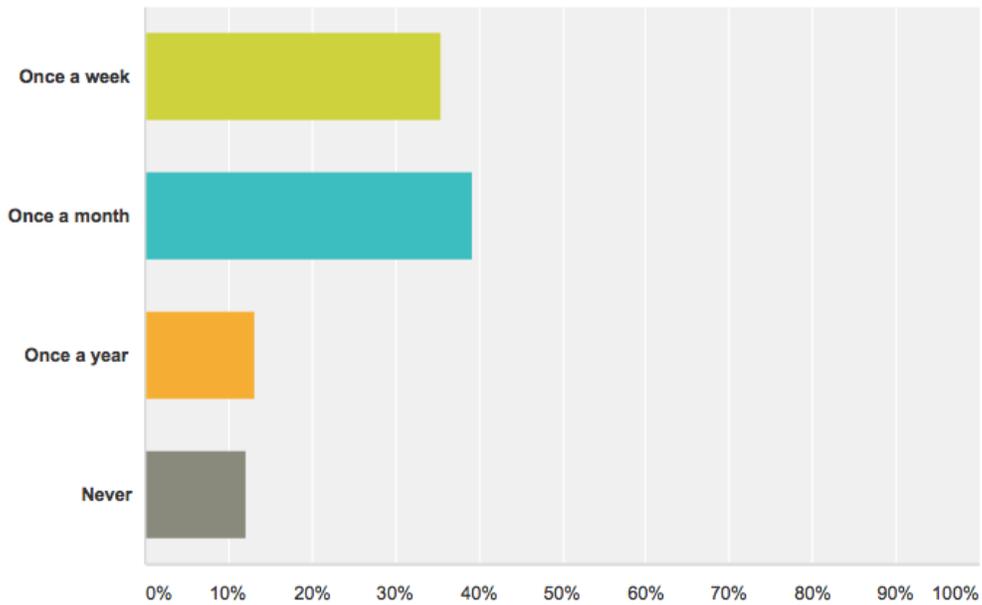
Q1 Where do you live?

Answered: 107 Skipped: 0



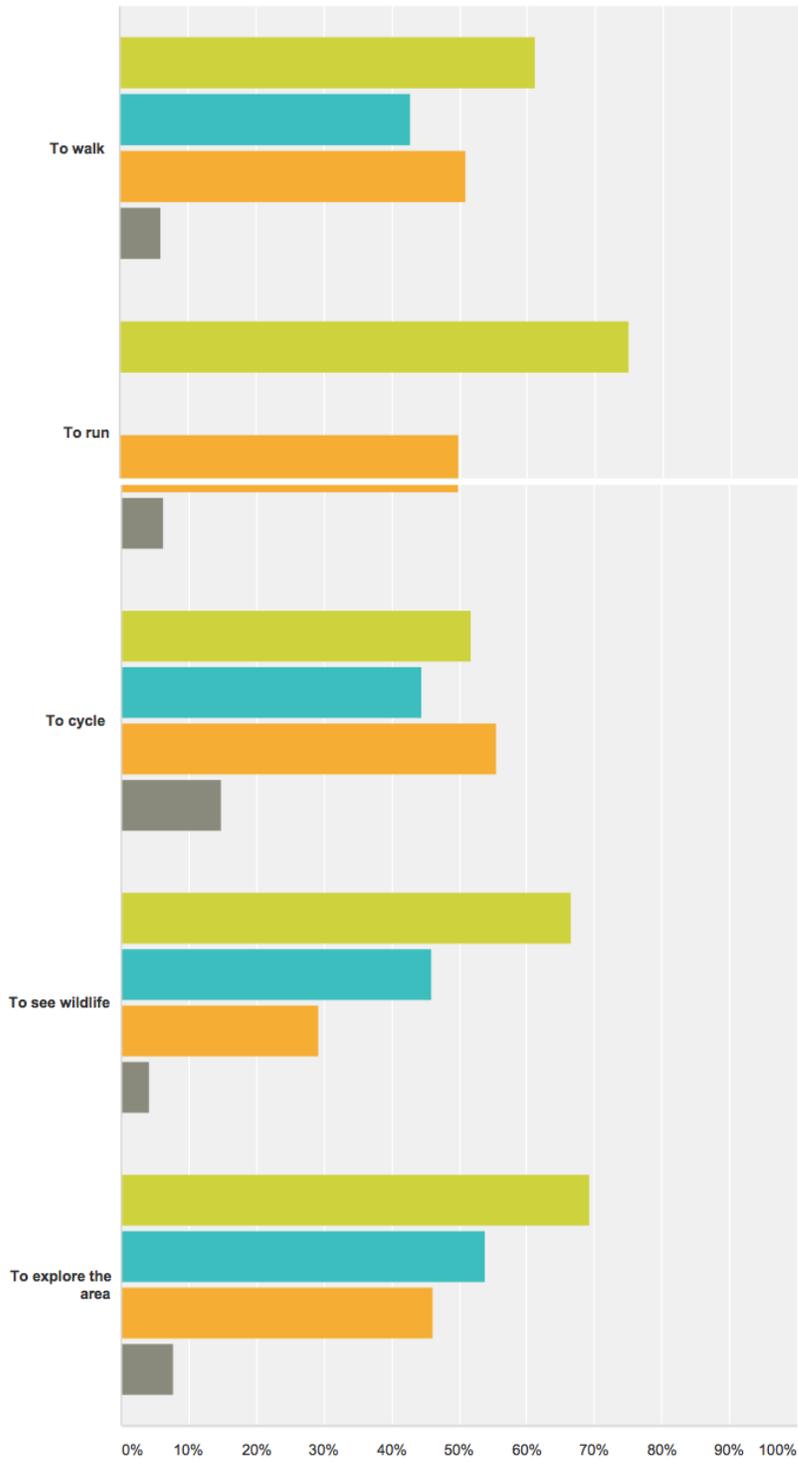
Q2 How often do you visit Coilhallan Wood?

Answered: 107 Skipped: 0



Q3 Why do you usually visit Coilhallan Wood? (you may tick more than one option)

Answered: 55 Skipped: 52

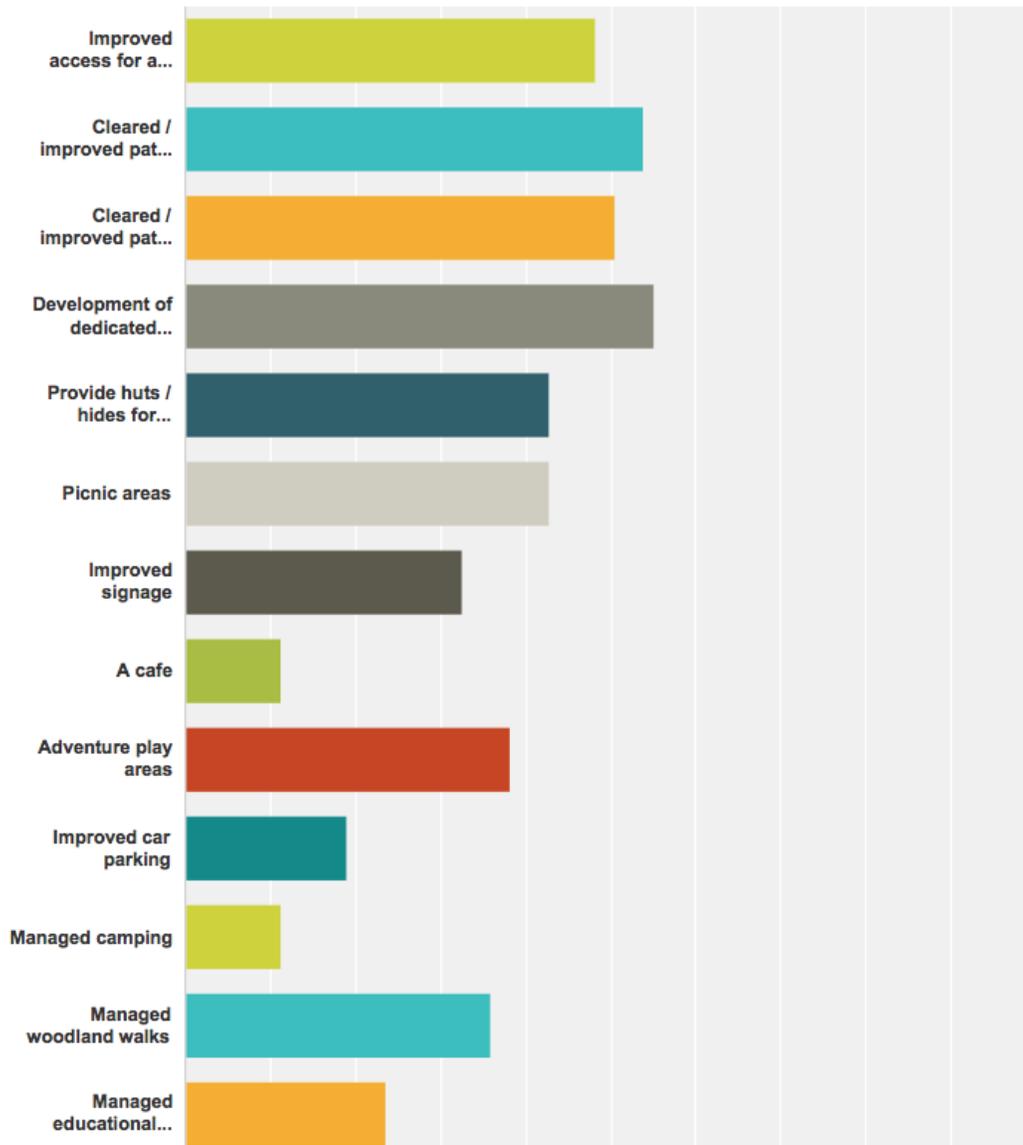


- On my own
- With my/friend's grand/children
- With friends
- With an organised group

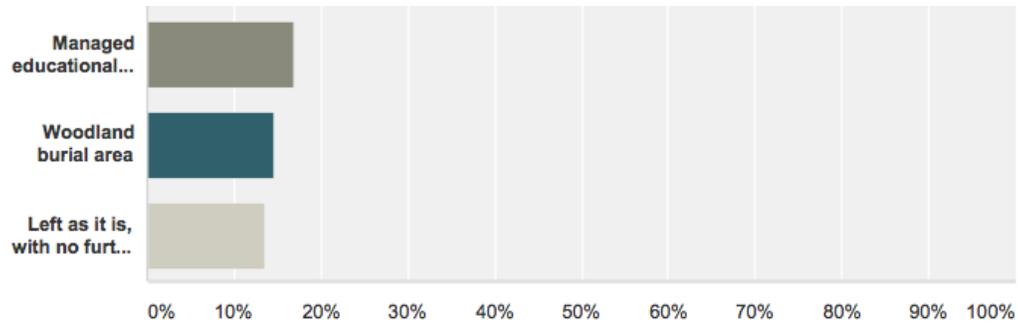
Q4 If Coilhallan Wood was purchased by CCDT, what would you like to see happen?

(you may tick more than one option)

Answered: 89 Skipped: 18



Callander Community Development Trust



#	Other (please specify)
1	Do not require to overcrowd the area with too many attractions.
2	It would be nice to have 'managed' hides like at the David Marshal Lodge where squirrel huts and feeding stations are located
3	Think could develop for biking and outdoor adventure areas but within limits that leave a large proportion unspoiled
4	It used to have a permanent orienteering course so this would be good. Tree top walks for all abilities may work. Low level path from caravan park to Callander so you don't have to go on road.
5	Developments should not detract the natural woodland, ie no tar or concrete etc
6	It is not necessary to interfere with every bit of open space.
7	low impact visitor facilities

Q5 Do you think people would be willing to pay for the following initiatives if they were introduced in Coilhallan Wood? (You may tick more than one option)

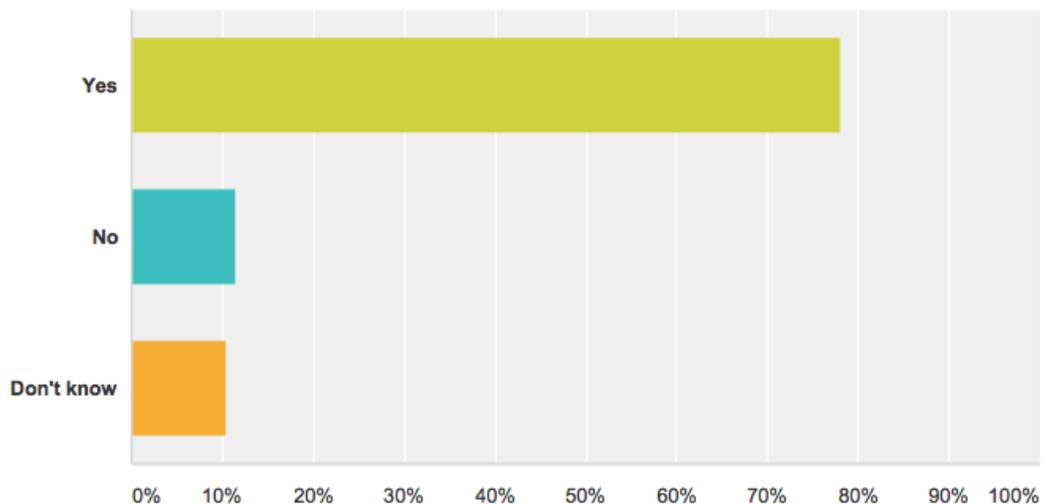
	Yes	No	Don't know	Total
Improved car parking	32.18% 28	45.98% 40	21.84% 19	87
Mountain biking (for trail upkeep / paid coaching days)	53.41% 47	26.14% 23	20.45% 18	88
Managed woodland walks	20.00% 17	48.24% 41	31.76% 27	85
Managed educational visits	51.16% 44	25.58% 22	23.26% 20	86
Seasonal 'events' (e.g. Easter egg hunts)	65.52% 57	17.24% 15	17.24% 15	87

Callander Community Development Trust

#	Other ideas / comments (please specify)
1	with regards to paying for mountain biking trails - it can sometimes be difficult to put a charge on such facilities and mostly, revenue comes through the car parking facilities and a cafe element being installed which can become hugely profitable if set up in a great destination! People may however pay for coaching days. Hope this helps.
2	Are there accessible areas suitable for filming? (Clanranald? they might have some good ideas... medieval camp?) Westonbirt Arboretum has nice "natural play" areas - precut branches for making dens, hut frames with movable wall panels, big logs to climb on, etc...
3	No mountain bikes/ adventure playgrounds etc. Don't want to see a beautiful natural area developed .
4	Sculpture park would be fantastic :) Yurts??? Information / labelling of trees and native vegetation? Info on bird life?
5	I would worry about dog walkers dumping their poo bags (like on the lower Craggs walk). This is an issue all around Callander and needs to be urgently addressed!! Tourists and locals will be put off using our beautiful walks unless this problem is solved.
6	Seasonal themed events - lit up evening walks, ghost walks, organised fun days and bbqs, educational activities like learning to whittle, make camp fires, toast marshmallows, make lanterns, pitch tents. Anything to encourage children out.
7	Treetop walk. Trial bike trails. Skateboard area. Callander badly needs attractions for children.
8	Do you mean one-off payment per use, or overall funding for projects?
9	People can walk for free all over this area and forestry commission will provide free educational walks etc so people won't pay for one relatively small wood
10	Races, pop up cafe, pop up events stalls, info trailer with donation request, maps for sale, low cost membership for up keep.

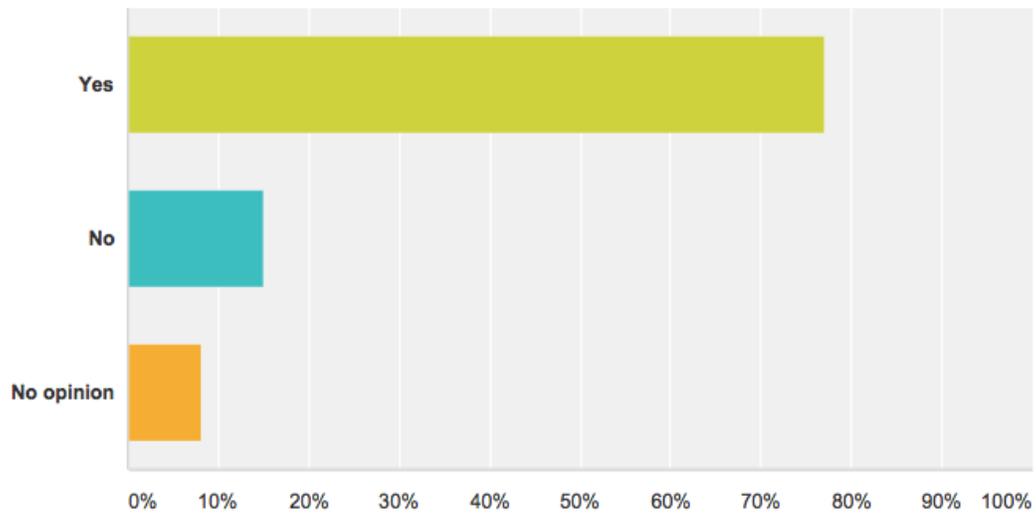
Q6 Do you think Coilhallan Wood could be used to attract additional visitors / tourists to the area?

Answered: 87 Skipped: 20



Q7 There is the potential for Coihallan Wood to be developed for community use. Do you support CCDT seeking to take over management / ownership in an attempt to initiate and manage this process on behalf of the community?

Answered: 87 Skipped: 20



Callander Community Development Trust

#	Please give reasons for your answer
1	More likely to know what locals and visitors want to see happening to the wood.
2	A lot of effort has been put into this project to create a local mountain bike trail.
3	Some one has to take responsibility and lead otherwise nothing gets done
4	I'm sure more could be done there, it would be good for the town, but needs organising.
5	It should be developed for a wider range of activities and FCS are unwilling to do this
6	It is an important resource that needs to be protected and CCDT have a good record of managing projects in the community interest and represent a broad spectrum of Callander dents
7	Providing management is sensitive to the environment , it could prove to be a very positive asset to the community. It could provide a very active and positive experience for many visitors and locals alike. Prices need to be realistic for families.
8	I think with management, the issues I mentioned of poo-bags etc can be dealt with. I also think that CCDT should take over management of the Craggs walks
9	could the money be better spent elsewhere
10	It is important that local facilities are owned by the community. It is a huge mistake losing at kessogs church for example this should be a focal point in Callander.
11	Because if it's managed it will be more organized and better maintained
12	As above
13	Good for community
14	I am not a member of the community but would support all and any initiatives
15	Bought to retain as natural space within town as that side grows and to prevent future development such as housing
16	Need more information to make a choice
17	I would need to know CCDT's intentions which is not clear
18	Not sure about the development of what is already a great area for wildlife.
19	I believe CCDT will help move forward the movement of mtb in Callander, locals like my self have built tracks in other parts of Callander (craggs). I support CCDT to take over coihallan woods and would hope they would build flowing tracks with technological sections big jumps and drop off's
20	Need someone with the drive to get stuff done.
21	I think it can only bring good things out of something that isn't being used
22	Community are the only ones who care about both the natural environment and the needs of locals
23	Wary of private companies owning large tracts of land
24	If it could improve mountain bike features in the area I'm all for it. I would even be for it just increasing outdoor activities in the area
25	Left outwith local control nothing will be done that will help locals or boost the local economy
26	The wood is fine as it is. Why does everything have to be 'managed'?
27	Community buy outs of similar woodlands have worked well
28	Ccdt has a pretty good track record and is likely to accomplish something.
29	Not sure it should be developed
30	It is already used by the local community for walking, cycling, running and general outdoor pursuits. There are far more financially viable sites in Callander that can be used to make money.
31	The area would require a level of management, CCDT could provide a good link with community
32	It would keep all the trails well managed
33	I think anything that improves or benefits Callander is positive.

Q8 Do you have any further comments you would like to make?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 87

#	Responses
1	Footpaths need to be separate from bike trails. A few new footpaths are required.
2	Any development will chase the red squirrels out. I like the woods as they are. Enough development already...e.g. The Craggs
3	Avoid over development. No theme parks please!!! Natural beauty is the main attraction :).
4	what is likely to happen to the wood if it is not purchased
5	Although live an hour away we have family home in callander and are up weekly. Would be fantastic to see area grow.
6	No
7	I think Callander could really benefit from some managed mountain bike trails. I don't bike myself but think it would be excellent for local young folk & tourists too.
8	Good luck. I hope the venture gets off the ground.
9	Each improvement should be tackled seperately and independantly to allow assesment of the impact on the woods
10	Buy it. Replant it. Leave it. Allow cyp to use the wood for land manager training and woodland skills in order to maintain healthy woodland
11	I would support the planting of native trees to fill in the areas which have been left derelict after felling.
12	Callander and surrounding areas have keen and experienced mtb/DH riders that will be looking for technical and fast flowing tracks with large jumps
13	Callander is a perfect place for dedicated bike trails. There is so much potential
14	If it was put to local mountain bikers I think the majority of them would be happy to build/upkeep trails for free.
15	The wood is good for walking, dog walking, seeing wildlife as it is. It does not require development. Developing the woodland would spoil the woods existing peaceful nature.
16	Leave well alone!
17	It's a lovely wood and at points I've walked there weekly or more. Development could spoil it depending on plans. It's not very big so unsure
18	Please leave it alone, it is a beautiful place to walk, run, or just visit to enjoy the peace and quiet it offers at the moment. you also see a wide variety of wildlife. Do not spoil this place of beauty and tranquility!
19	I think investment and management of the area would compliment what the town has to offer and hopefully be a low cost attraction to bring further business and activities to the area
20	Have mini races to get people involved from different areas.

Appendix Four

Balvalachlan Cemetery, Callander

Stirling Council intend to apply for full planning permission to develop a new cemetery to serve the local community of Callander and its surrounding settlements.

Need for the Development

The existing Callander cemetery is expected to reach its capacity within the next 3 years. There is unfortunately no opportunity to extend this facility, therefore a new cemetery is required to be built on a new location.

Proposed Location for the new cemetery

A suitable site has been identified to the east of Braes of Greenock and the A81, approximately 1.5km to the south of Callander. The site, which is already owned by Stirling Council, is currently farmland. This is the same location for which 'planning permission in principle' has previously been granted for a similar development. The site lies within the administrative boundary of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA), to whom the planning application will be made.

Development Proposals

The proposed cemetery will provide burial plots, an area for the internment of ashes, and an area for woodland burial which would include tree planting and setting of plaques at the time of burial. A circular roadway and pedestrian walkway will provide access around the site.

The development will include 49 car parking spaces, including 6 disabled spaces. A new bus stop will be created on the A81, opposite the cemetery.

What happens next

You are invited to email any comments you may have regarding the proposed development to Thomas.Bode@atkinsglobal.com

It is anticipated that a planning application will be submitted to Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority in late March. A summary and analysis of feedback received during the pre- application consultation will be submitted alongside the application. The National Park Authority will also invite comments on the application during the determination period.

Appendix Five

Investigation of Comparator Community Woodland Groups

By studying selected comparator Community Woodland Groups across the country, each with at least some similarity to the Callander situation, we sought to identify best practice and learn from the experiences of others. Unfortunately, we have not had time to visit the comparator projects as part of this Study. However, we have made contact with many of the key players involved and, in addition, have drawn on our up-to-date knowledge and direct experience of establishing new community woodlands or similar projects in other parts of Scotland.

We have split the comparators into two groups. The first small group includes examples that have particular significance for CCDT and the wider Callander situation. These are therefore, examined in considerable depth and are intended to highlight the ‘highs and lows’ of established community groups who have been involved in forest management and/or ownership. In each case we conclude with some “lessons to be learned” from the CCDT’s perspective. We hope this will also help to highlight some of the ‘pros and cons’ of various approaches taken by other groups.

The second group includes examples that we have not had time to research in detail and that may not be so relevant for CCDT. However, they still have some useful points. Again, we have not had time to go into great detail but where relevant in each of these cases we conclude with some “lessons to be learned”.

1. Anagach Woods Trust, Grantown on Spey

This example is particularly relevant for CCDT given that there are many similarities between Grantown and Callander in terms of each town bordering local woods. Anagach Woods Trust is a Charitable Limited Company which owns woods on the edge of Grantown on Spey. The woods were purchased by the community in 2002 with the help of grants from the Scottish Land Fund and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. At the time of purchase the Trust had 250 members and the cost of the acquisition was just under a million pounds at £975,000 which even today would be very significant for most community groups.

The 390ha woods comprise mostly of native pine forest and is used for environmental and forestry education, for sustainable timber management, and for a range of ‘green tourism’ activities as well as local amenity. Within the woods are several smaller ‘stand-alone’ woods each with a different character and its own path network which link with each other.

Like CCDT, there are no membership fees at present. AWT are reliant on grants, donations, fund raising events and occasional sales of timber. The 'catchment' population is about 3,000 people most of whom enjoy the woods at some point in the year with many being very regular users on a daily 'dog- walking' basis. However, although current membership is still around 250 there is an 'active' membership of only about 20. This small core group has been crucial in reducing maintenance/ revenue costs via voluntary efforts with path repairs, drainage, way marking paths, small scale forestry work and other woodland estate tasks.

Part of Anagach Woods is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) mainly to help protect the endangered Capercaillie. Despite the area being heavily used for recreation and dog-walkers Capercaillie have reared chicks. However, this required a big awareness/education campaign and wardening along with the cooperation of visitors to the woods.

The aims of the Anagach Woods Trust are:

- To manage the Woods in such a way as to improve the habitats for rare plants and animals characteristic of native Scots Pine forest.
- To make the most of the wood as a resource for environmental education and training.
- To create and maintain to a high standard access routes and other facilities that allow people of all abilities to enjoy the woods, that contribute to the value of Grantown as a whole and that balance with the primary objective of conservation.
- In line with conservation objectives, to ensure that Anagach Woods provides opportunities for small business development based on the products and activities of Anagach Woods.
- To maintain a positive flow of financial resources from timber and non- timber forest product revenues and from grants and donations that will sustain the management of the woods.
- To ensure that a wide range of Grantown residents and other stakeholders are involved in the management operations and planning of the woods. For further information: <http://www.anagachwoods.org.uk>

Lessons for Callander Community Development Trust -

- Many similarities to Callander as this wood is very close to the town and within a National Park. A visit would be a very useful exercise.
- The AWT have developed an area of one of the woods for Mountain Bike Trails and jumps. Although part of the wider Anagach Woods it is clear the area is principally for mountain biking with its 'own' paths, car park and good access for emergency vehicles if required.

- Conservation constraints/issues have been proactively addressed to ensure a positive outcome but this has required a lot of work by the Trust working in partnership with a wide range of interested parties.
- A willing and able group of volunteers has been vital to keep the woods in good, safe condition with paths and other infrastructure well- maintained.

2. Laggan Forest Trust (LFT)

We go into considerable detail with this comparator because there is a lot of useful information available and many issues encountered by LFT over the years are also likely to be encountered by CCDT should they enter into some form of ownership/management arrangement for the woods around Callander.

Laggan Forest Trust was one of the first community groups in Scotland to take a formal role in the management of a forest and to be involved in associated activities. Laggan Forest Trust was founded on a partnership with the Forestry Commission Scotland in 1998, and aims to continue building and nurturing partnerships concerned with community, conservation, leisure, employment and business.

Specifically, the Trust's aims are to:

- Safeguard local community interests
- Try and increase employment revolving around the Strathmashie Forest
- Reduce the depopulation rate and maintain all essential aspects of rural community life (i.e. the school, local shop, doctor etc.)
- Conserve, regenerate and promote restoration of native and other woodlands
- Maintain, improve and extend paths within and linking such woodlands for the benefit of the public.
- Promote all benefits of the woodland Operating as a Development Trust, the organisation is wholly community owned and led, undertakes a range of activities in the forests in the geographical region of Laggan, working in partnership with Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) as well as other community groups and organisations, and aspires to achieving economic sustainability through various enterprises. LFT has always worked in partnership with Forestry Commission Scotland, and in 2003 signed a 25 year partnership agreement for management of the Strathmashie Forest. LFT also works closely with the Cairngorm National Park Authority, which has funded the building of our newly opened Laggan Wolftrax Centre.

LFT has a trading arm, the LFT Forestry Company Ltd, which works to provide local employment opportunities, and aspires to achieve economic sustainability for LFT through various social enterprises. These include a small-scale wood fuel business, forestry contracting and the cafe in the new Centre. The LFT are hoping to add bike hire and an uplift service in 2016.

The associated mountain bike trails that are branded under the name Laggan Wolftrax are the responsibility of Forestry Commission. However, we understand that FCS are increasingly concerned over mountain bike trail liabilities and are not intending to establish or manage any new trails.

The LFT Forestry Company

Laggan Forest Trust Forestry Company Limited (LFTFC) is the trading arm of Laggan Forest Trust Originally set up to manage the Strathmashie Forest in partnership with FCS, the Forestry Company signed a 25 year partnership agreement with FCS in 2003. More recently, LFT's forestry contractors have been undertaking work for the Forestry Commission under framework agreements.

Over the past couple of years LFTFC has set up a small-scale wood fuel business and has built a much-needed new centre at Laggan Wolftrax, home of the Forestry Commission's mountain biking trails. The main attraction of the new **Laggan Wolftrax Centre** is the cafe - being run as a social enterprise - which offers good food and drink, a friendly welcome, and hot showers for muddy bikers.

The LFT Forestry Company is also hoping to offer bike hire and uplift from a dedicated "bike shop" in the new centre from 2016, and to offer a learning space for meetings and courses.

The LFT Forestry Company has a company registration (in Scotland) and is also registered for VAT.

The LFT currently has three members of staff, Business Development Officer, Support Officer and Café Supervisor

The Trustees and Company Secretary of LFT meet every month to discuss progress, review issues and assess strategy.

Review and Evaluation

Laggan Forest Trust very kindly made available a copy of a report on a Review and Evaluation of Laggan Forest Trust (2013) by Steve Westbrook.

The review was undertaken to assess the impact of LFT's activities, with a particular emphasis on the period since it acquired land assets on behalf of the Laggan community in 2007. The main considerations of the review were:

1. To what extent had LFT achieved its objectives?
2. To make recommendations for the future operation of LFT.

This review of a well-established community forest group will be very useful to CCDT as a group at the early stages of the woodland management/ownership options appraisal process. However, it is acknowledged that there are also many differences between the

two communities. The report highlights key issues from a long established community forest trust who have much relevant experience.

Whilst we would strongly recommend that all those on the CCDT Project Steering Group read the full review we have listed some of the Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations below for ease of reference. Please remember that these were compiled by the authors of the review and are not our own, original work:

The most important point made is that the Laggan Forest Trust, through its management agreements with FCS in 198/99 (for 5 years) and in 2004 (for a further 25 years) and its purchase of 3 areas of land (c20ha) from FCS in 2006/07 has:

- Enabled the forest to be managed and developed in ways which have broadly matched the community's aspirations. The Trust has consulted the local community extensively and frequently throughout the period; and its activities and plans are considered (on balance) to have reflected the community's preferences – though not without opposition on particular plans and issues.
- Led to the establishment and development of the Wolfrax mountain biking facility, which has provided benefits to the mountain biking community (particularly within Scotland), as well as to local businesses and the local residents who have obtained employment through the spending of additional visitors. Since opening in 2004, 100-150,000 mountain biking visits will have been made, with possibly 70 full time equivalent job years of employment generated through additional visitor spending in the Laggan / Newtonmore / Kingussie area. FCS, with partnership funding, has spent more than £500,000 on developing and maintaining the facility (excluding some of its staff costs).
- Brought the planning of a Forest Centre, primarily to support the mountain biking facility, to a stage where the Scottish Government, via CNPA, has provided £400,000 in funding to enable a Centre to be built in 2014.
- Worked with FCS to maintain and improve the mountain bike trails and made other amenity and access improvements within the forest, with local employment benefits.
- Obtained funding to establish a wood fuel business with prospects of providing sustainable full time employment for at least 2 local people as well as supplying wood fuel locally. Local employment through administration, forestry work, path building, etc has varied from year to year, and has been dependent largely on grant aid.

Organised and run a series of forest related events and training courses – the former of particular relevance to the area's younger people, with more than 30 events held in 2011 and 2012.

Had LFT not been set up and had local people not continued since 1998 to volunteer as directors to keep the organisation moving forward, it is possible that none (or only a small fraction) of the above benefits would have been forthcoming. The whole forest

might have been bought from FC by a commercial owner in the late 1990s and managed predominantly for timber thereafter – with any local employment limited to staff that forestry contractors might have taken on from time to time for planting, access improvements, thinning, clear felling, etc.

Because public and other support funding since 1998 has benefited the wider area through visitor spending and the mountain biking community (mainly not locally resident) as well as the Laggan community, the views of the local community on the actions that have been taken (by LFT, FCS and others) and the benefits that have accrued locally are not the only relevant indicator of success and value for public sector investment – though they are important.

The main disappointment / missed opportunity has been the time taken to achieve a forest centre / visitor centre.

The time lag, in the view of the Review's authors, has been almost entirely due to the opposition (principally from one business) to the project due to possible displacement of café trade. Similarly, the strength of antipathy to the Trust from small sections of the community has also predominantly been due to this issue and the failure to resolve it. The Trust's directors have been patient in dealing with the issue, and it is not considered reasonable to have expected volunteers with the community's overall interest at heart to have found a way to satisfy all parties in the circumstances (if indeed this would even have been possible). The public agencies appear to have taken a pragmatic approach in balancing increased economic benefit for the community as a whole against possible displacement of employment from one particular business – but this is more difficult for a community operation that has to live with the consequences in terms of public opinion and the reluctance of many to take sides.

Other local disappointment over the past five years has included:

- . (i) FCS's tendering processes leading to less local forest-related work.
- . (ii) Limited investment by FCS after early developments in additional and longer bike trails.
- . (iii) The rundown appearance of the BaseCamp facility latterly and its eventual closure.
- . (iv) The recent closure of the local shop.

LFT would have been able to have influenced (i) and (ii) above only marginally with more concerted effort; (iii) has stemmed mainly from the delay in building a customised forest centre; and (iv) is likely to have happened even if the Forest Centre had been built and other additional local employment had been generated given the market trends working against the survival of small village shops.

The consultation for this evaluation through a public meeting and locally distributed questionnaires produced a response biased towards the Trust's detractors; and previous

consultation, the scale of membership of the Trust, etc has been taken into account in our appraisal of the Trust's relative success in addition to the specific points (positive and negative) that have been made to us through our own consultation with the general public, people closely involved, and stakeholder organisations and businesses.

The principal recommendations from the review were that:

The Trust should strive to ensure that the impact of the Forest Centre's café is at worst neutral and at best positive on other local catering outlets. This could be achieved through:

- self, rather than contracted, operation.
- signage from the west not emphasising the café.
- promoting other local catering outlets prominently on-site.
- encouraging all vehicle drivers who park to pay the parking charge (with an increase in charge – see below – an even greater disincentive for non forest visitors to use the Forest Centre's café and toilets). Potentially, the outlet could stock goods for sale other than food and drink for consumption on the premises that would help compensate the community for the loss of its shop.

The Trust should negotiate with FCS to take over responsibility for managing, maintaining and developing Strathmashie Forest and the cycle trails (as well as all other facilities within the Forest and its car parks) on terms that should give it long term financial sustainability taking into account income from felling, planting (inclusive of grants), etc, and increased parking charges to mountain bikers. The subsequent broader operations should justify the employment of a full time manager, with economies of scale in management and administration were the café, bike hire, etc also to be run in-house, as well as greater control. It is acknowledged, however, that State Aids will be a consideration in how such arrangements might be taken forward.

Should FCS retain responsibility for the mountain bike trails, LFT should, as a partner, strive to work with FCS to obtain funding to develop the trails further, which would provide work for its new path building team.

In the short term, to help manage the construction project and the early operation of the Forest Centre and the wood fuel project, CNPA, HIE and other partners should fund adequate management time. Seconding or funding financial management skills to assist the Board, at least for a period, is also recommended.

LFT's Constitution should be modified to give competent and committed local people longer tenure as directors should they wish to continue their involvement and where this would be beneficial to the organisation and local community.

The Trust and its staff should liaise more regularly and constructively with local businesses, including the two hotels, to help maximise overall economic impact. Laggan

Forest Trust Development Project is supported by a Board of Trustees from the community of Laggan. **Mountain Biking at Wolftrax** The mountain biking trails at Wolftrax are some of the best in Scotland – they are owned and maintained by FCS. Further information is available at www.scotland.forestry.gov.uk/visit/laggan-wolftrax.

The car park has a £3 car parking fee. It is clearly stated that the money raised is used for maintenance of the trails which greatly encourages people to pay. There is a new centre at Wolftrax, with a cafe, toilets, showers and the Laggan Forest Trust office, and 'Bothy Bikes' have just opened up a bike shop offering bike hire and soon to be stocked with essential equipment and providing a maintenance service.

Lessons for Callander Community Development Trust -

- Laggan Forest Trust have been able to achieve it's aims for local forests in partnership with FCS without taking on the burden of full woodland ownership.
- LFT have also allowed FCS to take on ownership, maintenance and liability for the Mountain Bike Trails.
- By setting up a 'trading arm' in the form of a Forest Company Limited the LFT have been able to separate it's commercial activities from other aims. In this way it has been able to continue to receive grants to help deliver it's non-commercial community and conservation objectives.
- Dedicated staff frees the voluntary Board and Trustees from 'day-to- day' tasks and issues and allows them to concentrate on strategic development work.
- Ensure proactive communications with the wider community and avoid potential conflict with local businesses.

3. Fernaig Community Trust

Fernaig have produced a very useful report on their Community Woodland Management Proposal particularly have the community consultation process and results. Fernaig are therefore just slightly ahead of where Callander could be if CCDT decided to take on ownership/management of some of Callander woodlands.

Lessons for Callander Community Development Trust

See copy of Fernaig Community Trust – Community Woodland Management Proposal

COMPARATORS - GROUP 2

Bespoke Community Development Group, Falkirk

Bespoke, a Community Development Company is a radical new approach to linking the community with the countryside with the strapline of: 'For the Community by the Community'.

Whether on foot, by bike or on horseback, Bespoke is dedicated to engaging the community with the outdoors for health, recreation and learning.

Set up in September 2011, community owned and operated since day one, Bespoke is committed to working in partnership with people and organisations who share the ethos of getting people into the great outdoors.

Anyone committed to upholding and promoting Bespoke's aims and objectives whilst sharing in its core values may apply to become a member. Membership enables a direct input into the work of Bespoke which is 'owned' by its members.

Bespoke is driven by a plan adopted following consultation with its membership. During the initial stages, the focus will be primarily on the paths, tracks and trails on the south side of Falkirk whilst developing a working partnership with Callendar Estate who has an extensive path network including single track cycle trails.

Bespoke currently runs a trail building / training project. With grant funding, Bespoke was able to purchase a range of hand tools and some motorised equipment which is being used to help construct some of their new technical trails as well as maintaining the existing path network.

Full induction and training is given to all new volunteers and Bespoke supplies volunteers with all the appropriate personal protective equipment as required except from boots.

Bespoke is currently undertaking the construction of a technical trail in the Auchengean woods which has been entirely built by hand and with volunteer labour.

Although successful in being awarded 'start-up' and project grants Bespoke, like many other initiatives struggles to find ongoing income to cover revenue and running costs such as consumable materials and admin costs.

For further information see www.bespokefalkirk.co.uk

Lessons for Callander Community Development Trust -

- By linking community projects to training and health agendas there is opportunity to access funding and a 'workforce' for woodland development and maintenance.
- Ensure mechanism/Business Plan for ongoing funding to cover revenue items.

4. Maryculter Woodlands Trust

In Aberdeenshire, the **Maryculter Woodlands Trust** was awarded a grant of nearly £200,000 from the Scottish Land Fund in September 2015. The Trust will now be able to take forward a long held ambition of owning the 67 hectare Kirkton of Maryculter Wood. The local community has managed the forest, under agreement with Forestry Commission Scotland, since 2007 and will now, thanks to the SLF grant be able to develop the wood as owners.

The award will help to secure the future of the woodland as a community asset, allowing the Trust to build on the existing use of the wood as an educational resource, to create new opportunities for volunteering, training and skills development and to initiate a range of income generating activities.

Ed Thorogood, Chair, Maryculter Woodlands Trust said: “Gaining support from the Scottish Land Fund is life-changing news for us. We are also very grateful to our own supportive community and to those who put the framework in place which helps communities take ownership of their local woods. We look forward to continuing our work with the community and network of local organisations to help improve the habitat and amenity value still further. We are particularly pleased with the number of educational groups, including the Kincardineshire Forest School and The Green School of Aberdeen, which want to work with us to develop the educational value of the wood.”

Lessons for Callander Community Development Trust -

- Having several years sharing the management of the wood with FCS before taking on full ownership gave the Trust greater experience and confidence.
- Having the backing of a supportive, wider community was important particularly for funding applications.
- Working with local organisations helped form a network of local experience and volunteer labour to help with conservation projects and solve access-related issues such as path signing.
- Working with local schools meant that many more people got involved in the woods via their children which helped to build much wider community support.

Other Scottish Land Fund awards that have received recent funding are:

Glengarry Community Woodlands

Award: £224,000 This group will purchase Glengarry Wood and the former Forestry Commission Depot at Invergarry, Inverness-shire under the National Forest Land Scheme bringing 30 hectares of woodland into community ownership.

Morvern Community Development Company

Award: £127,000 This group based in the Highlands will purchase two plots of land in Lochaline on the Morvern peninsula, one plot under the National Forest Land Scheme. The plots will be developed to provide sites for new affordable housing, visitor accommodation and a heritage centre/gift shop in the centre of the village, to meet the needs of this remote rural community.

Summary of Comparators Investigation

Our investigation into comparator attractions has been enlightening – though only up to a point. It has thrown up some examples of good practice and innovation, some of

which might be “borrowed” by CCDT. However, our research has also revealed that there is a growing number of community groups around Scotland who have very similar aspirations to CCDT and are seeking capital grants for various community ‘buy-outs’. There are also over 200 community woodland groups in Scotland of various types. All of these are looking for some sort of revenue income to keep them going. Ongoing revenue income is often more difficult to attract than one-off initial capital funding. It is also important to bear in mind that many new groups are likely to be starting up encouraged by the Scottish Government push on Community Right to Buy legislation and the increase in SLF funding. Although capital funding budgets and profile have increased this is likely to, in turn, result in greater competition for a finite pot for capital project funding.

Other possible comparators

Given the limited budget and time available we have been unable to research other comparators in detail. However, we have started to list some potentially useful comparators below that the CCDT may be able to investigate themselves or include as part of a future consultancy contract.

Culag Woods – Culag Community Woodland Trust, Lochinver Dinnet Community Forestry Ullapool Community Woodfuel Group Applecross Community Share Scourie Community Development Company Ltd.
Staffin Community Trust

Further examples are given in the report ‘Community Forest Scotland – A Report for Forest Research’ April 2009 although there are also additional more up-to-date examples as given earlier in this report.