



# Feasibility Study: Community Ownership of FLS Site, Cairnbaan

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Cairnbaan Community Trust

14 June 2024 *Final Version 26 August 2004*



# Contents

<b>1. Introduction and Background .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 Background and High Level Aims.....	2
1.2 The Organisation .....	3
1.3 The Asset .....	4
1.4 Methodology .....	4
<b>2. Community and Market Research.....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 The Nature of the Area.....	8
2.2 Demographics and Statistics.....	9
2.3 Policy Context .....	15
2.4 Community Survey .....	22
2.5 Open Public Meeting.....	26
2.6 Stakeholder Conversations and Interviews.....	27
2.7 Market Research.....	29
<b>3. The Asset.....</b>	<b>47</b>
3.1 Overview of the Asset.....	47
3.2 Condition Survey .....	48
3.3 Input from the Architect.....	48
3.4 Valuation .....	49
3.5 Running Costs .....	49
3.6 Plans.....	49
<b>4. Capacity to Deliver .....</b>	<b>51</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	51
4.2 Legal Structure Appraisal .....	51
4.3 Board Skills.....	51
4.4 Funding.....	52
4.5 Financial Viability.....	54
<b>5. Findings and Recommendations.....</b>	<b>57</b>
5.1 Findings.....	57
5.2 Options Appraisal .....	60
5.3 Recommendations .....	61
5.4 Accommodation Schedule.....	63

# 1. Introduction and Background

## 1.1 Background and High Level Aims

In 2020, a group of local residents in Cairnbaan took over the redundant BT phone box, and successfully negotiated the installation of a defibrillator, creating a 'wee community hub' with book exchange, which was named Ionad Càrn Bàn to reflect the community's Gaelic heritage. Other projects followed, including securing funding from local building firm MacKenzie Construction<sup>1</sup> for two local initiatives: the replacement of fencing for a playpark, and a community notice board. The group also had a small grant of £250 from Lochgilphead Community Council in April 2023.



As with many rural communities in Scotland, there have been changes to the community over the years. In Cairnbaan, this has included the loss of the village's shop and primary school, a rise in second / holiday home ownership, and the recent very significant closure of the local hotel. Though there are hopes that this may re-open, it operated as the community hub of the village, and that has left a significant gap. In the meantime, Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) indicated that their buildings in the centre of the village were surplus to requirements.

In early 2023, the group started to explore the possible transfer of the redundant Forestry and Land Scotland buildings in the village into community ownership. A community meeting was held, with 40 people attending, and the ideas for the FLS buildings, and for the establishment of a community trust, received strong support. This was entirely community-led and grassroots, indicating a desire for the community to take control of the services and facilities that matter to them.

Out of this bottom-up momentum, Cairnbaan Community Trust (Urras a'Chàirn Bhàin) was set up. The organisation arranged a competition for the design of its logo in collaboration with Lochgilphead High School, and made a short film about the process<sup>2</sup>.

In June 2024, CCT received a grant of £5,000 from Nadara a'Cruachan Windfarm to make a film about Cairnbaan, and it is anticipated that this will be used on the CCT website to showcase the village and for funding applications.

The organisation has a growing membership, with 50 Ordinary Members (people who live in Cairnbaan) and 19 Associate Members. This represents around 20% of the population.

<sup>1</sup> MacKenzie Construction Community Fund: <https://www.mackenzieconstruction.com/news-knowledge/crinan-community-fund/>

<sup>2</sup> [Logo Winner20231103\\_2023\\_11\\_19\\_15\\_37\\_39 \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LogoWinner20231103_2023_11_19_15_37_39)

The Trust believes that the FLS site could become a significant community hub in the heart of the village. It is vital, partly to attract external investment and partly to ensure robust planning, that the project sets out a concept that fills a gap in the village and meets local need, is fundable, is financially viable and works in close collaboration with (rather than displacing) other local agencies and existing local amenities / services.

The Trust commissioned Community Enterprise to undertake feasibility work on the site and buildings, and assess their suitability to deliver a range of positive outcomes for local residents, and Inch Architecture to lead on re-design of the space to create something that meets the up to date needs of this community.

## 1.2 The Organisation

Cairnbaan Community Trust<sup>3</sup> is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation<sup>4</sup> (SCIO), run entirely by local volunteers.

The organisation's main purpose is to undertake initiatives which benefit the people of Cairnbaan, making the village an even better place for its residents to live and for visitors to enjoy.

The Trust's geographic focus is Cairnbaan<sup>5</sup>. Full membership is open to those aged 16 or over and residing in the defined geographical area. There are also Junior and Associate categories of membership, for 12-15 year olds residing in Cairnbaan, and for those who live outwith the area, but support the purposes of the Trust. Membership is free.

The Trust's purposes<sup>6</sup> are:

- The advancement of citizenship and economically sustainable development.
- The advancement of arts, heritage, culture and science.
- The provision of recreational facilities or the organisation of recreational facilities with the object of improving the conditions of life for the persons for whom the facilities or activities are primarily intended.
- The advancement of environmental protection or improvement including the education of the community about its environment, culture and/or history.
- The relief of those in need.
- The saving of lives by the provision and maintenance of the defibrillator and associated training; the promotion of water safety and similar activities.

This local membership and broad objectives meet the place-based nature of this project well.

The Trust currently has 5 Trustees. There are no paid staff.

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<sup>3</sup> [Home - Cairnbaan Community Trust](#)

<sup>4</sup> Charity number: SC052905, registered charity from 25 October 2023: [OSCR | Charity Details](#)

<sup>5</sup> Defined as the postcode areas of PA31 8BA, 8SQ, 8SJ, 8UP, 8UE, 8UH, 8UF, 8SX and 8SP

<sup>6</sup> These are set out in clause 4 of the constitution: [CCT-Constitution.pdf \(cairnbaancommunitytrust.org\)](#)



### 1.3 The Asset



The vacant property is owned by Forestry and Land Scotland and has become available for Community Asset Transfer, which could present opportunities for the development of a community hub.

The FLS site is approximately 0.3 hectares in the centre of Cairnbaan. There are two buildings: an office building, and a large shed / workshop. The buildings have been vacant since June 2023.



### 1.4 Methodology

Community consultation was undertaken by the Trust during 2023. There were two events: a meeting at the Cairnbaan Hotel in April, attended by 40 people, most of whom were full time residents of the village; and an open day at the buildings in June, to which about 12 people came. This was followed up with a further meeting at the hotel, attended by 12 people. Following this meeting, a resident made a short film of the

buildings which was shared on YouTube<sup>7</sup>. Regular resident updates have also been posted to all residents on the email list compiled during the year.

Ideas for the buildings at that early point included: a playgroup; a lunch club / Warm Space; an art space / pottery classes; a Gaelic language centre; music tuition; a community garden / therapeutic garden / outdoor play area; storage in the large shed; a workshop space; tool exchange and repair; and a tourist hub to promote the cultural heritage of Cairnbaan and the surrounding area.

The early ideas of the Trust were that the two buildings remain as distinct entities, with the large shed / workshop used for storage or workshop space, potentially sub-divided and partially leased out to generate an income; and the former office building being used as a community hub facility, with potential for a tourist offering.

This feasibility work has combined both desk-based research and community and stakeholder consultation. The aim of this work was to ensure that proposals for the asset were community-led and addressed a real need in a changing community.

For this feasibility study, the following have been engaged with:


- 64 people via an online survey, 39 of whom live in Cairnbaan. Many of the respondents were answering on behalf of a household or group, rather than as an individual, and respondents were asked to indicate how many people their answers represented. With these taken into account, responses nominally represent a further 34 adults, 2 young people aged 13-18 and 10 children under the age of 13 (total of 110).
- 20 people at an open meeting.
- 10 people from the local community, in semi-structured phone / online interviews.
- Conversations and site visits with representatives of 6 local community organisations with a specific interest in the project.
- Conversations with 6 local business owners from Cairnbaan and surrounding areas.

The stages of this study were:

Feasibility Study phase	Description
Raising Awareness	<div data-bbox="448 1518 759 1821" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="778 1518 1281 1585">Press release, published in the Argyll Advertiser.</p> <p data-bbox="778 1608 1318 1713">Postings on the Trust’s website and the Cairnbaan Community Group Facebook page<sup>8</sup>.</p> <p data-bbox="778 1731 1318 1839">Hard copy posters displayed in the Wee Community Hub (Ionad Càrn Bàn) and around the village.</p>

<sup>7</sup> [Forestry building tour - YouTube](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Cairnbaan Community Group | Facebook](#)

	
<p>Demographic and Policy Analysis</p>	<p>Study of key demographic trends in the local area using a bespoke piece of software that gathers over 30 data sets including Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Census, DWP statistics and health figures. This was refreshed in June as new census data has been released so the data is as up to date as possible.</p> <p>Analysis of key national, local authority and local policies and priorities to test fit and compatibility.</p>
<p>Community Survey</p>	<p>Survey available online from mid-April to early June 2024.</p> <p>Paper copies available locally.</p> <p>Promoted via social media and by word of mouth across the community.</p> <p>64 individual responses were received representing the views of 110 people.</p>
<p>Stakeholder Interviews</p>	<p>In-depth interviews carried out by phone / videocall / in person with key local organisations, groups and individuals.</p>
<p>Drop in Event</p>	<p>A drop in event in May 2024 to provide residents with an opportunity to provide feedback on the proposal and share ideas.</p> <div data-bbox="534 1489 1308 1787" style="border: 1px solid orange; padding: 5px;"> <p><a href="https://cairnbaancommunitytrust.org/survey-community-event/">https://cairnbaancommunitytrust.org/survey-community-event/</a></p> <p><b>Community Event</b></p> <p>We will also be hosting a <b>Community Event at MacPOOL on May 11th between 11am and 3pm.</b></p> <p>This is a drop-in event and will be held in the foyer to hear about plans and ask questions. Free tea &amp; coffee with cake will be available.</p> <p>Please <b>contact us</b> if you have any questions.</p> </div>
<p>Desk-based Research</p>	<p>Competitive and partnership analysis of the key local assets in the area to identify a key gap and to ensure no displacement.</p> <p>Research into ideas for the site: market trends to assess viability, levels of community buy in and risk of displacement, plus the identification of partnership opportunities.</p>

Design Team Input	Condition Survey of the building. Site visit and input from INCH Architects.
Financial Viability and Fundability	Financial options reviewed to ascertain whether the project could be financially viable in principle. Research into potential funding for capital projects undertaken to ensure this project is fundable and not a liability to the community.
Options Appraisal	An options appraisal of the offerings based on the research.

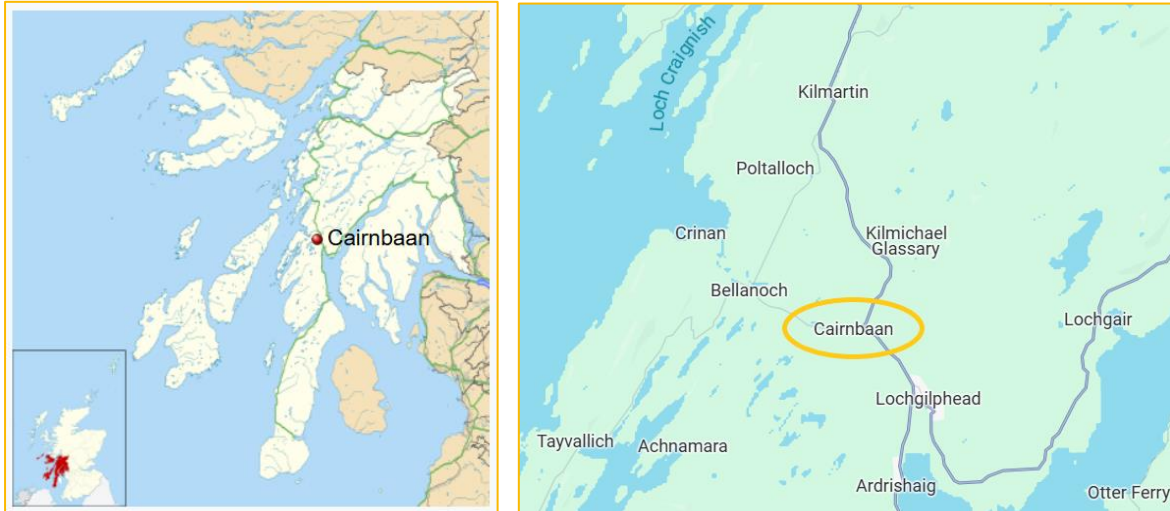
It is intended that the work above will lead to a 5-year business plan with cash flow projection, to support the Trust moving forwards and to secure required capital and revenue funding.



## 2. Community and Market Research

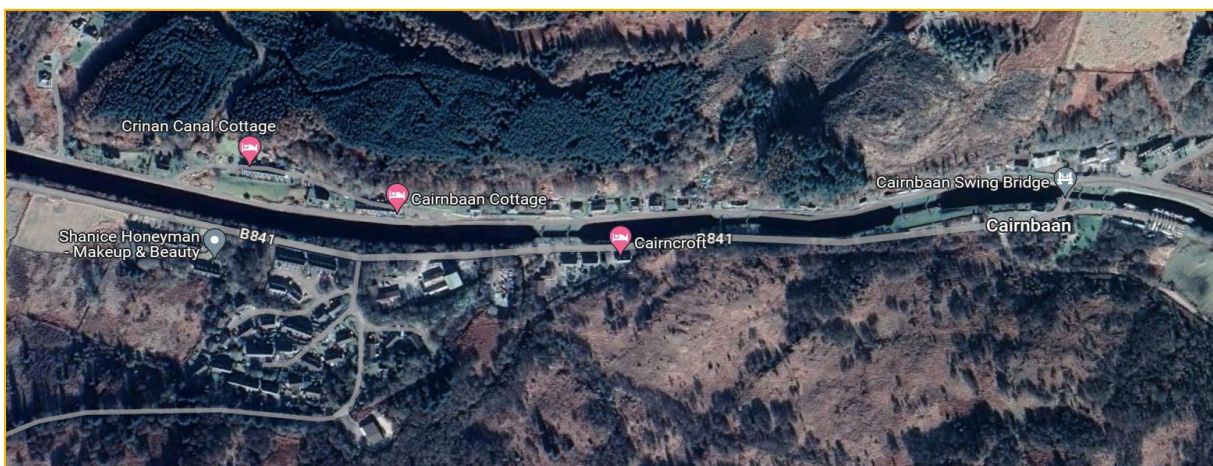
### 2.1 The Nature of the Area

Cairnbaan is a village on the Crinan Canal in Argyll and Bute. It has a population of 245. The village lies just off the A816, which is the main road between Lochgilphead and Oban.



The nearest town is Lochgilphead (population around 2,300), 2.5 miles from Cairnbaan, which has nursery, primary and secondary education at Lochgilphead Joint Campus<sup>9</sup>, shops and supermarkets, banks, a swimming pool<sup>10</sup> and hospitals.

The village is bisected by the canal, with workers' cottages from the 1800s on both sides of the canal, as well as newer housing developments in the village, the most recent of which was built by Argyll Community Housing Association on the south side of the canal<sup>11</sup>. The lock gates are commonly used to reference locations.



<sup>9</sup> [Lochgilphead Joint Campus](#)

<sup>10</sup> [MACPool Activity Hub | Improving Community Health & Wellbeing](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Photo gallery | ACHA](#)

The village previously had a primary school, which is now a residential property<sup>12</sup>, and a shop<sup>13</sup>, which is now a holiday house<sup>14</sup>. The Cairnbaan Hotel, built in around 1800, is currently closed, and has recently been sold<sup>15</sup>.



Scottish Canals<sup>16</sup> and Forestry and Land Scotland<sup>17</sup> are significant employers and landowners in the wider local area.

In relation to tourism, the village is at the mid-point of the 9 mile long Crinan Canal, between Ardrishaig and Crinan. There are a number of holiday homes along the canal, and the population increases between Easter and September with holiday makers, and



sailors berthing on the Canal. Activities including walking, cycling, fishing, wild swimming and paddle boarding.

The local area has some of the number of the most important Neolithic and Bronze Age artefacts in Britain, including cup and ring marks in Cairnbaan<sup>18</sup>. This history is showcased at the recently expanded Kilmartin Museum<sup>19</sup>, which reopened in 2023 after renovation works.

## 2.2 Demographics and Statistics

The data presented here represents the community of Cairnbaan, as defined in the constitution of Cairnbaan Community Trust (postcode areas of PA31 8BA, 8SQ, 8SJ, 8UP, 8UE, 8UH, 8UF, 8SX and 8SP).

Unless otherwise noted, the figures below have been obtained from Community Insight, a software package that collects data from over 30 databases including Census Scotland, Department of Work and Pensions, NHS and others. Community Enterprise does not own any of this data. This has been updated since earlier iterations of this report. Because of the small population / data set, there is a risk of indirect disclosure of identity. Some data (e.g. ethnic group, people in receipt of certain benefits) has therefore been omitted.

<sup>12</sup> [Old School House, Cairnbaan, Lochgilphead, PA31 2 bed detached house - £235,000 \(onthemarket.com\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> Image from “Crinan Canal: The Shipping Shortcut”, Guthrie Hutton, 2003

<sup>14</sup> [Cairnbaan House | Argyll Self Catering Holidays](#)

<sup>15</sup> [The Cairnbaan Hotel, Crinan Canal, Cairnbaan - Graham + Sibbald \(g-s.co.uk\)](#)

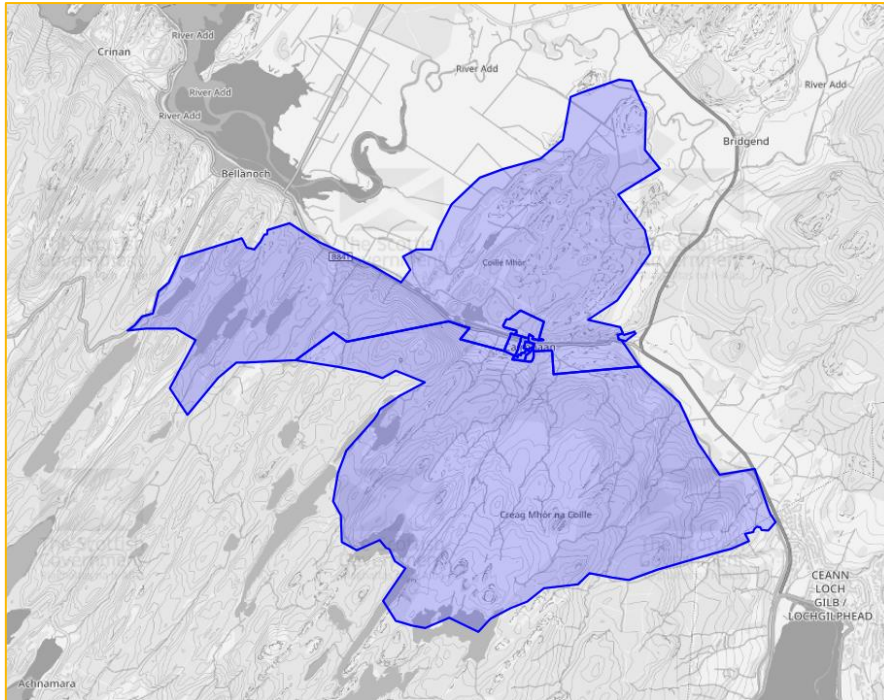
<sup>16</sup> [scottishcanals.co.uk](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Home - Forestry and Land Scotland](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Kilmartin Glen: Cairnbaan Rock Art | Historic Environment Scotland](#) and [Cairnbaan 1 | Canmore](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Kilmartin Museum](#)





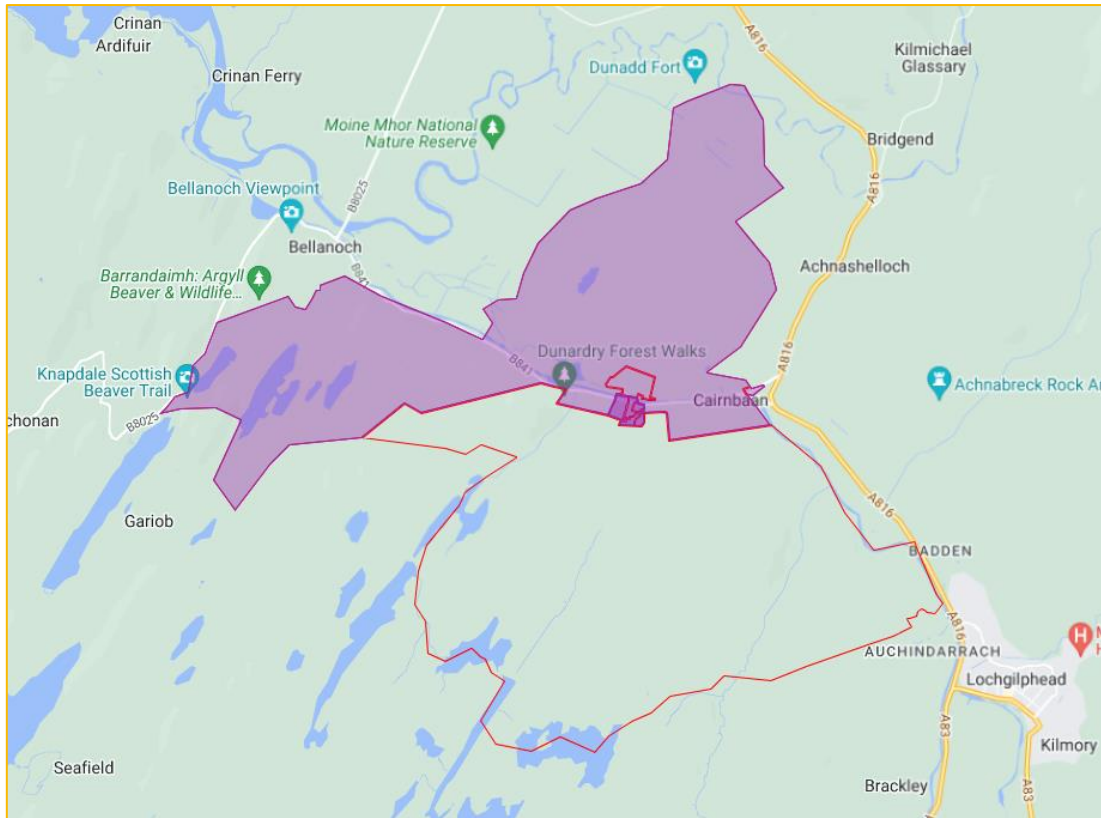
## Population

### Population and age

As at the 2022 Census, there were 245 people living in the community of Cairnbaan in 124 households.

Due to the small population and availability of data sets, it is not possible to determine an exact age breakdown for the area. However, in January 2024, there were 173 adults (16 or over) in Cairnbaan on the electoral register.

Another way to get an estimated age breakdown is by sourcing Output Area data as opposed to postcodes. Output Areas S00140611 and S00140628 (the purple area on the map below) cover all the Cairnbaan postcode areas apart from PA31 8UH. The population of postcode area PA31 8UH is 24, therefore the following data only accounts for 221 of the 245 people living in the community of Cairnbaan.



Data on Output Areas S00140611 and S00140628 comes from the 2022 Census. In these Output Areas, 19.4% (42 people) are aged 15 or under; this is higher than the national figure which is 15.3%. There are fewer people of working age (16-64) in the area than nationally: 58% (126 people) compared to 64.6%. Finally, 22.6% (49 people) are aged 65 or over, which is more than 20.1% in this age category nationally.<sup>20</sup>

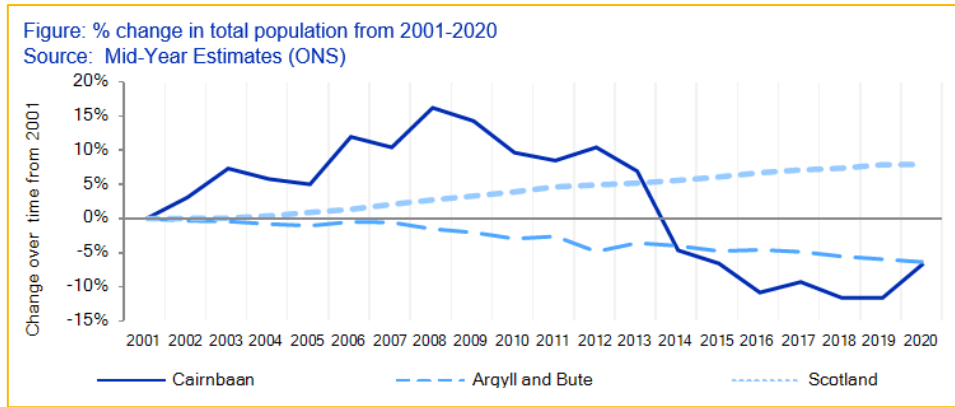
	Output Area S00140611 and S00140628 combined	Scotland
0-15 years	19.4%	15.3%
16-64 years	58%	64.6%
65+ years	22.6%	20.1%

### Population change

The population fluctuated between 2001 and 2020, increasing, then declining, before starting to increase again. As a whole, Argyll & Bute's population is decreasing, whereas the overall population in Scotland is increasing steadily. Addressing depopulation in remote / rural areas of Scotland is a key policy issue.

<sup>20</sup> [2022 output area data | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk) and [Scotland's Census 2022 - Rounded population estimates | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk)





## Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) measures the level of deprivation across 6,976 data zones in Scotland. The SIMD combines data across seven domains: income, employment, education, health, geographic access to services, housing and crime.<sup>21</sup>

The whole population of Cairnbaan is located within the most deprived 10% of areas in Scotland in terms of geographic access to services. This covers travel times by car and public transport to basic services such as GPs, post offices, schools, retail and fuel stations.

## Connectivity

Broadband speed in Cairnbaan is significantly slower than the average for Scotland.

Premises with broadband speeds below the USO (2019)	Average broadband download speed (Mbit/s)	Average broadband upload speed (Mbit/s)
05	38.93	8.02
3.1% (Scotland average = 3.7%)	Scotland average = 69.86	Scotland average = 11.22
Source: Ofcom 2017 & 2019; UK Onward (2021)		

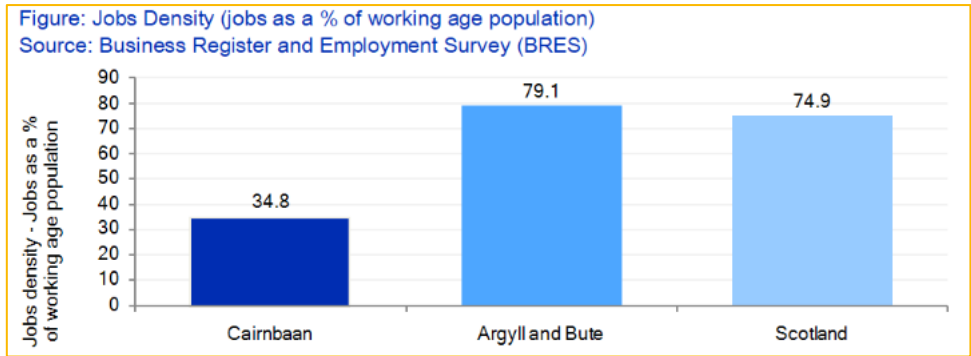
## Economy

### Local jobs

'Jobs density' is the number of jobs in the catchment area, as a percentage of working age population.

Data from the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) (2021) show that job density in the Cairnbaan area is much lower than the local authority average (34.8% compared to 79.1% in Argyll and Bute). Job density is also lower in Cairnbaan than the national average which is 74.9%.

<sup>21</sup> [SIMD \(Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation\)](#)



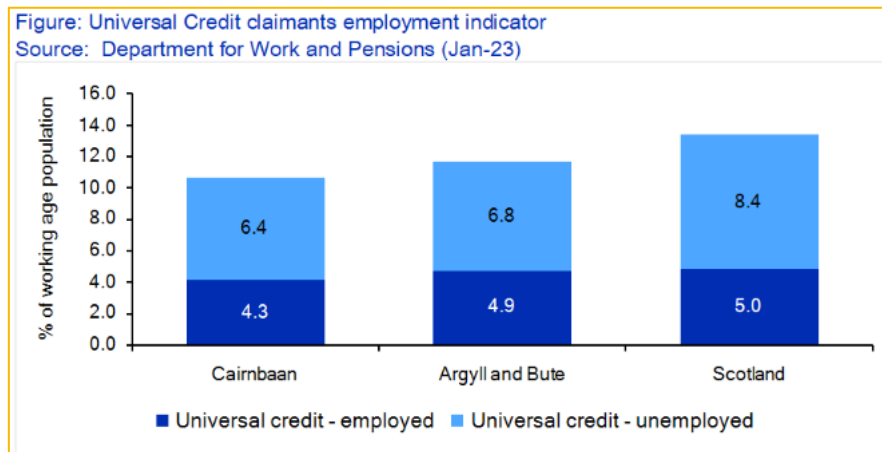
According to Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) figures from 2021, the three largest industry groups for workforce jobs based in the Cairnbaan area are:

- Transport
- Hotels and Catering
- Health

### Universal Credit

Universal Credit has replaced six previous benefits (including housing benefit, child tax credit and working tax credit).

10.7% of people living in the Cairnbaan area claim Universal Credit, which is below the averages of 11.7% in Argyll and Bute and 13.4% in Scotland.



### **Housing**

#### Tenure

The table below is a summary of the status of registered properties on the Council Tax register as at January 2024.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Information supplied by Argyll and Bute Council, Housing Services Department to Cairnbaan Community Trust to support their Scottish Land Fund application.

A&BC Council Tax Records – January 2024	Cairnbaan	% of Total
1. All properties	145	
2. Total Ineffective Stock	26	18%
2a. Long-term empty / exempt properties	9	
2b. 2nd/holiday homes	17	
3. Private Rented Sector	19	13%
4. RSL/Social Rented sector	24	17%
5. Private Owner Occupied (est.)	76	52%

The majority of housing in the Cairnbaan area are classed as private owner occupied (52%). 17% of properties in the area are social housing, provided by either Fyne Homes (13 properties) or ACHA (11 properties). 13% of properties are rented through a private landlord or estate agent.

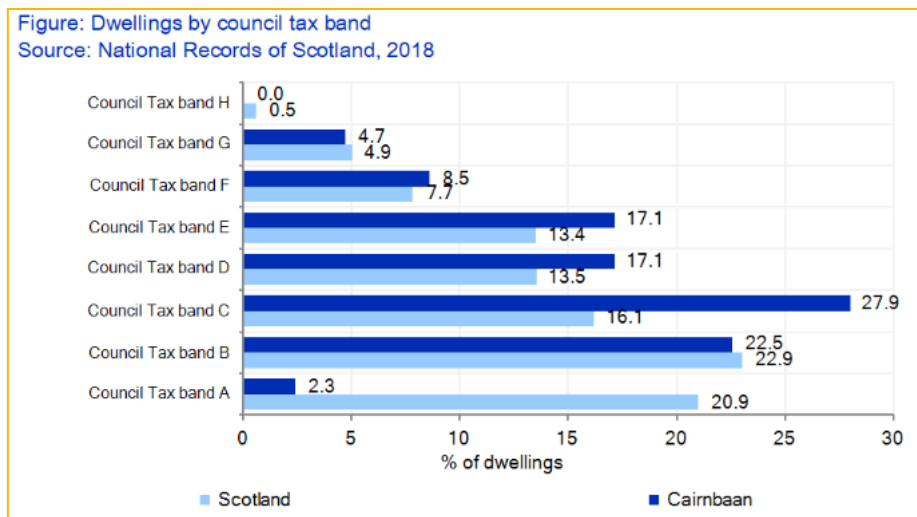
18% of all properties in the area are classed as ineffective stock. This means that they are either long-term empty / exempt or second / holiday homes. This is higher than both the Argyll and Bute average of 13% and the Mid Argyll average of 15% (January 2024).

### Property value

Council tax bands can be used as measure for property value and levels of affordable housing with Band A representing the lowest property value.

There is a very low proportion of dwellings in Cairnbaan in the most affordable category. 2.3% are Council Tax band A dwellings, compared to 20.9% in Scotland. However, 22.5% of properties are in the second most affordable Council Tax band and 27.9% are in the third most affordable.

In both Cairnbaan and nationally, around 13% of dwellings are in Council Tax band F to H.



## 2.3 Policy Context

Ensuring a good strategic fit with national and local policy will be important for the Trust to gain the support it will need. Key policies and initiatives have been reviewed in relation to the project. This section sets out how plans for community ownership of the FLS site in Cairnbaan could align with and help to realise key local and national policies.

### National Policy

Policy Document	Key Points	Alignment with Cairnbaan Community Hub project
National Performance Framework Outcomes <sup>23</sup>	<p>The National Performance Framework covers the whole of Scotland and aims to create a more successful country, give opportunities and increase the wellbeing of everyone living in Scotland, create sustainable and inclusive growth, reduce inequalities and give importance to economic, environmental and social progress.</p> <p>There are 11 national outcomes. Those that are most relevant to this project include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communities.</b> We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.</li> <li>• <b>Culture.</b> We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely.</li> <li>• <b>Health.</b> We are healthy and active.</li> <li>• <b>Environment.</b> We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment.</li> <li>• <b>Children and Young people:</b> We grow up loved, safe and respected, so that we realise our full potential.</li> <li>• <b>Fair Work and Businesses:</b> We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality</li> </ul>	<p>A central hub in the village could foster the feeling of a friendly, vibrant and cohesive community for all of those who live in and visit Cairnbaan. The location of the site, in the heart of the village, could help to reduce the perception of the village being divided by the canal.</p> <p>Management of the site could contribute to increased community resilience, where people are encouraged to volunteer, take responsibility for their community, and engage with decisions about it. The site could provide a central location for locals and visitors to explore the culture and heritage of the local area. This could include events and information.</p> <p>Active travel, including a bike station, and hire of items such as bikes, kayaks and paddle boards, could contribute to a healthier community. A community garden, and signage linking up with other local initiatives such as Forestry and Land Scotland footpaths, or the Argyll Beaver Centre, could promote environmental protection and knowledge. Access to local resources and events could reduce car usage.</p> <p>Activities for children and young people could be located in a safe and local space.</p> <p>Community ownership of the site could lead to increased job opportunities, as well as opportunities for volunteering and skills development.</p>

<sup>23</sup> [National Performance Framework | National Performance Framework](#)



Policy Document	Key Points	Alignment with Cairnbaan Community Hub project
	jobs and fair work for everyone.	
Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015) <sup>24</sup>	The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 helps to empower community bodies through the ownership or control of land and buildings, and by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services.	The development of a community owned and led hub in Cairnbaan could provide a positive example of the many benefits of community led development in rural Scotland. The idea generation and delivery will be led by local people with a focus on delivering community benefits locally.
National Planning Framework (NFP4)	Relevant spatial principles guiding planning include: <b>Just Transition.</b> empowering people to shape their places and ensure the transition to net zero is fair and inclusive. <b>Local living.</b> We will support local liveability and improve community health and wellbeing by ensuring people can easily access services, greenspace, learning, work and leisure locally. <b>Rural revitalisation.</b> We will encourage sustainable development in rural areas, recognising the need to grow and support urban and rural communities together.	The project could contribute towards NFP4 principles as set out above under the National Performance Framework Outcomes. Supporting local businesses / rural social enterprises could contribute to the local economy and create jobs.
Place Principle, 2019	Adopted by the Scottish Government in 2019, and intended to provide a collective focus to support inclusive economic growth and create places which are both successful and sustainable. It recognises that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose and is at the heart of addressing the needs and realising the full potential of communities.</li> </ul>	Regenerating the FLS building could provide a community hub in the heart of the village.

<sup>24</sup> [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act: summary - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-papers/plain-language/community-empowerment-scotland-act-2015-summary/)

Policy Document	Key Points	Alignment with Cairnbaan Community Hub project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A more joined-up, collaborative, and participative approach to services, land and buildings enables better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities.</li> </ul>	
Social Enterprise	<p>Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy, 2016-2026</p> <p>The vision is that “Over the next decade social enterprise will be at the forefront of a new wave of ethical and socially responsible business in Scotland. It will become a far reaching and valued alternative and a key part of the Scottish way of doing business.” A third action plan is about to be launched.</p>	<p>The buildings could be used as a base for local businesses, which employ local people. This could lead to an increase in local jobs.</p>
A Wellbeing Economy	<p>Wellbeing Economy Governments (WEGo) and First Minister speech at Panmure House 2019. This sets out that an economy should be driven by the wellbeing of people and communities rather than only GDP. This has developed with the establishment of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance (<a href="https://weall.org/scotland">https://weall.org/scotland</a>).</p>	<p>The proposal for this site will achieve both financial outcomes and social and wellbeing ones through use as community space.</p>
Community Wealth Building	<p>CWB is a model whereby locally based anchor institutions (such as local authorities, NHS, etc.) focus spend locally to encourage the development of local economies and to limit procurement spend leaking out of the area.</p> <p>The Scottish Government has bought into this concept and it is rolling out across local authorities. There are 5 key principles:</p>	<p>This is an important policy reference point and the focus on using these five principles to build the local economy of this area will be strong.</p>

Policy Document	Key Points	Alignment with Cairnbaan Community Hub project
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Plural ownership of the economy.</li> <li>2. Making financial power work for local places.</li> <li>3. Fair employment and just labour markets.</li> <li>4. Progressive procurement of goods and services.</li> <li>5. Socially productive use of land and property.</li> </ol>	
Climate Emergency and Net Zero	Recognition of the climate emergency and a need for “transformative change.” With an increasing focus on this as a cross-cutting theme in Government, this is resulting in new policy areas and funding streams from Government and other bodies such as the Lottery distributors.	This is a fundamental reference point for this project, where re-using an asset, while using the highest forms of energy efficiency and energy generation, have been built into Inch’s designs.
Scotland’s National Strategy for Economic Transformation	<p>This maps out how Scotland will recover from covid in a way that is more than just getting into growth again.</p> <p>“The ambition of this strategy is not just to grow our economy but in doing so, to transform our country’s economic model so that we build an economy that celebrates success in terms of economic growth, environmental sustainability, quality of life and equality of opportunity and reward.”</p> <p>Key objectives are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish Scotland as a <b>world-class entrepreneurial nation</b> founded on a culture that encourages, promotes and celebrates entrepreneurial activity in every sector of our economy.</li> <li>2. Strengthen Scotland’s position in new markets and industries,</li> </ol>	This policy sets out a commitment to a new economy that the renovation of an important local site can contribute to in this rural area.

Policy Document	Key Points	Alignment with Cairnbaan Community Hub project
	<p>generating new, well-paid jobs from <b>a just transition to net zero.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Make Scotland's businesses, industries, regions, communities and public services more <b>productive and innovative.</b></li> <li>4. Ensure that <b>people have the skills</b> they need at every stage of life to have rewarding careers and meet the demands of an ever-changing economy and society and that employers invest in the skilled employees they need to grow their businesses.</li> <li>5. Reorient our economy towards <b>wellbeing and fair work</b>, to deliver higher rates of employment and wage growth, to significantly reduce structural poverty, particularly child poverty, and improve health, cultural and social outcomes for disadvantaged families and communities.</li> </ol>	
Visit Scotland – Tourism 2030	The National Tourism Strategy recognises the key role that tourism plays in Scotland's economy. Key goals in the strategy include the development of real experiences for visitors. Key priorities – Our passionate people, our thriving places, our diverse businesses, our memorable experiences.	Small scale tourism offerings, such as signage and information, may be a part of the future vision.

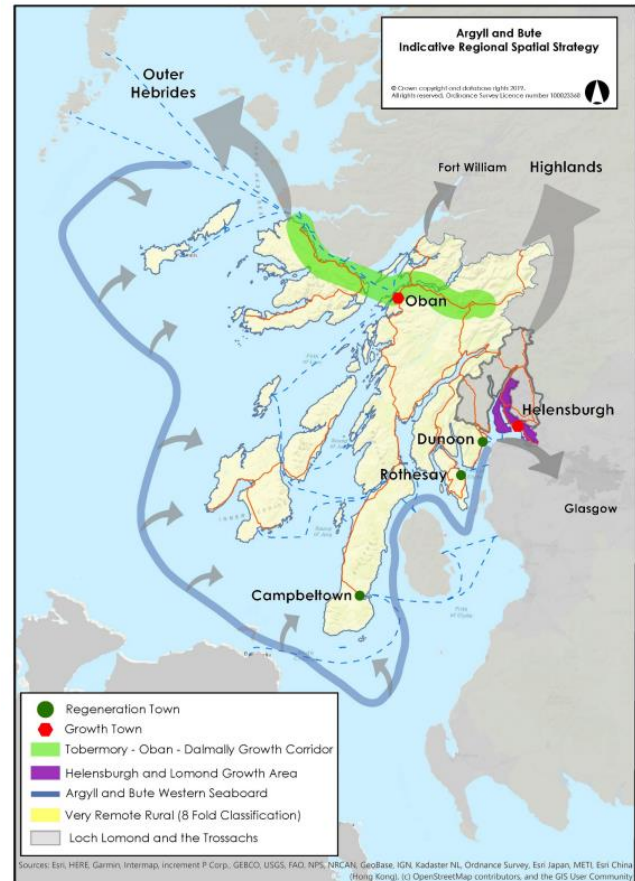


## Regional Policy

Relevant Argyll & Bute policies include:

- The Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2<sup>25</sup>
- Argyll and Bute Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy<sup>26</sup>

- “The overarching vision for the Council to 2030 and beyond is that Argyll and Bute is an economically diverse and successful area based on sustainable and low carbon development. It has a growing population with high quality, well connected places where people are able to meet their full potential without prejudicing the quality of life of future generations. It benefits both economically and socially from its outstanding natural, historic and built environment whilst protecting those very same special qualities that make Argyll and Bute a place that people choose to be.”
- Cairnbaan lies within a wider area categorised in planning terms as



- Very Remote Rural (Scottish Government)
- an Economically Fragile Area (Highlands and Islands Enterprise)

- Argyll and Bute Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2024-2034<sup>27</sup>
  - Outcome 3 is Community Wellbeing, whereby “Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership will improve Community Wellbeing by:
    - Broadening equality of access to Community Leadership opportunities
    - Furthering equality of access to services, facilities and community assets
    - Working with partners to maximise sustainability of community facilities and services
    - Enabling a voice in collective decision making

<sup>25</sup> [Local Development Plan 2 | Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>26</sup> [Draft FULL Indicative RSS v7.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>27</sup> [Argyll and Bute Outcomes Improvement Plan 2024-2034 | Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

- Enhancing communication within communities
  - Better understanding how communities achieve a sense of connection and belonging”
- Argyll & Isles Strategic Tourism Partnership: Visitor Economy Recovery and Growth Strategy 2022-25<sup>28</sup>
  - This promotes “the destination’s hero products:
    - the natural environment and iconic wildlife.
    - water and coast-based activities.
    - unique cycling territory.
    - dark skies & ancient forests.
    - excellence in food and drink (especially seafood, local whisky and gin, craft beer).
    - authentic cultural & heritage experiences.
    - health and wellbeing opportunities.
    - accommodation range.”
- Argyll and Bute Council’s Lochgilphead to Crinan Canal Active Travel Route<sup>29</sup>.
- Scottish Canals host Community Meetings specific to the Crinan Canal<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> [AISTP Strategy 2022-2025 FINAL VERSION Updated 2023.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>29</sup> [LOCHGILPHEAD TO CRINAN CANAL ACTIVE TRAVEL ROUTE CONCEPT DESIGN AND FUTURE EXTENAL FUNDING.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

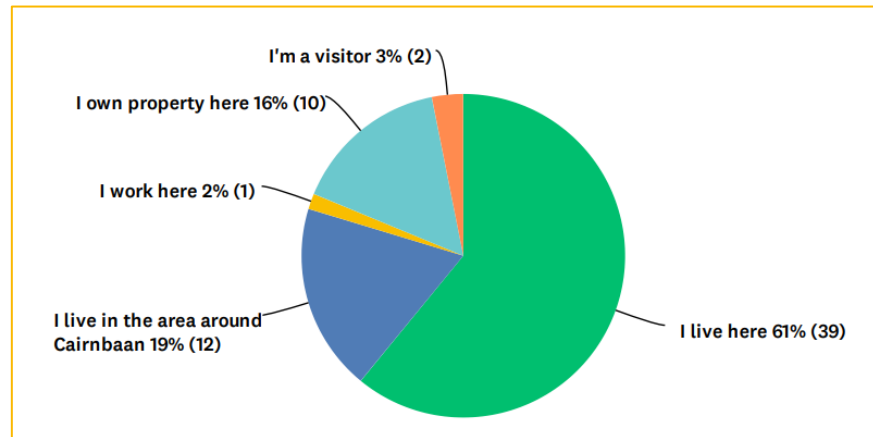
<sup>30</sup> [Scottish Canals | Crinan Canal](#)

## 2.4 Community Survey

The community survey was available from mid-April to early June 2024. 64 people responded. Many of these were responses on behalf of a household or group rather than an individual, and with these taken into account, responses nominally represent a further 34 adults, 2 young people aged 13-18 and 10 children under the age of 13 (total of 110)

### Respondents

The majority of respondents were local residents (39), followed by people who live in the area (12), property owners (10), visitors (2) and 1 person who works in Cairnbaan.



59 people

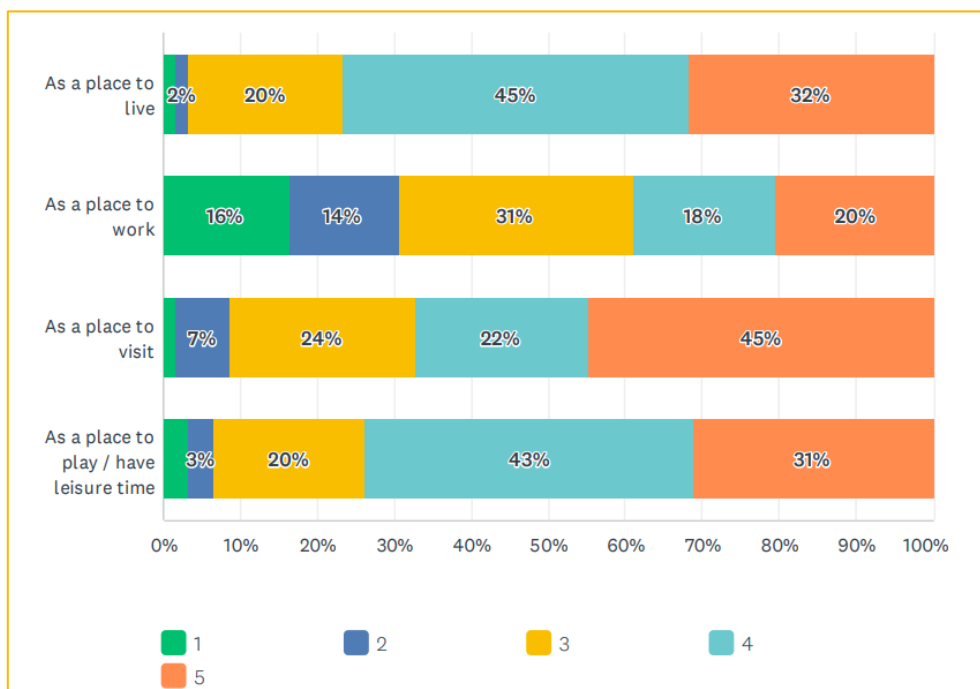
answered the question about age range; the majority of those respondents were working age adults (43 people), with 14 people aged over 65 and 2 aged between 13-18.

### Views of Cairnbaan

Respondents were asked to rate aspects of life in Cairnbaan from 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent). 63 people responded to this question.

77% of respondents rated Cairnbaan as either a good or excellent place to live; 67% as a good or excellent place to visit; and 74% as a good or excellent place to play / have leisure time.

This drops to 38% for Cairnbaan being a good or excellent place to work, with 16% rating it as very poor.



Respondents were asked, “What would improve life in Cairnbaan?” This was an intentionally open ended question, to ascertain what the key needs are in the community. Some of the needs might be met by initiatives on the FLS site, but others might require an alternative way of meeting the need.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to add any further comments later in the survey; those comments have been included here.

The responses can be grouped under the following themes:

A community hub (26 comments):

- Nearly all of these comments emphasised the need for a community space / hub / village hall
- Some comments included a strong endorsement: “We have a great bunch of neighbours, but nowhere to get together.” “A community hub to bring together both sides of the canal.”
- One respondent gave a word of warning, that: “there are plenty of venue hire / halls everywhere, that no-one enjoys maintaining or running.”

Reopening the Cairnbaan Hotel / pub (21 comments):

- 2 respondents suggested that the hotel become a community hub: “The hotel should be used as a community hub rather than taking land.”; “The hotel would be the best idea to have reopened where lots of arts, crafts workshops and selling. Make the hotel the hub for the village and have yoga, aerobics etc. for locals and visitors to the hotel. You could have a room rented out for a beautician for massage, waxing etc.”

Community events, activities and facilities (21 comments):

- Ideas included: events, themed nights or festivals; carpet bowls; knitting, baking, gardening, DIY; Gaelic and other language classes; flower show, coffee mornings, toddler groups, job/employment clubs; “A men's shed would enable people to socialise and become less isolated, as well as the sharing of ideas and equipment.”; pop up craft markets / space for a farmers' market similar to Lochgilphead; meeting rooms for groups; community library; book club; craft group; community garden; doggy day care
- One respondent suggested, “Reinstate the outdoor swimming pool on the Store Burn. Provide changing rooms and showers in the offices. Install a hot tub and consider occasional licenses for a right good party.”

Improvements to the village as a whole (14 comments):

- Canal infrastructure: repairing the bridge at Lock 11; cat's eyes on the canal path, as there are from Lochgilphead to Ardrishaig
- Infrastructure for visitors, including developing walking routes and creating online maps and paper maps to be sold locally; more seating along the canal / by Lock 8; public parking; a social media page showing what Cairnbaan offers
- Connectivity: better phone signal and broadband
- Transport: a more regular / bespoke public transport service; community safety on local roads

More affordable housing (9 comments):

- One respondent commented that “Housing is more important” [than use of the FLS site as a community hub]

#### A shop (9 comments):

- “A small shop with essentials for locals would encourage locals to have a walk along to a shop instead of having to drive into town.”; “We have quite a few older people who may not be able to get to town easily.”

#### A play park (7 comments):

- An improved / new / better / bigger play park for children

#### Work opportunities (5 comments):

- Ideas included short term storage, rentable office spaces and a co-working space
- “Projects can create local jobs and training opportunities, and this can help the local economy.”

#### Tourism (5 comments):

- 4 comments were about having less visitors / focussing on the local community
- One respondent suggested that “it would be important to include local history, mainly Cairnbaan and the canal and also to include the Clan MacTavish castle that is hidden under Loch a’ Bharain which is the loch right next to the canal at Dunardry as nowhere in Argyll and Bute has any info on that so it would be good to have information boards too.”

#### Leisure facilities (5 comments):

- More access to canal leisure sports; a bicycle repair hub; Pilates classes and electric bike rental; bicycle hire; badminton and / or table tennis

#### A café (4 comments):

- One suggestion was that “what is most required is a 'drop-in' place especially in the winter where residents can get tea and decent coffee and/or a bowl of vegetarian soup/roll. This, of course, requires people to make this but if kept simple, I’m sure a rota of volunteers could be found. This can be expanded in the summer for visitors if successful, but I think the main aim should be for locals as a meeting point.”

#### Facilities for young people (3 comments):

- “We need to focus on families and young people.” “Over the years, several phases of building new streets and houses greatly expanding the village on the south side of the canal. Now there is a wonderful new generation of teenagers and children coming along with no local resources.”; “I expect teenagers might benefit from a place to meet if this can be arranged / trusted without adult supervision.”

#### The opportunity presented by the FLS site (2 comments):

- “The buildings are not used, in a prime position and the community has nothing like this.”; “I think asset transfer to the community is crucial to prevent a wasted opportunity.”

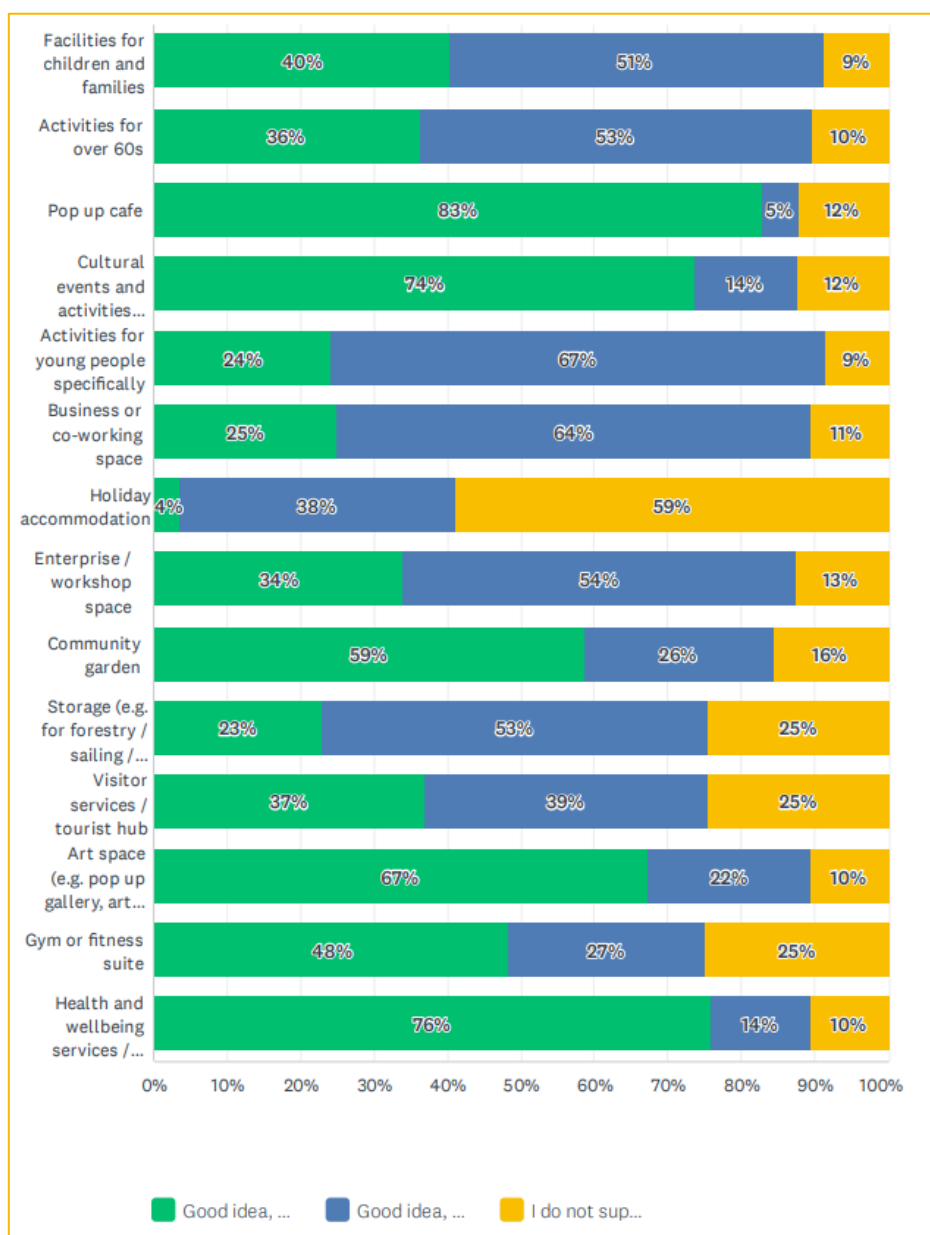


Participants were given a selection of ideas for the site, and could select, Good idea, and I would use it / Good idea, but I would not use it / I do not support this. 60 people answered this question.

In terms of what people would use, the most popular ideas were:

- Pop up café: 83% / 48 people
- Health and wellbeing services / activities (e.g. yoga, massage): 76% / 44 people
- Cultural events and activities (e.g. heritage displays / talks, Gaelic classes, music tuition): 74% / 42 people
- Art space (e.g. pop up gallery, arts and crafts workshops): 67% / 39 people

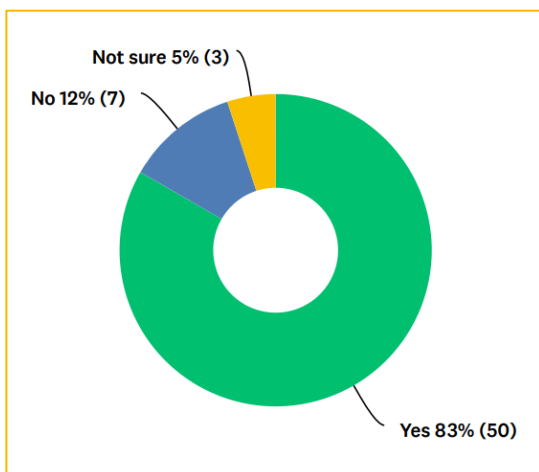
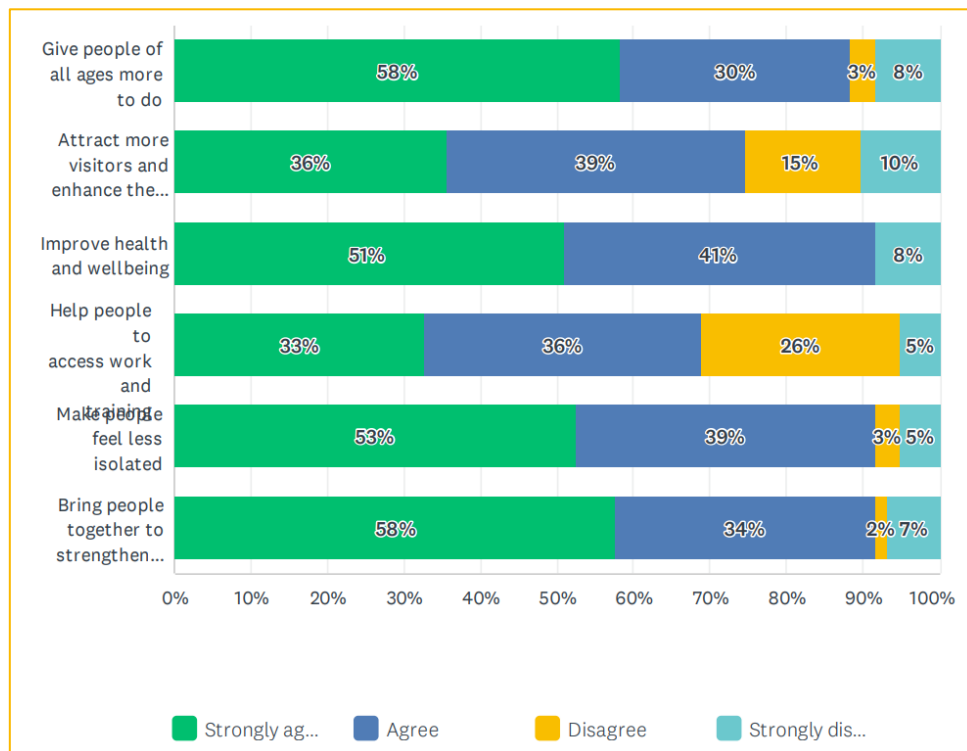
The least popular idea was tourist accommodation, with 59% (33 people) choosing 'I do not support this'.



### Thoughts about community ownership

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree on a number of statements relating to developing the FLS site, and incorporating some of the suggested activities. 60 people answered this question. The majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements.

- 92% agreed or strongly agreed that community ownership of the FLS site would improve health and wellbeing; make people feel less isolated; and bring people together to strengthen community



Respondents were asked whether, in general terms, and if funding options for the future can be found, whether they support the asset transfer of the FLS buildings to the community. 60 people answered this question. 83% answered Yes, 5% / 3 people were not sure and 12% / 7 people answered No.

Of the 64 respondents, 11 indicated that they would like to become involved in some of the projects; and 17 that they would like to be kept up to date with what is happening.

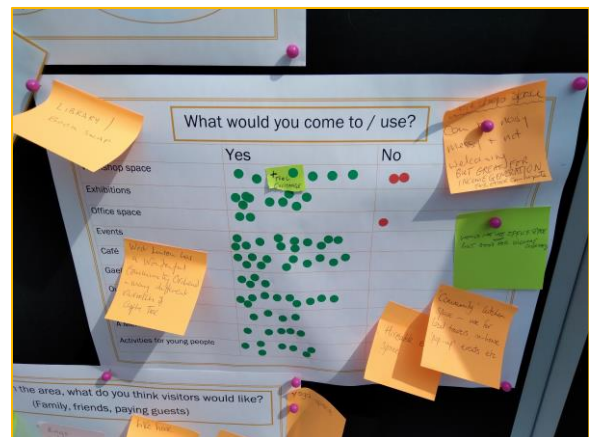
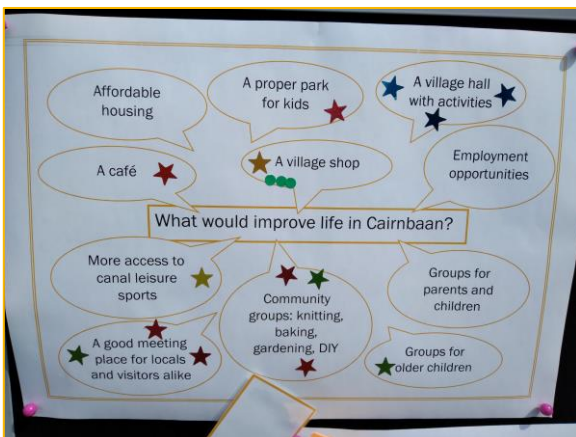
### 2.5 Open Public Meeting

With the recent closure of the hotel in Cairnbaan, there was no indoor public space in the village for a consultation event. Instead, an event was arranged for a Saturday in May at the MACPool community owned swimming pool in Lochgilphead. This was timed to coincide with the family fun session, with the hope that families from Cairnbaan would be

attending. Around 20 people stopped to chat about the project and contribute their ideas.

The majority of comments were positive, with people indicating that they would support nearly all of the ideas that had been suggested so far (from the survey and stakeholder interviews). Further ideas included a tool exchange, and a community kitchen space which could be used by local traders / in house pop-up events etc.

A concern was raised about workshop spaces being messy / noisy / unwelcoming; this was countered by the point that it could be a source of income. People were supportive of office space, although wouldn't actually use it themselves.



## 2.6 Stakeholder Conversations and Interviews

A series of semi-structured conversations were held with 10 individuals in the community, representing a range of ages, backgrounds, jobs and interests.

A further series of conversations and site visits took place with representatives of the following organisations with an interest in the development of the project:

- Achnamara Village Hall<sup>31</sup>
- Ardrishaig Public Hall<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> [Village Hall Activity – Achnamara](#)

<sup>32</sup> [Ardrishaig](#)

- The Community Shop in Lochgilphead<sup>33</sup>
- MACPool community owned swimming pool<sup>34</sup>
- The Egg Shed (visitor centre and community space in Ardrishaig owned by Scottish Canals)<sup>35</sup>
- Forestry and Land Scotland (informal conversations)
- Argyll and Bute Council

The owners of local businesses were spoken to about their potential usage of the FLS site. This included hospitality, boatbuilding, construction and renovation, art and crafts and bike hire.

Feedback is presented in aggregate to preserve anonymity.

#### *The good things about living in Cairnbaan*

- Cairnbaan is a “lovely place to live”; it is picturesque and quiet, and relatively accessible to other parts of Mid-Argyll.
- There is a “real community spirit”, which was particularly evident during the pandemic; people in the village are friendly; “Everyone helps each other – it’s part of the culture.”
- There are lots of opportunities for outdoor activities, including walking, cycling, kayaking and paddle boarding.

#### *Challenges for people living and working in Cairnbaan*

- There are no amenities within walking distance: there are no facilities that other villages have – namely, a school, a shop, and a village hall.
- There is a lack of public transport: this is particularly an issue for those who don’t drive and have to travel to access services and amenities.
- There is no indoor space for the community to gather and take part in activities:
  - There has been a loss of community space with the closure of the Cairnbaan Hotel. This had previously hosted local community groups (e.g. the Gaelic club, the Residents Association), for no charge. It also provided a restaurant / bar / venue for parties etc., as well as accommodation.
  - Villages like Achnamara and Tayvallich are perceived as “much stronger communities because of their halls.”
  - “Having a meeting space would make the community more separate, and distinct from Lochgilphead. This would also allow the community to get to know people better.”
- There is a lack of affordable housing: people are concerned about the number of second homes / holiday homes, and the impact on young families in terms of accessing affordable accommodation.
- Community cohesion could be stronger:

<sup>33</sup> [Facebook](#)

<sup>34</sup> [MACPool Activity Hub | Improving Community Health & Wellbeing](#)

<sup>35</sup> [Scottish Canals | The Egg Shed \(E\)](#) and [The Egg Shed, Ardrishaig – Museums | VisitScotland](#)

- People talk about “the other side of the canal” (from both sides). There is a perception that on the north side of the canal, there are only retirees, and on the south side, there are only young families. Sometimes this is conflated with the view that the “original” village is on the north of the canal. There is a perception of stigmatisation around social housing.
- There are concerns about loneliness amongst the elderly members of the community.

#### *Ideas for the project*

These largely corresponded with those which came out of the survey. Some specific examples of successful initiatives in other community owned assets were given, including the Soup Group at Ardrishaig Public Hall, and the Shed-na Mara, choir and Café Connect at Achnamara Village Hall

#### *Concerns about the project*

These included:

- the scale / ambition of the project
- the capacity of the community to take on the necessary refurbishment of the buildings / development of the site
- whether younger people in the community are / would be involved
- the sustainability of the initiative, “in terms of people’s energy to carry on the project”

## **2.7 Market Research**

Market research presented below focusses on the suggestions for the site that have emerged from the community consultation, namely:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Community hub                          | 6. Storage / workshop space              |
| 2. Café                                   | 7. Office / co-working space             |
| 3. Health and wellbeing activities        | 8. Shop                                  |
| 4. Outdoor activities / Active Travel Hub | 9. Play park / community garden          |
| 5. Tourist offering                       | 10. Facilities for particular age groups |

### **1. Community hub**

#### *Evidence of need / demand*

Creating a community hub at the FLS site is the prime driver in the Trust’s exploration of an asset transfer of the site.

There is currently no space where the community can gather in Cairnbaan. This has been particularly pronounced since the closure of the Cairnbaan Hotel. Although the hotel has recently been purchased, it is anticipated that renovation could take up to 18 months. In addition, the flat roof extension to the hotel, which was formerly used as the restaurant and bar, and where community groups met, may be demolished. It cannot be assumed that a re-opened hotel will have the same opportunities for meeting spaces as before.



The desire for a community hub generated the largest number of comments in the survey, including the comment that, “A community hub [could] bring together both sides of the canal.” One of the stakeholders interviewed said that, “Having a meeting space would make the community more separate, and distinct from Lochgilphead. This would also allow the community to get to know people better.”

92% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that community ownership of the FLS site would make people feel less isolated, and bring people together to strengthen community.

Lots of ideas have been generated for the sorts of activities that could take place in a community hub, and the third and fourth most popular ideas in terms of what people would use were cultural events and activities (e.g. heritage displays / talks, Gaelic classes, music tuition): 74%; and art space (e.g. pop up gallery, arts and crafts workshops): 67%.

The office building, either as is, or remodelled, could provide spaces for groups to meet. This could potentially be offered at low cost for community groups, if projects were subsidised with grant income.

The rooms could be used for e.g. the Gaelic group, Residents Association meetings, meetings of the Trust, craft groups, a youth group, or anything else that community members want to facilitate.

In Achnamara, if community members are interested in using the Village Hall, they are encouraged by the Trustees of the SCIO to take the lead on organising, promoting and managing the events. At Ardrishaig Public Hall, with its larger spaces, there is a more formal room hire system with associated charges.

In terms of specific requests for usage:

- the owner of A Touch of Glass Studio<sup>36</sup> is interested in the FLS site as a community art space and as a possible workshop / base for activities
- a survey respondent is interested in the office building for a life drawing class, which would need a warm space
- the Gaelic group have indicated that they would prefer room hire for free (as was the case when they met at the hotel), but have also suggested that funding is available for Gaelic initiatives – future funding applications could include costs towards room hire

The Trust will need to consider whether, in taking ownership of the FLS site, they will need to create / stimulate the groups who will use it, or deliver the initiatives that have been suggested, or whether there are people in the community who will use the opportunity presented by the site to develop projects and groups independently of the Trust. 11 respondents to the survey indicated that they would like to become involved in some of the projects, which is a positive sign of that appetite.

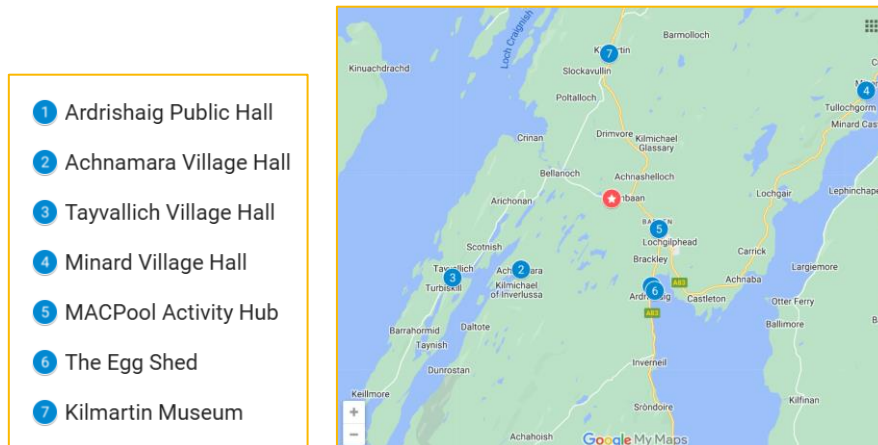
It is acknowledged that in Cairnbaan the Trust are working from a position where there has been relatively little community activity in recent years, to considering taking on and developing a significant asset. In neighbouring communities, there has been community development work carried out over a number of years to include or lead to the acquisition of halls and other asset based resources.

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<sup>36</sup> [Glass - A Touch of Glass Studio \(atouchglass.co.uk\)](http://atouchglass.co.uk)

## Competitive analysis / comparators

The following assets have been considered:



### Ardrishaig (population approx. 1,220)

Ardrishaig Public Hall<sup>37</sup> is 4.3 miles / 8 minutes by car from Cairnbaan. It is a ‘traditional’ village hall, in that it was purpose built and gifted to the community. It is currently owned and managed by Ardrishaig Community Trust. The original halls have been renovated and upgraded, providing a glass fronted foyer.

The Public Hall has a large hall, a small hall, the foyer which is also used as a meeting space (available for free for use by local community groups<sup>38</sup>), toilets, an office, and a commercial kitchen. Some small scale internal works are currently in progress, including an upgrading of the toilets. Solar panels have recently been installed.



<sup>37</sup> [Ardrishaig](#)

<sup>38</sup> Images of the groups from the ACT Facebook page: [Facebook](#)



The large hall has a stage, and lighting and sound equipment. It is decorated to a high standard. There is capacity for 200 people for events such as weddings. The small hall can be hired on its own, or it can be opened up to extend the space from the large hall.



ACT either run or host a range of activities, including a toddlers group, community craft group, Zumba, puppy training, life drawing, and yoga. The halls are available to hire for private functions and weddings.

ACT has also acquired the former church hall (known as the North Hall) across the road. This was funded with a grant from the Scottish Land Fund. The Trust is in the middle of a programme of major works, which will see the building offering more space and facilities alongside those already in the village.



ACT invested in their local windfarm<sup>39</sup>, which means that they have a source of income which is a return on their investment, rather than having to apply for wind farm grant

<sup>39</sup> [Allt Dearg Community Wind Farm | Allt Dearg Wind Farm \(lochfynewindfarms.com\)](http://Allt Dearg Community Wind Farm | Allt Dearg Wind Farm (lochfynewindfarms.com))



funding. The ACT Board has 6 Trustees, and there are two part time members of staff, a Development Officer and a Caretaker.

Key points in relation to the FLS site:

- the staff and Trustees of Ardrishaig Community Trust have significant experience of owning, managing and renovating assets, and are willing to share their knowledge and expertise with the Board of Cairnbaan Community Trust
- unless there was a demolition and rebuild at the FLS site, what is potentially available is not going to be comparable to the hall spaces in Ardrishaig, so there is little risk of displacement of the activities which take place in those spaces
- the events which take place in the foyer are in an area that is of comparable size to e.g. the rooms in the office building, so there is a risk of displacement which could undermine those groups / events; working in partnership with ACT would mitigate against this

Ardrishaig is also home to The Egg Shed<sup>40</sup>, which is owned and operated by Scottish Canals.

There are two components to the facilities at the Egg Shed; a heritage space (discussed below), and a community space. The community space has been developed to a very high standard, with underfloor heating, a hidden / lockable kitchenette, a projector and speaker system. It has independent keycode access. It also has beautiful waterfront views. It is currently used by e.g. peripatetic yoga teachers and is being developed as a gallery space.



Key points in relation to the FLS site:

- Scottish Canals have already been approached and are agreeable to working in partnership with CCT
- there will be knowledge within Scottish Canals about the renovation of an asset, the local tourist market, and the operation of renting out a community space; this is knowledge that could be shared with Trustees of Cairnbaan Community Trust

<sup>40</sup> [Scottish Canals | The Egg Shed \(E\)](#) and [The Egg Shed, Ardrishaig - Museums | VisitScotland](#)

- it would be difficult for the office building at the FLS site to have a comparable offering in terms of the specification of the space, even if renovated and upgraded
- the events which take place in the community space are in an area that is of comparable size to e.g. the rooms in the office building, so there is a risk of displacement which could undermine those groups / events; working in partnership with Scottish Canals and local providers would mitigate against this

### Achnamara (population approx. 40)

Achnamara Village Hall<sup>41</sup> is 5.2 miles / 15 minutes by car from Cairnbaan. It is at the opposite end of the village hall scale from Ardrishaig in terms of its construction and size. It is currently owned and managed by the Achnamara Community Trust, having previously been owned by FLS. The Board takes a relatively light touch approach to management of the hall, with local residents being encouraged to deliver their own activities and projects.



Activities include a singing group, craft group, table tennis, circuit training, a pop up pub, yoga, book swap and cycling group, as well as one off event such as illustrated talks, fairs, musical events and dinners. There is an active Shed-na Mara<sup>42</sup> (similar in concept to a Men's Shed). There is a weekly pop up café, Café Connect, originally delivered by North Knapdale Church, and now delivered by the community.

Most activities are free, or £3 a session. The hall is available for booking for private events at £15/hour.

The hall has recently been refurbished. The SCIO was awarded a grant from Highlands and Islands Enterprise's Greening Community Assets Fund<sup>43</sup>, for insulation of the hall, making it warmer in winter and cheaper to run. A further grant from Awards for All<sup>44</sup> paid for the replacement and insulation of the floor.

Key points in relation to the FLS site:

- the offering at Achnamara Village Hall is a good example of what can be achieved with a modest asset, in a small community

<sup>41</sup> [Village Hall Activity - Achnamara](#)

<sup>42</sup> [Shed-na-Mara - Achnamara](#)

<sup>43</sup> [Greening Community Assets Fund – Highlands & Islands Climate Hub \(hiclimathub.co.uk\)](#)

<sup>44</sup> [National Lottery Awards for All Scotland | The National Lottery Community Fund \(tnlcommunityfund.org.uk\)](#)



- the Trustees of Achnamara Community Trust have experience of owning, managing and renovating an asset, and are willing to share their knowledge and expertise with the Board of Cairnbaan Community Trust
- there is a risk of displacement – for example, people in Cairnbaan travel to Achnamara for exercise classes over the winter months. Splitting the audience would mean that the numbers would be too small for the classes to be viable in either location

Further away from Cairnbaan, but relatively easy to reach by car, are the following:

- Tayvallich Village Hall<sup>45</sup> (9.1 miles / 19 minutes by car)
- Minard Village Hall<sup>46</sup> (15.8 miles / 25 minutes by car)

Other local community owned assets include MACPool, the community owned swimming pool in Lochgilphead<sup>47</sup>, and Kilmartin Museum<sup>48</sup>.

Both assets have recently been redeveloped, and the Trustees and staff of each organisation have experience of owning, managing and renovating assets, as well as managing grant funding, and franchising of their café (MACPool to local business Salty Dog<sup>49</sup>, and Kilmartin Museum to The Glen Bistro<sup>50</sup> ).

This is a further source of knowledge and expertise that could be shared with the Board of Cairnbaan Community Trust.



Cairnbaan Community Trust have started to develop a working relationship with the Argyll Beaver Centre<sup>51</sup>, who went through a successful Community Asset Transfer from FLS<sup>52</sup>.

### Conclusion

- There is currently no space where the community can gather in Cairnbaan.
- There is a demonstrable need for some sort of community hub in the village.
- Any risk of displacing what is on offer at Ardrishaig Public Hall, The Egg Shed, and Achnamara and Tayvallich Village Halls is small due to the distance to these

<sup>45</sup> [Tayvallich Hall](#)

<sup>46</sup> [Minard Community Trust](#)

<sup>47</sup> [MACPool Activity Hub | Improving Community Health & Wellbeing](#)

<sup>48</sup> [Kilmartin Museum](#)

<sup>49</sup> [The Salty Dog joins MACPool | MACPool Activity Hub](#) and [Facebook](#)

<sup>50</sup> [Facebook](#)

<sup>51</sup> [Argyll Beaver Centre Home page](#)

<sup>52</sup> [Argyll Beaver Centre in community ownership - Forestry and Land Scotland](#)

community assets; alternatively, there is the opportunity to work in partnership with them to coordinate and develop the offering across the local area.

- The offering at Achnamara Village Hall is a good example of what can be achieved with a modest asset, in a small community
- There is substantial local knowledge and expertise around community owned assets that could be shared with the Board of Cairnbaan Community Trust.

## 2. Café

### *Evidence of need / demand*

A pop up café was the most popular idea in the survey, in terms of what people would use, with 83% indicating that they would use this.

### *Competitive analysis*

There are lots of cafés in Lochgilphead, 2.5 miles away, but there are none in Cairnbaan. As noted above, a reopened hotel may not have the same offering as previously.

A community run café is unlikely to be commercially viable in Cairnbaan. However, there are two potential ways to meet the clearly articulated need for a meeting place centred around food: mobile catering units; and a project based food offering.

Polly's Coffee Stop<sup>53</sup> is a successful local small business, which has been trading for the past 3 years. It offers coffee and cake from a converted horsebox. This is parked up at a range of locations, including at Lock 10 in Cairnbaan. The owner of the business is interested in trading from the FLS site, as this would give access to mains electricity, rather than having to rely on a generator. The owner is also interested in the use of a commercial kitchen, and is aware that there are not those facilities yet (this could be an option for future development of the workshop space). The site could also provide storage for the horsebox (see below). Reaching an agreement with Polly's Coffee Stop would mean that catering could be provided on site, without the need for the Trust to provide that directly.

There is also a local mobile pizza unit, which has previously parked up on site at Adrishaig Public Hall<sup>54</sup>.



<sup>53</sup> [Facebook](#)

<sup>54</sup> Image from the Adrishaig Community Trust Facebook page: [Facebook](#)

Outdoor covered seating could be provided, which would mean that no entry to the building is required; or there could be days on which the office building is open as a pop up café. This could be run by volunteers, or with staffing provided by Polly's Coffee Stop. In Crinan and Inverary, stretch tents<sup>55</sup> are used to provide cover for outdoor seating:



The other option (the two are not mutually exclusive) is the provision of a pop up café run as a project. One suggestion in the survey was that “what is most required is a 'drop-in' place especially in the winter where residents can get tea and decent coffee and/or a bowl of vegetarian soup/roll. ... the main aim should be for locals as a meeting point.”

Two local examples of this are:

- Ardrishaig Soup Club; this is a lunch club operated by Ardrishaig Community Trust. Because this is a grant funded programme, with no charge for the lunches, ACT are not required to register as a food business with the Food Standards Authority<sup>56</sup>, although staff are required to have the necessary Food Hygiene qualifications.
- Café Connect at Achnamara Village Hall, which is run by the local community.

#### Conclusion

- There is a demonstrable desire for somewhere for the community to meet over food and drink
- This need could be met on a pop up basis by local mobile catering businesses, and / or by a grant funded / project based community café

### 3. Health and wellbeing

#### *Evidence of need / demand*

Health and wellbeing services / activities (e.g. yoga, massage) was the second most popular idea in the survey, with 76% of respondents indicating that they would use this. 48% of respondents would use a gym or fitness suite. Comments in the survey included specific suggestions for Pilates classes, badminton and table tennis.

92% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that community ownership of the FLS site would improve health and wellbeing.

<sup>55</sup> Both provided by [Stretch Tents Scotland](#)

<sup>56</sup> [Providing food at community and charity events | Food Standards Agency](#)

### Competitive analysis

There are a number of self-employed health and wellbeing practitioners locally who offer their services from other village halls, and would be likely to expand their offering to Cairnbaan if there was sufficient interest. These include:

- Wellbeing with Keri, yoga and reflexology<sup>57</sup>
- Yoga with Keera<sup>58</sup>:
- Suzanne Gross, mobile reflexology<sup>59</sup>.

Care would need to be taken that this did not displace activities in other halls, making those unsustainable.

There is also a small gym at the MACPool centre in Lochgilphead. Again, care would need to be taken not to displace that offering. The key opportunity would be something within walking distance for Cairnbaan residents.

### Conclusion

- There is a demonstrable desire for access to health and wellbeing services in Cairnbaan
- These could be delivered by existing local independent businesses, as long as the risk of displacement is managed carefully

## 4. Outdoor activities / Active Travel Hub

### Evidence of need / demand

Cairnbaan is very well placed for outdoor activities including walking, cycling, fishing, wild swimming and paddle boarding.

Comments in the survey included specific suggestions for outdoor activities: more access to canal leisure sports; a bicycle repair hub; bicycle hire / electric bike rental. Owners of local holiday homes are often asked about bike hire.

Argyll and Bute Council are in the process of developing a Lochgilphead to Crinan Canal Active Travel Route<sup>60</sup>, designed to increase walking and cycling.

Outside The Egg Shed in Ardrishaig is a Sustrans bike repair station. This is something that could be replicated at the FLS site.



<sup>57</sup> [Wellbeing With Keri](#) and [Facebook](#)

<sup>58</sup> [Yoga with Keera | Facebook](#)

<sup>59</sup> [Suzanne Gross | Facebook](#)

<sup>60</sup> [Council sets wheels in motion on active travel plans – My Council Works](#) and [LOCHGILPHEAD TO CRINAN CANAL ACTIVE TRAVEL ROUTE CONCEPT DESIGN AND FUTURE EXTENAL FUNDING.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)



### Competitive analysis / comparators

The nearest place to hire a bike is Ally's Bike Hire<sup>61</sup> in Tayvallich. Bikes can be delivered to Cairnbaan. This is a small business (4 bikes), and not the main occupation of the owner, who is not looking to expand. Any cycle hire provision would not displace his business; rather he would be delighted to see more bike hire available locally. He is willing to share his knowledge of the bike hire market.



One example of a community based active travel hub is the Loch Ness Hub in Drumnadrochit<sup>62</sup>, where the local community took over the former tourist information office, and now provide baggage and shuttle transfers on all the walks and trails around Loch Ness and the surrounding area, e-bike hire and visitor information services.

### Conclusion

- There is some appetite for local bike hire
- The location and size of the FLS site lends itself to e.g. a Sustrans bike repair station

## 5. Tourist offering

### Evidence of need / demand

There is very little appetite for the FLS site to be used for tourist accommodation.

37% of survey respondents thought that visitor services / a tourist hub was a good idea, and would use it, with a further 39% thinking that it was a good idea but that they would be unlikely to use it.

Cairnbaan is at the mid-point of the 9 mile long Crinan Canal. It is also midway between Lochgilphead and Kilmartin Museum by road. There are a number of holiday homes along the canal, and the population increases between Easter and September with holiday makers, and sailors berthing on the Canal. The cup and ring marks in Cairnbaan are amongst some of the number of the most important Neolithic and Bronze Age artefacts in Britain.

If one or more of the rooms in the office building were set up as e.g. a pop up café, they could also be used as exhibition or gallery spaces. This wouldn't necessarily bring in

<sup>61</sup> [Facebook](#)

<sup>62</sup> [Great Glen Way and Highland Baggage transfer service - Loch Ness Travel](#) and [Facebook](#)

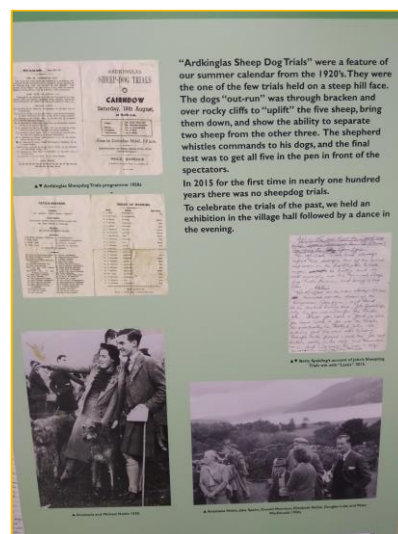


direct income, but it would be a focal point for / a draw to the site, and grant funding could be sought for arts / heritage projects.

The heritage space at The Egg Shed has a relatively small range of artefacts, interpretation boards, and a retail offering. The heritage information could be duplicated / replicated at the FLS site, either within the office building, or with the use of external signage. Likewise information from Kilmartin Museum could be duplicated / replicated.



Alternatively, bespoke resources could be developed, telling the story of Cairnbaan including its canal and forestry heritage. The Here We Are project<sup>63</sup> in Clachan, Cairndow (in between Loch Fyne Oysters and The Tree Shop), has some good examples of local heritage displays:



<sup>63</sup> [Here We Are - The Here We Are Story - past, present and future \(hereweare-uk.com\)](http://hereweare-uk.com)

There could also be outdoor, weatherproof signage, so that tourist / heritage information is available without the need for access to the building. This could be a refresh / duplication of existing signage, e.g. the signage developed under the Dalriada project<sup>64</sup>, or by FLS.

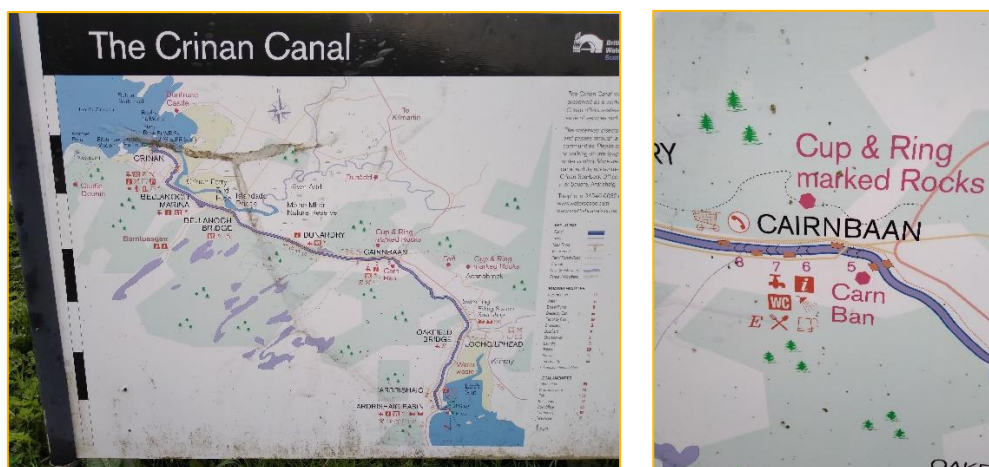


Again, the Here We Are project has some good examples:



### Competitive analysis

There is currently no tourist information service or heritage offering in Cairnbaan – although the out of date sign in Crinan suggests that there is, along with a shop and public phone.



<sup>64</sup> [The Dalriada Project | About the Project \(spanglefish.com\)](http://www.spanglefish.com)



## Conclusion

- There is not an appetite for tourist services to be one of the primary offerings from the FLS site
- However, the FLS site is well located for a small scale tourism offering that could be a focal point for / a draw to the site, in a way that complements other facilities

## 6. Storage / workshop space

### Evidence of need / demand

The workshop building could be used as storage space for local independent businesses.

- The owner of Polly's Coffee Stop has indicated that she is interested in storing the converted horsebox in the workshop.
- Sloan Improvements Ltd.<sup>65</sup> is a local building firm. They are interested in the FLS site for both storage and office space.
- A & R Way Boatbuilding<sup>66</sup> is a local boat building and boat storage company. They have a boatyard in Cairnbaan. They are not currently looking for additional storage, but also don't want to rule out the potential offered by the FLS site, and would like to be kept informed of progress.
- One of the comments in the survey was the suggestion of a short term storage facility.

If there was sufficient interest in the village, the workshop building lends itself to an initiative like a Men's Shed. There is a similar initiative, the Shed-na Mara, in Achnamara Village Hall.

Longer term, there is the potential to install a commercial kitchen, which could be rented out to local food businesses including Polly's Coffee Stop. At Ardrishaig Public Hall, the kitchen equipment was sourced from Lochgilphead hospital, when their catering equipment was being upgraded, and was therefore installed at a much lower cost than would have been the case if it was purchased new. It is used by external caterers for events that take place in the hall, as well as by ACT for their Soup Group.



<sup>65</sup> [Facebook](#)

<sup>66</sup> [Boat storage : A and R Way Boatbuilding](#)

## Competitive analysis

The owner of Polly's Coffee Stop has said that there are no other local options available to her for covered storage, which is particularly an issue over the winter.

### Conclusion

- Use of the workshop for storage space is dependent on the workshop being brought back in to use following the damage caused by the burst pipes
- If this was addressed, then use of the workshop for storage (as opposed to remodelling the interior / creating work units etc.) is relatively straightforward, and would bring in an income
- There are local businesses interested in using storage at the FLS site

## 7. Office / co-working space

### Evidence of need / demand

The office building is currently set up as an office space. There is potential for one of the rooms to be offered as a hot desking space. This would allow self-employed people to have a base to work from, perhaps one or two days a week, with office facilities and fellow workers for company. This would need a relatively high level of administrative support, but could be an additional source of income.

25% of survey respondents (15 people) said that they thought business or co-working space was a good idea and they would use it.

5 comments in the survey were about rentable office spaces and a co-working space, with the recognition that, "Projects can create local jobs and training opportunities and this can help the local economy."

Sloan Improvements Ltd. are interested in office space.

One survey respondent commented, "I teach yoga and would potentially make use of a plain room for venue if suitable. A collective of local wellbeing practitioners are looking for a premises full time. I would hire co working space if it was warm and had strong WiFi and was available for booking. There are no co-working spaces in the west of Argyll this is a missed opportunity."

### Competitive analysis / comparators

There is no offering for hot-desking in or near Cairnbaan.

Hot desking is offered at the Here We Are project, at a rate of £20 per desk per day, or £15 per desk per day for a block booking of 10.

Examples of community owned co-working and hot-desking spaces include Impact Hub Inverness<sup>67</sup> and Can Do Crieff<sup>68</sup>.



<sup>67</sup> [Hot Desking and Co Working - Impact Hub Inverness](#)

<sup>68</sup> [Welcome to Can Do Crieff! - Can Do Crieff](#)

## Conclusion

- There is some appetite for office and co-working space at the FLS site
- Further investigation would be required to determine the likely take up / budget of those wanting to use the space

## 8. Shop

### *Evidence of need / demand*

There has previously been a shop in Cairnbaan, which was situated at Lock 8.

There were 9 comments in the survey about a shop provision, without it being listed as a specific idea, and this was something that also came up in conversation at the public event. The suggested need is for older people, who may not be able to get to the shops as easily. It could also reduce car use (environmental benefits) and increase walking (health benefits).

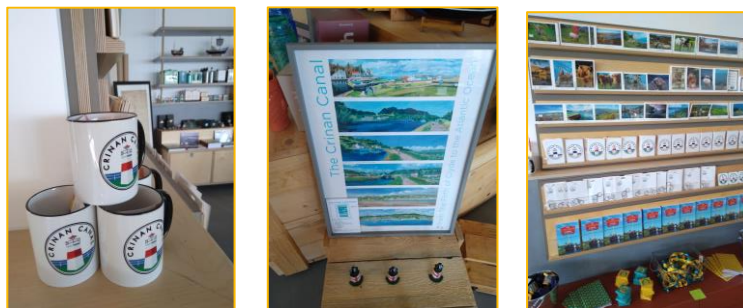
### *Competitive analysis / comparators*

A community shop, such as the one in Tayvallich<sup>69</sup>, is unlikely to be commercially viable, given the proximity of the shops in Lochgilphead, which includes a Co-op and a SPAR. Tesco also do a home delivery service to Cairnbaan.

However, there are local businesses who sell from their vans, e.g. a fishmonger, or who deliver locally, e.g. bread from Knapdale Artisan Bread in Tayvallich<sup>70</sup>. The FLS site could be the base for those vans to park up, or the office building could be used as a pop up shop co-ordinating deliveries of e.g. milk and bread.

This could be combined with local crafters selling their work. This model is currently being developed at The Egg Shed in Ardrishaig.

Over the summer months, when there is footfall from walkers, cyclists and sailors, there could be the opportunity of a small scale souvenir offering. Local examples include the retail space at The Egg Shed.



Another example is the tearoom at Crinan:

<sup>69</sup> [Tayvallich Shop \(tayvallichenterprises.com\)](http://tayvallichenterprises.com)

<sup>70</sup> [Knapdale Artisan Bread \(@knapdaleartisanbread\)](https://www.instagram.com/knapdaleartisanbread) • [Instagram photos and videos](#)





### Conclusion

- A shop emerged as a need in the survey, despite not being one of the suggested ideas
- A pop up shop could enhance the wider offering of the overall site

## 9. Play park / community garden

### Evidence of need / demand

7 comments in the survey were about having an improved / new / better / bigger play park for children in Cairnbaan.

59% of survey respondents said that a community garden was a good idea, and they would use it.

### Competitive analysis / comparators

There are already two sites designated as play parks in the village. There is potential for those to be developed further.

MAKI Pups<sup>71</sup> is a good local example of how a community owned outdoor play space / community garden has been developed.



### Conclusion

- There is an appetite for a play park and a community garden
- There is sufficient space on the FLS site to incorporate these

<sup>71</sup> [MAKI Pups Outdoor Nursery | Facebook](#)

## 10. Facilities for particular age groups

Although there was some desire for facilities for particular age groups (children and families / young people / over 60s), the majority of respondents indicated that although they supported the idea, they wouldn't actually use those facilities.

### Overall conclusion

The FLS site lends itself to a range of uses.

The office space could be used for:

- rooms for community groups to meet
- a pop up café
- a co-working space
- a small scale heritage offering

The workshop space could be used for storage, which would bring in an income. There are local businesses interested in this.

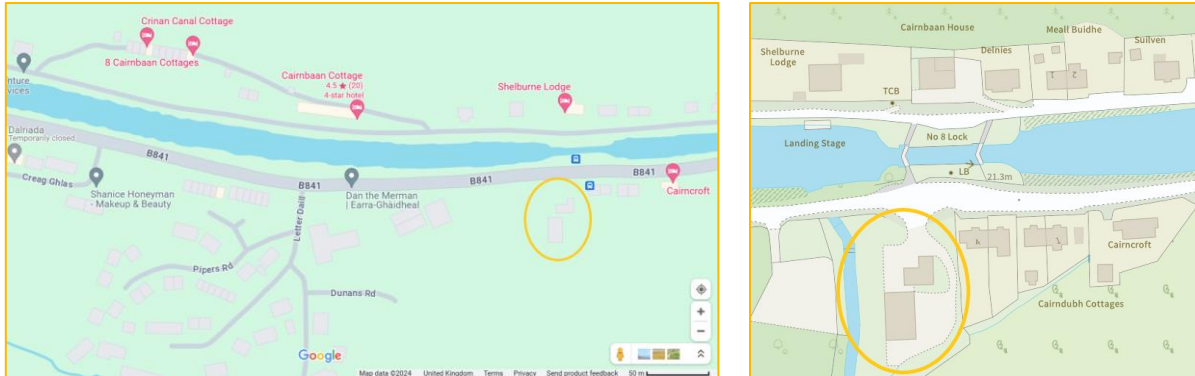
Zoning of the outdoor spaces, and use of signage and non-permanent structures, could increase the site's potential. This could include outdoor seating, heritage signs, tourist information, a play park and a community garden.

Taken as a whole, the site could be used creatively to meet a range of demonstrable community needs.

## 3. The Asset

### 3.1 Overview of the Asset

The Forestry and Land Scotland buildings are located in the centre of Cairnbaan, on the south side of the canal, at Lock 8<sup>72</sup>.



There are two buildings: a wooden clad building with four separate office spaces and toilets; and a large industrial shed with a further four offices and toilet. The buildings are situated on a 0.3 hectare site. They have been vacant since June 2023 and are surplus to the needs of FLS. The postal address is Knapdale Office, Cairnbaan, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8UH. Cairnbaan Community Trust have put together a short film of the site and buildings<sup>73</sup>.



<sup>72</sup> OS map accessed via [The Egg Shed, Ardrishaig – Museums | VisitScotland](#)

<sup>73</sup> [Forestry building tour \(youtube.com\)](#)

### 3.2 Condition Survey

A Building Condition Survey Report dated April 2024 has been prepared by Hardies<sup>74</sup>, following a site visit on 29 March 2024. The report should be read in its entirety alongside this one.

The report states that, “The site and buildings are in a fair condition overall, however, there are areas that are in a poor condition and will require maintenance and repairs in the immediate term to prevent further decay to the building fabrics.”

Key points to note:

- There are number of recommendations for immediate work, including:
  - maintenance to the concrete roof tiles to the office building to remove moss and carry out minor repairs
  - replacement / maintenance of sections of gutter and downpipes
  - timber cladding replacement / repairs to decayed timbers
  - timber decay works to external timber windows, door frames and facings; replacement of doors
  - repairs to water damaged areas of the building; toilet and shower / kitchenette facilities in the workshop will require full replacement
  - full sanitisation/deep clean of the building “as it is currently uninhabitable”
- Further information is required from FLS re:
  - confirmation that the water leak has been repaired
  - clarity on the underground septic tank regarding maintenance records
- NB there are no accessible toilets in the office building, and the building itself is not accessible by wheelchair

The report includes an estimated cost of immediate, short- and long-term repairs of £117,755.00, exclusive of VAT. With VAT, this amounts to **£141,306**.

### 3.3 Input from the Architect

INCH Architects have carried out a site visit. Initial feedback is as follows:

- The site lends itself to ‘zoning’, whereby better use could be made of the site as a whole; this could include areas for parking / access, outdoor seating, signage, a play area and a covered shelter
- Development of the buildings could be done in a phased manner; e.g.
  - the first phase would be to make good the buildings, including accessibility; there is potential for the office building and the workshop to be used more or less as is
  - the second phase would include internal remodeling
  - longer term, the buildings are likely to have a limited lifespan; ownership of the site would allow for a complete rebuild, if funding becomes available

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<sup>74</sup> [Hardies Property & Construction Services](#)



- At a minimum for using the office building for community use, accessibility for inclusive use should be considered: ramped access into the building, alterations at the front door to widen the entrance to accommodate a wheelchair and internal alterations to a form an accessible WC
- Regarding the internal walls for both buildings, the workshop building is a large portal frame building and the internal walls are non-loadbearing offering flexibility to rearrange as necessary; re the smaller office building, it is less clear, and some opening up works would be needed to confirm the construction of the walls
- The workshop building has level access, including an entrance at the back of the site; installation of e.g. a commercial kitchen could be sited at the far end of the workshop, keeping noise / ducts etc. away from other activities on the site

### 3.4 Valuation

Forestry and Land Scotland and Cairnbaan Community Trust commissioned Bell Ingram<sup>75</sup> to carry out a valuation report.

The report, dated 7 August 2024, states that:

“We are of the opinion that the Market Value of the property at Cairnbaan as considered by this report and with the benefit of vacant possession and as at 12 June 2024 and as detailed above can be fairly stated as follows: - Total £150,000 (One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Pounds Sterling)”

The purchase price will be negotiated with Forestry and Land Scotland, and a discount is expected due to the assessment of community benefit the proposed facility will provide.

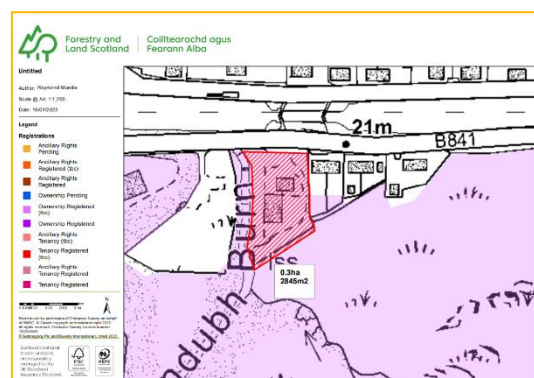
If a negotiated discount is secured, there will be no need to secure match funding. With SLF funding under pressure, the larger the discount the higher the likelihood of funding success.

### 3.5 Running Costs

Forestry and Land Scotland are unable to provide running costs for the buildings, as they are currently mothballed and were previously rented out.

### 3.6 Plans

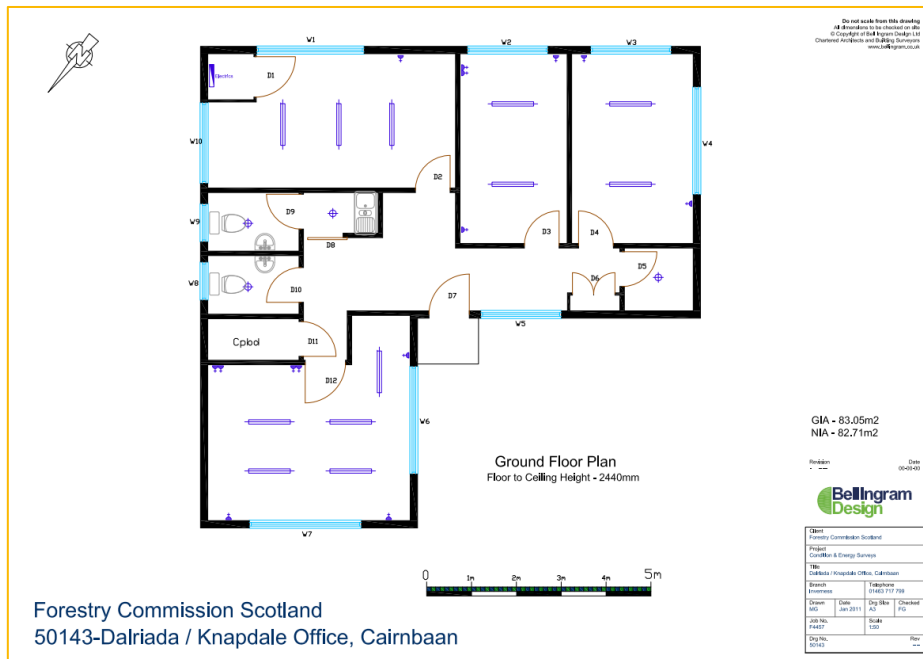
Site plan, provided by Forestry and Land Scotland:



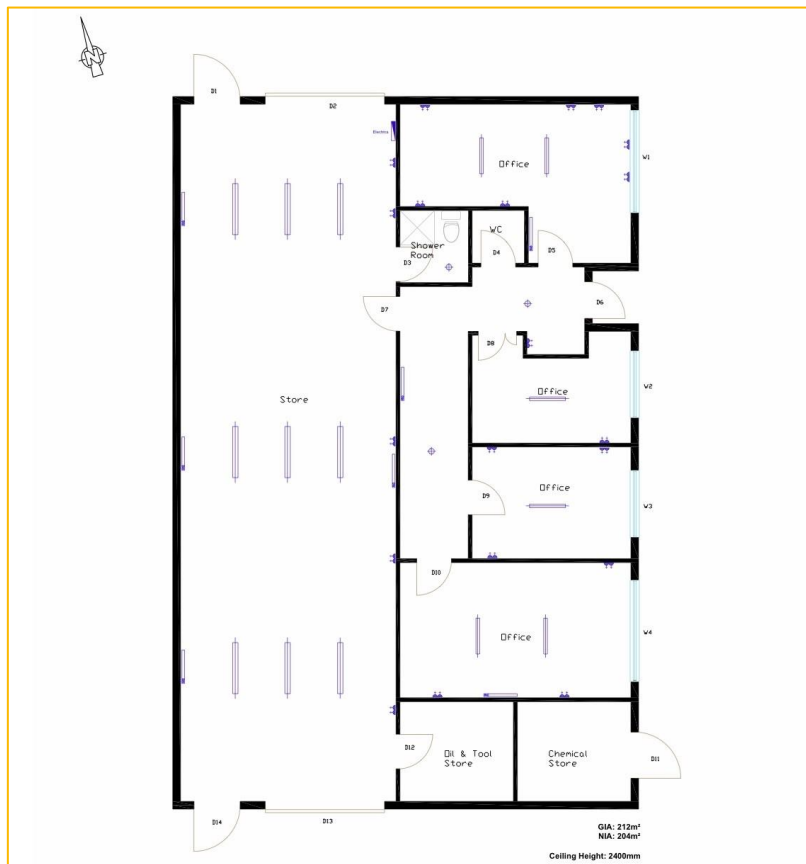
<sup>75</sup> [Bell Ingram | Rural Business Specialists](#)

Floor plans, provided by Forestry and Land Scotland, from drawings prepared by Bell Ingram in 2011:

Office building:



Workshop:



## 4. Capacity to Deliver

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### 4.1 Introduction

Cairnbaan Community Trust is a young organisation, having been incorporated in 2023. Projects to date have been relatively small, and taking on ownership of an asset on behalf of the community will be a significant scaling up for the Trust. Though not a decision to be taken lightly, the situation of a new organisation taking on an asset is a very standard situation in the community asset transfer sector, when groups of local people come together with the desire to re-purpose a building. What is important is the current skills set, the level of community support, and the opportunity to develop skills and experience in the future.

### 4.2 Legal Structure Appraisal

Cairnbaan Community Trust currently has 50 Full Members which, in a population of 245, is highly impressive this quickly. There are 5 elected Trustees to meet its statutory obligations, provide leadership and direction, and oversee operations<sup>76</sup>. The constitution states that the number of Trustees on the Board must be not less than three and not more than twelve. Elected and Co-opted Trustees must be Ordinary Members (i.e. resident within the geographical boundaries of the organisation).

There are provisions within the constitution which allows for stability within the Board, whilst also requiring new Trustees to come on in a phased manner, and preventing any Trustee from staying the Board on indefinitely.

The constitution has a clear geographical boundary, open membership and community control.

### 4.3 Board Skills

The skills and expertise of current Board members have been assessed to identify existing strengths and experience, but also areas for development and improvement. 6 Board members took part in an in depth online skills survey designed to tease out areas they felt confident and less confident in. A further Trustee has since been identified to address some of the skills gaps. The full analysis can be viewed separately.

Generally, the Board scored well and there were no specific concerns identified, simply areas that could be strengthened further. There was a healthy level of interest in further training, and training options have been provided.

Overall, there is a good working knowledge on the Board in relation to planning and management. There is a strong skills set in managing an organisation or large project, and leadership of an organisation is well-resourced.

In relation to working with people, there is significant strength across the Board. Half the Board have good knowledge of managing staff. Knowledge of employment law is an area where some skills would be of benefit.

A skills gap in relation to communications and marketing has been addressed by the co-option of a new Trustee.

One of the biggest relevant gaps in the organisation is fundraising.

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<sup>76</sup> The Trustees' roles and obligations are set out at Clauses 33 and 41 of the constitution, which is available online: [CCT-Constitution.pdf \(cairnbaancommunitytrust.org\)](https://www.cairnbaancommunitytrust.org/CCT-Constitution.pdf)

Though there is some finance capability, understanding cash flow, preparing budgets and understanding accounts are vital to the running of a successful organisation, and this can be addressed with recruitment or training as a priority.

Community engagement and development is an area of strength for the organisation, as has been proven during the preparatory phase for this project when there was good community engagement.

In relation to this project, i.e. developing and running an asset, the low level of skills in community asset development is not necessarily unusual for a young organisation, but it is striking, and this will need to be addressed via training and support. The process of this asset transfer will be a crucial learning journey.

In the survey 29 people said they would like to continue to be involved and kept up to date and of those 21 left email addresses.

#### 4.4 Funding

Fund	Notes	Target amount	Relevant eligibility criteria
Scottish Land Fund	SLF will fund up to 95% of the valuation. An agreed price is yet to be achieved with FLS but if a significant discount is secured there will be no need for match funding. The SLF grant will cover purchase but also legal fees and potentially a basic repair, insurance and cost of a part time development officer. This will give a good start to the organisation.	To be agreed.	An eligible body according to the Community Empowerment Act (2015), which the group are.
Regeneration Capital Grants Fund	Fund applicant would be Highland Council so it would need to be persuaded to bid on behalf the Trust. Feels like a strong fit but there RCGF is currently paused due to Scottish Government budget constraints. A reduced budget has been agreed so this will re-launch at some point. This is a highly competitive fund which could take years to secure.	Average Grant is £1m but this project may only need say £200,000.	Annual ability to apply and need to spend in next financial year. Highland Council may have other projects "in the queue".
Community Ownership Fund	UK Government fund to secure assets for the community that could be lost. Can fund purchase, lease, renovation or revenue. Currently paused due to the election and this is the final round before a new programme is announced (this is not guaranteed).	£250,000 ceiling now increased to £2m but the higher the grant the harder the assessment.	Need to spend within 12 months of securing the grant.
SSE Sustainable	Funding for capital infrastructure to develop place-based improvements.	Say £100,000.	Based in the Highlands



Development Fund	Closed until Spring 2025 when new guidance will be released.		
Place based investment fund	Scottish Government Funding that is allocated by local authorities. Disaggregated by place so this can be relatively small amounts. At the discretion of Highland Council.	Speak to Council.	Need to check local budget.
CARES	Will depend on the building as this is for retrofitting public buildings with renewables	Up to £80,000.	Funds things like ground or air source heat pumps.
Garfield Weston Foundation	Will fund up to 10% of capital project budgets. For local community projects, grants are unlikely to exceed £30k.	£30,000 or 10% of project costs	Note: will not fund unless the organisation has a track record of service delivery.
Charitable Trusts	Barcappel, Wolfson, Gannochy, Clothworkers.	Say £100,000.	Various deadlines.
Scottish Landfill Communities Fund	Cairnbaan is within 10 miles of a landfill site and is eligible	£30,000.	To be considered.
Nadara A'Chruach Wind Farm Community Fund <sup>77</sup>	The fund's purposes include: Enhance infrastructure including ... community-owned property.	Small (£500 - £5,000), Medium (£5,001 - £25,000) and Large (over £25,000 - no maximum specified)	Advertised deadlines.
Crowdfunding and donations	This can be local donations or corporate gifts in kind (e.g. Mackenzie Construction have provided the playpark fencing and community notice board in Cairnbaan).	Say £10,000	This can take effort and capacity.

<sup>77</sup> [Nadara A'Chruach Wind Farm Community Fund | Foundation Scotland](#)

## 4.5 Financial Viability

A full cash flow projection will be produced for the business plan but financial modelling has been undertaken at this stage to understand how a developed building can be financially viable.

### *Potential sources of income*

Grant funding, either for specific services / projects within the site, or core running costs, e.g.:

- the A'Chruach Wind Farm Community Fund: this fund has a Multi-year Flexible Funding programme for grants between £2,000 - £10,000 per year, for up to three years, towards a broad set of costs (including 'core' costs); CCT have received a grant of £5,000 from this fund to make a film about Cairnbaan
- the National Lottery's Community Led<sup>78</sup> programme: this closes to applications in August 2024, but it is anticipated that a similar programme will replace it
- Awards for All<sup>79</sup> (up to £20,000)

Enterprise activity, e.g.:

- Room hire by community groups
- Rental of storage space in the workshop
- Hot desking space
- Pop up café
- Community events and gatherings
- Gym and wellbeing services (some of this would be room hire e.g. to yoga)
- Modest bike hire

### *Expenditure*

Running costs will include:

- Building and site maintenance
- Electricity: longer term, energy costs could be brought down with grant funding for improved energy efficiency<sup>80</sup>
- Rates: Registered charities can apply for 80% rates relief; councils can also offer up to 20% additional relief on top of the 80%<sup>81</sup>
- Water rates: if the organisation's annual gross income is below £300,000 then it may be eligible for reduced water and sewerage charges through the Water and Sewerage Charges Exemption Scheme<sup>82</sup>
- Phone and broadband

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<sup>78</sup> [Community Led | The National Lottery Community Fund \(tnlcommunityfund.org.uk\)](https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)

<sup>79</sup> [National Lottery Awards for All Scotland | The National Lottery Community Fund \(tnlcommunityfund.org.uk\)](https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)

<sup>80</sup> e.g. the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES): [Funding advice for renewable energy projects in Scotland \(localenergy.scot\)](https://www.localenergy.scot)

<sup>81</sup> [Charity Relief - mygov.scot](https://www.mygov.scot)

<sup>82</sup> [Water and Sewerage Charges Exemption Scheme - mygov.scot](https://www.mygov.scot)

- Insurance
- Volunteer costs

The Trust may consider that the site / buildings / projects can be managed on a voluntary basis. If the Trust chooses to employ one or more members of staff (e.g. a part time Development Officer and / or a part time Caretaker), then related costs will include salary, National Insurance contributions, pension and sick / holiday pay, as well as expenses / training costs etc.

### Staffing

Staffing may need to reduce to just cleaner / caretaker / key holder with the use of keypad entry to reduce staff costs. This would strip around £10,000 from expenditure which would make the site more onerous to operate but more financially viable.

Core Staffing costs					
Core Posts	Salary	NI	Pension	FTE	total
<b>Development Manager / Facilities Manager</b>	£30,000	£2,446	£1,500	0.3	£10,184
<b>Cleaner/Caretaker</b>	£20,000	£1,447	£1,000	0.2	£4,489
<b>Total</b>					£14,673

### Income Generation

Income generation has been retained at modest levels. The modelling (see below) indicates that the future sustainability of the facility is rooted in diversification of income streams rather than any one key source of income. The model shows income from an informal donations based pop up café, some modest room hire, storage and a small gym. These permutations can be changed to identify a preferred route. The occupancy rate is retained at only 20% but we would hope that it would be much higher than that.

In addition, most (if not all) facilities of this kind will have an element of grant and fundraising in the model. We have deliberately kept that out to see how it stacks up without grants.

Cairnbaan hub		Financial model for the upgraded FLS building													Totals
		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
	Weeks Per Month	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	
	Days Open Per Month	20	20	28	28	28	28	20	20	20	20	20	20	16	
	Hours of Café Per Day	5	5	7	7	7	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	
Pop up café	Visitors Per Day	20	25	30	40	40	30	20	10	10	10	10	20		
	Café Donations Per Head	£3	£3	£3	£3	£3	£3	£3	£3	£3	£3	£3	£3	£3	
	Income from Café	£1,200	£1,500	£2,520	£3,360	£3,360	£2,520	£1,200	£600	£600	£600	£600	£960	19,020	
	Café Cost of Sales	£480	£600	£1,008	£1,344	£1,344	£1,008	£480	£240	£240	£240	£240	£384	7,608	
	Café Profit/Loss	£480	£900	£1,512	£2,016	£2,016	£1,512	£720	£360	£360	£360	£360	£576	11,172	
Storage units	Numbers of units let	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
	Price per unit per month	£120	£120	£120	£120	£120	£120	£120	£120	£120	£120	£120	£120	£120	
	Retail Profit/Loss	£360	£360	£360	£360	£360	£360	£360	£360	£360	£360	£360	£360	4,320	
		£720													
Co-working space	Potential user numbers	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
	Average monthly fee	£30	£30	£30	£30	£30	£30	£30	£30	£30	£30	£30	£30	£30	
	Co-working Profit/Loss	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	1,800	
Gym	Number of users per month	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	
	Fee per month	£15	£15	£15	£15	£15	£15	£15	£15	£15	£15	£15	£15	£15	
	Income from Gym	£450	£450	£450	£450	£450	£450	£450	£450	£450	£450	£450	£450	5,400	
Room hire	Space hire by community groups hourly rate	£10	£10	£10	£10	£10	£10	£10	£10	£10	£10	£10	£10	£10	
	Hours available	360	360	360	360	360	360	360	360	360	360	360	360	360	
	occupancy rate	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	
	Donation from events	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	
	Rental Profit/Loss	£1,220	£720	£1,220	£720	£1,220	£720	£720	£720	£720	£1,220	£720	£720	£720	10,640
Bike Hire	Number of bikes	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
	Hours let per month	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	
	Hourly rate	£5	£5	£5	£5	£5	£5	£5	£5	£5	£5	£5	£5	£5	
	Repair	10.00%													
	Total income	£0	£1,688	£1,688	£1,688	£1,688	£1,688	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0		
<b>Total income</b>		<b>£2,300</b>	<b>£3,908</b>	<b>£5,020</b>	<b>£5,024</b>	<b>£5,524</b>	<b>£4,520</b>	<b>£2,040</b>	<b>£1,680</b>	<b>£2,180</b>	<b>£1,680</b>	<b>£1,680</b>	<b>£1,896</b>	<b>37,450</b>	
Overhead Expenses	Advertising	£1,000	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	1,550	
	Rates													0	
	Water Rates	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	1,800	
	Gas / Electric	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	3,000	
	Phone and internet	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	1,200	
	Insurance	£2,000												2,000	
	Stationery, postage & Printing	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	300	
	Staff costs : Core	£1,223	£1,223	£1,223	£1,223	£1,223	£1,223	£1,223	£1,223	£1,223	£1,223	£1,223	£1,223	14,673	
	Staff expenses and training	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	600	
	Volunteer expenses and training	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	600	
	Professional and accountancy fees													£1,500	
	Repairs & Maintenance	£300	£300	£300	£300	£300	£300	£300	£300	£300	£300	£300	£300	3,600	
	Security alarm and other contracts	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	300	
	Refuse Collection	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	300	
	Membership fees	£500												500	
	Cleaning materials	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	£25	300	
Misc	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	1,200		
	<b>Total Overheads</b>	<b>£5,823</b>	<b>£2,373</b>	<b>£2,373</b>	<b>£2,373</b>	<b>£2,373</b>	<b>£2,373</b>	<b>£2,373</b>	<b>£2,373</b>	<b>£2,373</b>	<b>£2,373</b>	<b>£2,373</b>	<b>£3,873</b>	<b>33,423</b>	
<b>Operating Profit</b>	<b>TOTAL PROFIT/LOSS</b>	<b>-£3,523</b>	<b>£1,535</b>	<b>£2,647</b>	<b>£2,651</b>	<b>£3,151</b>	<b>£2,147</b>	<b>-£333</b>	<b>-£693</b>	<b>-£193</b>	<b>-£693</b>	<b>-£693</b>	<b>-£1,977</b>	<b>4,026</b>	
Revenue Grants	And fundraising													0	
Operating Cash Flow	without grants	-£3,523	-£1,988	£659	£3,309	£6,460	£8,607	£8,274	£7,581	£7,389	£6,696	£6,003	£4,026	4,026	
	with grants	-£7,046	-£453	£3,305	£5,960	£9,611	£10,754	£7,941	£6,889	£7,196	£6,003	£5,310	£2,050	4,026	



## 5. Findings and Recommendations

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### 5.1 Findings

#### *Assets in the community*

1. The community itself is a key asset: 77% of survey respondents rated Cairnbaan as either a good or excellent place to live; 67% as a good or excellent place to visit; and 74% as a good or excellent place to play / have leisure time.
2. At over 50 out of a population of 245, the membership of the organisation is relatively high and a strong indication of community support.
3. Cairnbaan is picturesque and quiet, and relatively accessible to other parts of Mid-Argyll. There are a range of attractions that can bring visitors to the area, though there may be a need for a central point for information and gathering.
4. There are lots of opportunities for outdoor activities, including walking, cycling, kayaking and paddle boarding.
5. There is a real sense of community spirit; people in the village are friendly; and people help each other.

#### *Need in the community*

6. Cairnbaan is located within the most deprived 10% of areas in Scotland in terms of geographic access to services.
7. There is a lack of public transport: this is particularly an issue for those who don't drive and have to travel to access services and amenities.
8. Cairnbaan lies within a wider area categorised in planning terms as Very Remote Rural and an Economically Fragile Area.
9. There are no amenities within walking distance: there are no facilities that other villages have – namely, a school, a shop, and a village hall.
10. There is no indoor space for the community to gather and take part in activities.
11. There is a lack of affordable housing: people are concerned about the number of second homes / holiday homes, and the impact on young families in terms of accessing affordable accommodation.
12. Community cohesion could be stronger: people talk about “the other side of the canal” (from both sides).
13. There are concerns about loneliness amongst the elderly members of the community.
14. There are fewer people of working age (58% compared with 64% nationally) and a need to attract younger families. There has been a mixed population picture and recent re-growth needs to be invested in.

#### *Support for the project*

15. 92% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that community ownership of the FLS site would improve health and wellbeing; make people feel less isolated; and bring people together to strengthen community.
16. 83% of survey respondents support the asset transfer of the FLS buildings to the community.

## *Project ideas*

### Community hub

17. There is a demonstrable need for some sort of community hub in the village.
18. There is the very low risk of displacing what is on offer at Ardrishaig Public Hall, The Egg Shed, and Achnamara and Tayvallich Village Halls. In such a rural community, there is a real opportunity to work in partnership with them to coordinate and develop the offering across the local area.
19. The offering at Achnamara Village Hall is a good example of what can be achieved with a modest asset, in a small community.

### Café

20. There is a well evidenced desire for somewhere for the community to meet over food and drink. 83% of survey respondents would use a pop up café.
21. This need could be met on a pop up basis by local mobile catering businesses, and / or by a grant funded / project based community café.

### Health and wellbeing services

22. There is a clear desire for access to health and wellbeing services in Cairnbaan. 76% of survey respondents would use wellbeing services.
23. These could be delivered by existing local independent businesses which already are active locally.

### Outdoor activities / Active Travel Hub

24. There is some appetite for local bike hire.
25. The location and size of the FLS site lends itself to e.g. a Sustrans bike repair station.

### Tourist offering

26. There is not an appetite for tourist services to be one of the primary offerings from the FLS site.
27. However, the FLS site is well located for a small scale tourism offering that could be a focal point for / a draw to the site, in a way that complements other facilities.

### Storage / workshop space

28. Use of the workshop for storage space is dependent on the workshop being brought back in to use following the damage caused by the burst pipes.
29. If this was addressed, then use of the workshop for storage (as opposed to remodeling the interior / creating work units etc.) is relatively straightforward and would bring in an income.
30. There are local businesses interested in using storage at the FLS site.

### Office / co-working space

31. There is some appetite for office and co-working space at the FLS site. 15 people said they were interested.
32. Further investigation would be required to determine the likely take up / budget of those wanting to use the space.

## Shop

- 33. A shop emerged as a need in the survey, despite not being one of the suggested ideas.
- 34. A pop up shop could enhance the wider offering of the overall site.
- 35. 67% were supportive of a gallery and crafts workshop.

## Play park / community garden

- 36. There is an appetite for a play park and a community garden.
- 37. There is sufficient space on the FLS site to incorporate these.

## Overall project

- 38. The FLS site lends itself to a range of uses and the key to sustainability is likely to be a diversity of activity and income streams.
- 39. Zoning of the outdoor spaces, and use of signage and non-permanent structures, could increase the site's potential.
- 40. Rental of space could include activity such as wellbeing classes, yoga, crafts, small events etc. as well as bookings for existing groups who used to operate from the hotel.
- 41. There are a range of individuals and groups interested in offering activities from a small hub.

## Capacity to deliver

- 42. The skills audit indicated a strong board, but with some skills gaps: these can be rectified by readily available, low cost, training; recruiting volunteers with specific skills and experience; and drawing on the knowledge and experience of local asset owning community organisations.
- 43. Overall there is a good working knowledge on the Board in relation to planning and management. There is a strong skills set in managing an organisation or large project, and leadership of an organisation is well-resourced.
- 44. Community engagement and development is an area of strength for the organisation.
- 45. One of the biggest relevant gaps in the organisation is fundraising.
- 46. There is a low level of skills and knowledge in community asset development and facilities management which will need to be addressed via training and support or via recruitment of a paid member of staff. The process of this asset transfer will be a crucial learning journey.

## Fundability and financial viability

- 47. It is intended that the cost of purchasing the FLS site will be met by a grant from the Scottish Land Fund, with match funding being a negotiated discount from FLS for the community benefits realised by the project. FLS are supportive of an asset transfer.
- 48. Significant works are required to bring the buildings back in to use.
- 49. Funding for capital projects is currently extremely challenging for all projects across Scotland but this is likely to change and this will be a more modest budget than most capital projects.

50. Running costs could be met by a combination of grant funding and enterprise activity, though financial modelling shows that it can be sustained without grants as long as staffing is kept to a minimum.

## 5.2 Options Appraisal

Option 1: Do nothing – likelihood that the site will be sold privately and used for housing	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No responsibility for managing the asset</li> <li>• Organisation has limited experience in facilities management</li> <li>• A significant amount of work and money is required to bring the buildings back in to use</li> <li>• No need to generate funding and investment and enter into a potentially stressful period of development</li> <li>• The Trust is free to pursue other local initiatives</li> <li>• The buildings are likely to have a limited lifespan</li> <li>• Housing is a need in the area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of the opportunity of this site probably forever</li> <li>• Potential significant negative impact on the community long term with no facilities (there is no guarantee that a new hotel will offer facilities)</li> <li>• Lack of community control as to what happens at the site</li> <li>• Does not meet the need for a community hub and associated facilities</li> <li>• Loss of opportunity for meantime use before renovation.</li> </ul>

Option 2: Progress with an Asset Transfer of the site to develop a community hub	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site is at the heart of the village, and could provide a real opportunity to bring the community together</li> <li>• There is a clear need for a space where the community can meet; this need is unlikely to be met with the reopening of the Cairnbaan Hotel</li> <li>• There is also a clear desire for a café, and this could be provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant project to be undertaken by a voluntary board</li> <li>• Capital funding is very challenging in the current environment, with no guarantee that investment can be secured</li> <li>• Potential for revenue cost increases with less ability to generate income</li> </ul>



<p>by, rather than displace, the local pop-up café</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset Transfer from FLS, funded by the SLF, is likely to be a ‘one-off’ opportunity for the village</li> <li>• Once the site is in community ownership, then the buildings can be upgraded or even replaced in a phased way, for the long term benefit of the community.</li> <li>• The wider site presents opportunities for the use of green space and non-permanent structures</li> <li>• Enhances community empowerment and local control with opportunities to change what happens there if need changes over time</li> <li>• Offers space to community groups</li> <li>• Creates opportunities for a heritage / tourism offering</li> <li>• Supported by the local community and stakeholders</li> <li>• Grants are commonly secured for such projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ability to generate enough income for a large staff team is unlikely</li> </ul>
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On balance, we recommend that Cairnbaan Community Trust progresses with Option 2, though the capital funding landscape is currently in flux partly due to public sector funding constraints. Despite this situation, this is a comparatively modest development with strong support and existing users already interested.

### 5.3 Recommendations

We recommend that Cairnbaan Community Trust:

1. Proceeds to a business plan with full cash flow projections and governance arrangements.
2. Agrees an accommodation schedule for the architect.
3. Progresses discussions with Forestry and Land Scotland to purchase the site in Cairnbaan on the basis of a substantial discount on the valuation due to significant social impact locally.
4. Considers the feasibility study in detail, particularly the implications of current challenges in relation to capital funding. This may impact on the timing of a

purchase. A worst-case scenario should be understood and a risk assessment will be set out in the business plan.

5. Continues to grow its membership.
6. Continues to consult and inform the local community and stakeholders over these plans to ensure growing support.
7. Progresses partnership opportunities, in particular with the following:
  - a. Community groups interested in using the space
  - b. Potential users of office space
  - c. Potential users of the workshop space for storage
  - d. Trustees of other asset owning community organisations locally
8. Establishes a community hub that brings the community together, providing a range of activities for all community members, as well as resources that can be enjoyed by visitors too.

## 5.4 Accommodation Schedule

Based on the evidence of need and the development issues, the following accommodation matrix recommends which services / facilities should be included in the new development, and ranks / scores each on:

Priority – either strong or low priority in relation to local needs.

Evidenced Demand – scores from 1 (low) to 3 (high) on demand and the level of evidence that has been gathered to support this.

Social Impact – scores 1 (low) to 3 (high) on the social outcomes the service / facility will deliver to the community, and the extent to which it will meet funding outcomes.

Viability Impact – scores 1 (low) to 3 (high) on income generation potential

Service / Facility	Evidenced Demand	Social Impact	Viability impact (ability to generate income)	Comments	Space Requirements
Strong Priority					
Pop up cafe and drop in gathering space	3	3	2	This can be used for community events such as community dinners. Run by volunteers or donation based – or operated by a local business.	Room for 20 covers if possible, including space and tables. Ability to spill out into attractive outside landscaped space.
Storage units	2	1	2	Medum sized storage units. E.g. building materials and Polly's horsebox.	3 units of different sizes.
Small gym	3	3	2	Must be as self-managed as possible to avoid pressure on the Trust. Small space – 30 members estimated.	One room with space for basic equipment. Showers and changing facilities.
Rentable space	3	3	3	Medium sized space for rent from Gaelic club to yoga and craft classes.	Space that could be used as a therapist – anchor tenants would bring income. Ideally for 6-8 people Ideally two rooms if there is space.
Medium Priority					
Co-working space	3	2	1	Good demand but not clear if it will convert into usage.	Retain small area, perhaps adjacent to the café/gathering space, for work pods.
Bike hire	2	2	2	Will depend on whether the Trust wants to manage this.	Say 5 bikes in outside storage – will need to be entirely booked online and released with a keypad or code.



Tourist information	2	2	1	Central point for visitors to get information and to orientate themselves.	Information boards and leaflet stands at the gathering space.
Lower priority					
Tourist accommodation	1	1	3	Will compete with local accommodation providers.	Would be small bunkhouse rather than boutique hotel.
Additional Shared Space					
Toilets.					
Small office accommodation for a minimum 2 desks, if possible, for the Trust itself.					
Storage for community groups renting rooms.					
Reception area – welcoming entrance area to the hub, opportunity for groups to advertise services / meetings.					
Parking – though attempt to encourage active travel.					
Landscaping and a community garden if space and budget allows.					