

Lochaline Community Forest



Fundraising Strategy

June 2025

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Executive Summary

This document offers various fundraising options, cases for support summaries, and funding channels for the Lochaline Community Forest project as it goes forward, while acknowledging that at this stage it is delivered as part of the business plan that demonstrates project feasibility when applying to the Community Asset Transfer Scheme (CATS) and Scottish Land Fund (SLF). The community forest project is led by Morvern Community Woodlands (MCW) to help deliver one of the aspirational projects identified in the Morvern Local Place Plan. It includes purchase of 96 hectares of the national forest estate, the creation of woodland crofts, woodland management through a woodlot lease, enhancement of native woodland, improvements for public recreation and community engagement in woodland management.

The funding strategy aims to provide an overview of the project's goals, alignment with funders, and a programme for what and when applications for grant funding need to be made. It is to be read in conjunction with other documents provided including the business plan and cash flow and is part of the Feasibility Plan package delivered by the Community Woodlands association (CWA) for MCW.

Please note that mention of a particular funding option does not guarantee or suggest success with an application. Each funder is independent and will make their own decisions against their own criteria in response to an application made.

With committed work from members and the board of MCW, along with the Woodland Crofts Steering Group, MCW is delivering the package of Feasibility Study, Business Plan, Cash Flow and Fundraising strategy as part of their application to the Community Asset Transfer Scheme (CATS) and the Scottish Land Fund (SLF). Other applications are also in hand; one to the Pebble Trust and another to Morvern Community Development Company. This Funding Strategy provides the guidance for where to go next depending on the outcome of the CATS and SLF applications

2. Case for Support

A 'case for support' is an essential part of a fundraising campaign that should be kept in mind during fundraising and reviewed and revised as the project develops and milestones are reached. Here it also serves to present the vision of Lochaline Community Forest and for what purposes external funding is required.

What follows is a generic 'case for support' for the Lochaline Community Forest project. Multiple cases for support aligned to specific funders are presented, in brief, in Appendix 1. Numbers included are place holders that may be edited; indeed, the whole may be edited as time progresses and the focus of funding changes.

Generic 'Case for Support': Lochaline Community Forest

Executive Summary

The Lochaline Community Forest project is a community-led initiative to acquire and manage woodland adjacent to the village of Lochaline, on Scotland's west coast. It is led by Morvern Community Woodlands (MCW) with support from a wide range of community stakeholders, including Morvern Community Development Company (MCDC).

Our vision is to create a community-led, community forest enterprise that provides long-lasting social and economic benefits to the community, with land use based on a combination of woodland crofts, low-impact woodland management, restoration of native woodlands and enhanced opportunities for recreation & community engagement. Intergenerational connections between people and land will generate sustainable livelihoods and support the health and well-being of our community.

We are seeking funding to support land acquisition, infrastructure development, environmental restoration, and community engagement programmes¹.

Morvern Community Woodlands is a limited Company (SC275782) and registered charity (050538).

The Need

Lochaline is a remote rural community with limited access to local employment, services, and recreational opportunities. Young people growing up in the area are priced out of access to land and homes from which to generate sustainable living. Community led management of the forest represents a unique opportunity to address these challenges by:

- Creating woodland crofts and sustainable jobs
- Enhancing biodiversity
- Improving public access and outdoor recreation
- Providing educational and volunteering opportunities
- Strengthening community resilience and self-reliance

Aims

The aims for the management of Lochaline Community Forest are that it is:

- **Community-owned and managed**, ensuring long-term stewardship
- **Ecologically rich**, supporting native species and climate resilience
- **Economically productive**, through sustainable forestry, tourism, and crofting
- **Socially inclusive**, offering opportunities for all ages and backgrounds

What We Will Do

With your support, we will:

- Secure ownership of the forest for the community
- Establish between 6 and 8 woodland crofts, enabling residents to rent the land, build affordable homes and grow local enterprise
- Establish a woodlot area to support low impact forest management supplying timber to local markets and supporting further employment opportunities
- Enhance public access infrastructure to encourage greater use of the forest for recreation
- Restore up to 36ha of native woodland to provide a key landscape link for Scotland's rare rainforest species
- Deliver educational programs and volunteer opportunities

Impact

Your support will help us:

- Protect and enhance a valuable natural asset
 - Long-term approximately 20 hectares of plantation forest will be managed with low-impact systems and up to 40 hectares will be managed for nature restoration, predominantly native woodland.

¹ Delete as appropriate

- Create sustainable livelihoods and reduce rural poverty:
 - Woodland Crofts: The Crofting Commission's report on The Value of Crofting estimates that crofting contributes £588 million GVA/year to Scotland's economy. Based on the Economic Conditions of Crofting (2019–2022), average croft income is £4,538/year, with Biggar Economics estimating a GVA impact of £6,938 per croft/year when supply chain effects are included. Using a 3.5% discount rate over five years (HM Treasury Green Book), and assuming 6–8 crofts become active from Year 2, the Net Present Value is £25,483 per croft. This yields a total benefit of £152,898 to £204,000.
 - Woodlot: adding value to at least 1,100 m³ of timber in the first 5 years would generate some £33,000 for the enterprise. Combined with work elsewhere on native woodland restoration there will be capacity to host a woodland apprenticeship, valued at £24,000 per year by year 5.
 - Direct employment: Within the first 5 years, employment of project manager, forester, administrator and ranger is valued at £180,000 within the first 5 years.
- Foster environmental awareness and community pride
 - Volunteering: Based on MCW experience on average volunteer time input to woodland work and management will be some 5 hours per week, valued at £26,000 over 5 years.
- Build a model of rural regeneration that can inspire others:
 - The area will support the livelihoods of up to 8 families and almost 4km of public access trails.

Budget Overview

We are seeking funding to contribute to a total project budget of approximately **£1,169,000** in the first 5 years covering:

- Land acquisition: £607,000
- Infrastructure and access improvements: £141,000
- Public access infrastructure: £158,000
- Community and educational programs & project management: £212,000
- Woodland management and restoration costs: 51,000

Why Support Us

This project is:

- **Community-driven**: Led by local people with a strong track record
- **Strategically aligned**: Supports national goals for biodiversity, climate action, and rural development
- **Sustainable**: Designed for long-term environmental, social, and economic impact

Join Us

We invite you to be part of this transformative journey. Your support will help secure a vibrant future for the forest and the community it serves.

3. Fundraising Strategy

Purpose

This fundraising strategy is part of the business plan prepared to help deliver the Lochaline Community Forest objectives. It focuses on immediate requirements while looking strategically at objectives, aware that getting support from external sources is a stepping stone, to initiate projects, and that long-term the core enterprise will be self-sustaining.

This fundraising document focuses on external sources of funding and the timing of applications and fundraising effort and opportunities to release income from the forest if and when that is needed

External sources of funding are required for land acquisition, infrastructure development, community engagement, and other initiatives to benefit the community and environment.

The community forest project has the following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Strengths

- **Community Ownership & Engagement:** Strong grassroots support and local leadership ensure long-term commitment and stewardship. Strong collaboration with other community bodies such as Morvern Community Development Company (MCDC)
- **Environmental Value:** Focus on native woodland restoration, biodiversity enhancement, and climate resilience aligns with national and global environmental priorities.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Clear alignment with funders such as the Scottish Land Fund, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and SSE Sustainable Development Fund. Alignment with the Morvern Local Place Plan.
- **Multi-Benefit Model:** Combines environmental, social, and economic outcomes—woodland crofts, education, and outdoor recreation.
- **Established Vision & Planning:** Clear feasibility study, mapped funding sources, and phased infrastructure plans.

Weaknesses

- **Limited SIMD Eligibility:** Lochaline is not in the most deprived SIMD quintiles, which may limit access to some targeted funding streams.
- **Capacity Constraints:** Reliance at least initially on volunteer effort and the need for professional support for project management and, at least initially, dedicated fundraising staff.
- **Remote Location:** While a strength for biodiversity, remoteness may limit visitor numbers and increase costs.
- **Initial Capital Requirements:** High upfront costs for land acquisition and infrastructure may be challenging to secure quickly.

Opportunities

- **Growing Interest in Environmental & Climate Action related projects:** Increased public and philanthropic interest in environmental restoration and sustainability. Companies seeking to engage in 'natural capital' projects.
- **Tourism & Eco-Education:** Potential to attract visitors and school groups through trails, interpretation, and forest-based learning.
- **Community Shares & Ethical Finance:** Innovative funding models like community shares and ethical borrowing can unlock new capital and deepen engagement.
- **Corporate Partnerships:** aligned companies may support through funding, volunteering, or in-kind contributions.
- **Legacy Giving & Philanthropy:** Opportunity to build long-term support through named recognition and legacy gifts.

Threats

- **Funding Competition:** High competition for grants and philanthropic funding, especially in a post-COVID and inflationary context.
- **Environmental Risks:** Climate change, pests, or disease could impact forest health and project outcomes.
- **Regulatory & Legal Complexity:** Community share offers and borrowing require compliance with FCA and other legal frameworks.
- **Volunteer Burnout:** Sustained community involvement is essential but may wane without adequate support and recognition.

Lochaline, falls into a rural data zone that is typically ranked in the 4th or 5th SIMD quintile — meaning it is among the least deprived 40% to 20% of areas in Scotland according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Many funders use SIMD rankings to prioritise support for the most deprived 20% or 30% of areas. Lochaline is not in this bracket, so it may not automatically qualify for SIMD-targeted funding. We would not therefore recommend application to the Postcode Trusts and other sources that often prioritise SIMD-deprived areas.

Alternative fundraising strengths: Lochaline's rurality, remoteness, and community-led development model are strong eligibility factors for trusts focused on: access to services, environmental sustainability, community resilience or youth and skills development.

4. Fundraising Channels

The strategy acknowledges that Lochaline Community Forest aims to deliver on multiple objectives in a fairly short space of time and that there are several government and non-government funding channels that are in place to support most of these objectives:

- Affordable homes for rural areas where incomes are limited and house prices high
- Growing local, rural enterprises
- Natural habitat restoration
- Outdoor recreation opportunities and sustainable travel
- Engaging communities in outdoor activities and learning
- And of course, community ownership and management of assets important to communities.

The strategy also acknowledges that, post acquisition, MCW will own assets that can be sold – timber and land. Some of the development funding could come from loans or share capital based on future sales of assets.

A diversified fundraising approach is essential considering the following channels all of which may generate at least some income to the project.

1. Community Share Offer

Objective: Raise capital while fostering local ownership and engagement.

- Structure: Launch a community share offer through a Community Benefit Society (BenCom), allowing residents and supporters to invest in the forest.
- Support: Partner with the Community Shares Unit, Co-operatives UK, DTAS or the Plunkett Foundation for guidance.
- Campaign Elements:
 - Public meetings and Q&A sessions
 - Share offer prospectus with clear social and environmental returns
 - Local media and social media promotion
- Target Audience: Local residents, diaspora, environmental supporters

Pros

1. Community Engagement: Encourages local ownership and involvement in the project.
2. Financial Leverage: Can unlock additional funding from grants and other sources.
3. Long-term Sustainability: Creates a loyal base of supporters and investors.
4. Flexibility: Funds can be used for a variety of purposes, from capital projects to operational costs.

Cons

1. Time-Consuming: Requires significant effort to promote and manage the share offer.
2. Financial Risk: Investors may expect a return, which can create financial pressure.
3. Regulatory Compliance: Must comply with Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) regulations.
4. Limited Appeal: May not attract large-scale investment compared to other funding methods.

Appraisal: Community Shares have been used successfully by Sunart Community Renewables, Strontian Community School and are on-going for the Glenuig Inn. In the case of Just Porty (Portobello Community Hall), the offer expressly offered purchasers the opportunity to have investment (multiples of £25) returned after 5 years. They do not expect many people to do this.

To ensure local agency the share offer can be structured so that the (vast) majority of shares are only available to people within a specific geographic area. But having some shares available to people from outwith that area does bring wider support.

Potentially relatively high return of unrestricted income but significant effort to establish and make the offer, including the requirement to establish or convert to a BenCom.

2. Crowdfunding Campaign

Objective: Attract small to medium donations from a broad audience.

- Platform: Use platforms like Crowdfunder UK or JustGiving.
- Campaign Theme: “Grow the Forest, Grow the Future” – emphasizing biodiversity, education, and community resilience.
- Incentives: Offer rewards such as tree dedications, name plaques, or guided forest tours.
- Target Audience: General public, tourists, environmental enthusiasts

Appraisal: Crowdfunding through several online channels appears to have waned in success. One recent appeal for a new-start Inverness based charity generated significantly less income than hoped for and was regarded by Trustees as a failure. Success depends on grabbing the attention of large numbers of people for a cause they are willing to fund. In our opinion this is risky for this project and not likely to generate significant income.

3. Corporate Sponsorship and CSR Partnerships

Objective: Secure funding and in-kind support from aligned businesses.

- Potential Partners: ScottishPower, Co-op Group, Lush, Diageo, BT Group, SSEN
- Opportunities:
 - Sponsor a trail, shelter, or educational program
 - Corporate volunteer days
 - Co-branded environmental campaigns
 - Restoring ‘natural capital’ – rainforest restoration in Scotland
- Approach: Tailor proposals to each company’s goals and offer visibility and impact reporting.

Table 1 offers some suggestions of companies and the kind of corporate support they are known to offer

Table 1. Selected companies and the corporate support they are known to offer.

Company/Organisation	Sector	Relevance	Typical Forms of Support
Scottish Power	Energy	Active in Scottish environmental and community initiatives, including reforestation and biodiversity projects.	Funding, volunteer support, materials
Marks & Spencer (Plan A)	Retail	Strong CSR focus on sustainability, biodiversity, and community engagement.	Funding, in-kind donations, publicity
Co-op Group	Retail	Known for community funding and local environmental projects.	Funding, volunteer support, community engagement
Just One Tree	Environmental NGO	Partners with businesses to plant trees and support reforestation.	Funding, tree planting initiatives, environmental education
Diageo	Beverage	Invests in rural community development and sustainability in Scotland.	Funding, volunteer support, community projects

BT Group	Telecom	Supports digital inclusion and environmental sustainability, including green spaces.	Funding, technology support, volunteer initiatives
Lush Cosmetics	Retail	Funds grassroots environmental projects through its Charity Pot programme.	Funding, in-kind donations, publicity
One More Tree Foundation (expressed interest to expand activities in Scotland)	NGO	Promotes community-led reforestation and environmental education.	Funding, tree planting initiatives, environmental education

Appraisal: Geography may be a limit on corporate volunteering days, but sponsorship or partnership in relation to particular aspects of the project may be attractive to corporate organisations. There is a potentially high effort to identify the correct company, then the right person for relatively small scale income for smaller items of activity.

4. Application to grant and trust funds

Objective: Secure large-scale funding for capital and programme needs.

- Key Funders: Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Scottish Land Fund, Foundation Scotland, SSE Sustainable Development Fund, The Pebble Trust
- Strategy: Align applications with funders' priorities (e.g., biodiversity, community resilience, youth engagement).
- Tactics: Use the mapped funding table to match specific actions to funders.

Table 2 provides indicative likelihood of success for a number of grant giving bodies after assessing the work against their main criteria. Esmee Fairburn and the Social Investment Fund of Foundation Scotland are assessed as high likelihood of success and specific 'case for support' frameworks, tailored to them both are in Appendix 2.

Table 2: Selected grant giving bodies, alignment, outline criteria and indicative likelihood of success

Funding Source	Criteria	Deadline	Website	Likelihood of Success
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	Focuses on natural world restoration, community resilience, and social justice	Rolling	https://esmeefairbairn.org.uk/	High
Foundation Scotland – Social Investment Fund	Blends grant and loan investment to social enterprises, community organisations and charities across Scotland, but only if other bank loans can not be secured.	Rolling	Social Investment Fund Foundation Scotland	High

Garfield Weston				

	Scotland	Rolling	https://www.craignishtrust.org.uk /	Medium
CWA maintains on its website links a number of other sources of funds which may be worth additional exploration Funding for community woodlands — Community Woodlands Association				

Appraisal: Considerable effort is required and the grants and trust fund environment is more challenging and competitive than it has been in recent years but is a highly likely source of large-scale income for this project.

It is very possible to put together projects of work that have match funding from multiple sources. This brings challenges in designing applications, reporting to multiple funders on different timelines and delivering outputs specified in each application. It also brings a degree of resilience if multiple funders are supporting work on different timelines the end of one grant scheme does not necessarily mean the end of the project. This approach works well when projects have multiple activities all contributing to the whole.

5. Local Events and Campaigns

Objective: Build community support and raise unrestricted funds.

- Ideas:
 - Forest festivals or open days
 - Guided walks and storytelling evenings
 - Local art or photography competitions
- Benefits: Raise awareness, attract donations, and recruit volunteers

Appraisal: Community events are an essential part of community projects, offering opportunities for engagement, consultation and limited fundraising. Considerable effort is often required to organise events, that effort is unlikely to be justifiable based on sums raised. However, any income will likely be unrestricted and therefore potentially useful for all aspects of the project. This is not a fundraising channel to rely on to finance large initiatives.

6. Membership and “Friends of the Forest” Scheme

Objective: Build a base of recurring supporters.

- Structure: Offer annual memberships with benefits such as newsletters, early event access, and recognition.
- Tiers: Individual, family, and business memberships
- Engagement: Regular updates, behind-the-scenes content, and volunteer opportunities

Appraisal. As with community-based events a membership scheme whilst raising small sums of unrestricted income is unlikely to raise large sums. Many organisations run their membership schemes at a financial loss, seeing other benefits from inclusion, engagement, communications and relationship building.

Some community woodland groups offer some form of associate membership to visitors, allowing people from far afield to contribute, again only small sums can be hoped for.

7. Ethical Borrowing

A variety of ethical lenders lend to community projects and in the case of Lochaline it may be that loans could be made against future timber sales, or sales of affordable house plots. Subject to negotiation with the lender finance may be structured in various ways including, for example interest only repayments until such a time as timber is felled and a so-called balloon payment (larger sum) is made against a larger proportion or all of the borrowing.

Borrowing can be a powerful tool for community projects, enabling upfront investment in land, infrastructure, or development. However, it also comes with risks and responsibilities. Below are some of the pros and cons of borrowing for community projects.

Pros

1. Access to capital: Enables upfront investment in land, infrastructure, or development.

2. Leverage for grants: Demonstrates commitment and can unlock match funding.
3. Builds creditworthiness: Establishes a financial track record for future growth.
4. Flexible terms: Ethical lenders often offer tailored repayment schedules.

Cons

1. Repayment pressure: Requires reliable income streams to service debt, the need to ensure income streams & cash flow cover repayments on a regular basis is imperative.
2. Risk of default: Financial strain if project revenues fall short.
3. Risk of default: Emotional burden on the community and particularly people closely involved in project management is likely to be greater than delivering outputs on a grant.
4. Legal and administrative burden: Requires robust governance and financial oversight.
5. May require security: Some lenders require property or assets as collateral.

Table 3 identifies some ethical lenders, indicates a level of fit and provides links.

Table 3: Ethical lenders					
Institution	Description	Typical Borrowing Support	Fit	Website Link	Current Best Interest Rate
Triodos Bank	Offers loans to organisations delivering positive social, environmental, or cultural impact. Transparent about who they fund.	Secured loans, project finance, social enterprise lending	High	https://www.triodos.co.uk/business-lending/large-loans/charities-and-social-enterprises	Agreed on an individual basis
Charity Bank	Specialises in lending to charities and social enterprises. Profits are reinvested into the sector.	Loans for property, working capital, and project development	High	https://www.charitybank.org/loans/	Secured lending up to 70%
Ecology Building Society	Provides mortgages and loans for sustainable building and community-led housing or land projects.	Mortgages, community-led housing finance, eco-renovation loans	High	https://www.ecology.co.uk/mortgages/community-and-commercial-mortgages/community-led-housing/	5.99% variable
Co-operative & Community Finance	Offers ethical finance to co-ops, social enterprises, and community businesses.	Unsecured loans, bridging finance, community share match funding	Medium	https://coopfinance.coop/borrow/	6% to 10%
Big Issue Invest	Social investment arm of The Big Issue. Supports social enterprises and charities.	Loans, equity-like investments, blended finance	Medium	https://www.bigissue.com/invest/impact-loans-england/	7.5% to 8.5%

CAF Bank (Charities Aid Foundation)	Offers banking and lending services to charities and not-for-profits.	Loans for property purchase, development, and refinancing	Medium	https://www.cafonline.org/home/caf-bank/secured-loans/development-finance	5.5% fixed
Unity Trust Bank	Focuses on organisations with a social purpose. Offers ethical lending and banking.	Commercial loans, property finance, overdrafts for social enterprises	Medium	https://www.unity.co.uk/interest-rates/	Negotiated terms
Foundation Scotland – Social Investment Fund	Blends grant and loan investment to social enterprises, community organisations and charities across Scotland	Investment for working capital, asset acquisition, business growth, capital expenditure.	High	Social Investment Fund Foundation Scotland	Unclear

Appraisal. Borrowing is potentially a large source of income which may well be underutilized in the community sector. Some communities feel that this is a potential risk they are not prepared to make with others more comfortable with this approach.

Borrowing is worth considering as a means of generating income for this project, following this route depends on the appetite for this kind of financing by the MCW board.

8. Philanthropy

Few if any community projects receive philanthropic support in significant quantity, in that regard this is also potentially an underutilized source of funds. Unfortunately, it is likely to require relatively significant effort to establish philanthropic relationships, but if established they can be significant sources of support.

Relationships are usually established after some form of direct personal contact or communication. And like any form of funding, prospect research is required in finding contact information and generating leads. The Environmental Funding Network who have a Scotland specific element may be worth joining. However, CWA is a member and any significant leads are shared with CWA members as they arise.

Once relationships are established funding may be significant. As with all funding relationships and perhaps more so with philanthropists, the relationship requires attention and can be notoriously high maintenance.

Appraisal: Philanthropy can generate significant sums for relatively little effort. It can also be fruitless after a lot of effort. Much depends on either forming a personal connection or having a cause or project that is sufficiently attractive that a High or Very High, Net Worth Individual is willing to support you personally.

For Lochaline we suggest a small amount of time is invested in considering people you already know that may have large sums of disposable income and whom you could approach either for support to initiate work or conceivably to underwrite or secure ethical borrowing. If such a person is known to you then it may be worth an approach. If no one is known, we suggest that little effort is put into this funding channel.

Appendix 3 is a draft 'case for support' that may be appropriate for philanthropic applications.

9. Public money:

9.1 The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund

The RTIF fund was established by Scottish Government to improve the visitor experience in rural Scotland that are experiencing visitor management issues.

Funding is upward of £150,000 with larger sums available for multi-site projects. Design grants (up to £20k and 100% of design costs) are available to provide detail sufficient to apply for support and projects are also required to have applied for planning permission before the application deadline.

The links below are for further information and Appendix 4 is a 'case for support' tailored to this funding stream.

[Rural Development Fund - Funding | VisitScotland.org](#) containing a list of successful projects

See also https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1457/tourism_and_visitor_attractions/148/tourism/4

Improving path access in and around Lochaline might not be a priority area for this Fund even if it helps to provide additional facilities that might divert tourists from other hot-spot areas.

9.2 Forestry Grant Scheme

The Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS) provides financial support for woodland creation and woodland management under several themes. It is administered by Scottish Forestry and is part of the Scottish Government's Rural Payments and Services framework.

Relevant Grant Categories for Lochaline Community Forest

1. Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG)

- **Purpose:** Improve the condition and biodiversity of existing woodland.
- **Relevance:** Suitable for transforming existing woodland.
- **Support for a range of standard cost operations under:**
 - Planning
 - Habitats & Species
 - Low impact silviculture

2. Sustainable Management of Forests (SMF)

- **Purpose:** Bring woodlands into management, increase diversity and support native woodlands.
- **Relevance:** Recreation, native woodland management and low impact silviculture all supported.
- **Support is packaged into annual payments for 5-year contracts:**
 - Low impact silviculture
 - Native woodlands
 - Public access for rural woods
 - Reducing deer impact

3. Harvesting & Processing

- **Purpose:** Supports small scale timber processing and harvesting in small-scale woodlands.
- **Relevance:** May be more relevant for tenants in woodland crofts or woodlot.
- **Support includes grants for:**
 - Harvesting & primary processing equipment
 - Secondary processing equipment
 - Tree nursery and seed collecting equipment
 - Deer larders in rainforest (& Caledonian pinewood) areas

4. Forest Infrastructure

- **Purpose:** Supports forest access in small or undermanaged woods
- **Relevance:** Improving access for small-scale, improved management of specific areas of woodland might be eligible.
- **Support includes:**

- Road construction – standard cost per m
- Turning points – standard cost per m²
- Bell mouths – standard cost per m²

Applications are submitted via the Scottish Government's Rural Payments and Services portal. Businesses and land need to be registered. Pre-application discussions with Scottish Forestry are encouraged to ensure alignment and eligibility.

We have mapped Lochaline Community Forest project actions to current Scottish Forestry funding streams, particularly through the Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS) and the Scottish Forestry Community Fund. This information is available in Appendix 5

Appraisal: Public money is heavily restricted, and several funds have closed recently for new applications. Forestry grants need to be assessed to ensure that taken the limited funds available, and the reporting requirements, whether they are good value for money.

9.3. Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme (CAGS) & Croft Housing Grant (CHG)

Woodland crofts that have agricultural business (food growing) as a main part of their enterprise, even if it is in a woodland setting, are eligible for CAGS. MCW will need to work with the woodland crofters to get the most out of these grants to deliver services, including access roads, to the woodland crofts.

- CAGS could be used to support construction of internal roads and tracks.
- CHG could be used to help connect croft houses to services.

10. Third Sector Funding

Organisations such as Development Trusts Association, Community Woodlands Association and the Alliance for Scotland's Rainforests sometimes act as conduits for funding from government, lottery or other sources. Also listed here are funds administered by local bodies but built from community contributions from renewable energy projects.

Development Trusts Association Scotland

DTAS members may be eligible for their Strengthening Communities Programme and Recovery & Resilience Fund (launched 2025). Funds are aimed at supporting and stabilizing organisations if they have got into a crisis, but also to help them become more resilient.

MCW might work with MCDC to apply for staff costs to build capacity so that future management of the woodland crofts, any associated social housing, community engagement and public access infrastructure builds resilience into both organisations.

Renewables Community Funds

These funds are offered from renewable energy schemes: Morvern's own community owned hydro project, Artornish Hydro and SSE's Kingairloch hydro project. SSE also manages a nationwide sustainable Development Fund which should open again for the Highlands in Autumn 2025. They are usually quite limited in the size of grant they can make but are well suited to match funding specific or small, one-off projects.

[Morvern Community Development Company](#)

[Morvern Community Trust](#) (MCT) also administers grants from Glensanda quarry contributions.

[Ardornish Estate](#)

[SSE Renewables](#)

Scottish Communities Alliance

The [Community Learning Exchange](#) (CLE) fund offers small sums of funding to enable visits which build mutual support across the community sector through peer to peer learning – the best way to test and develop new ideas is to learn from people already on the journey themselves!

Alliance for Scotland's Rainforests (ASR) – Our Rainforest Futures

A range of partners make up ASR and work is underway in 2025 to deliver a fund that will support communities in delivering rainforest restoration, training and engagement in rainforest restoration through employment or volunteering. Morvern is within a landscape scale project area, with RSPB coordinating activity across the peninsula. Watch this space!

11. Funding for Particular Capital Projects

Most grant funding will come from applications for specific projects within the overall community forest plan. Funders will be encouraged by achievements delivered on other elements of the project and seeing how specific projects knit together. Funds work better if they allow an inclusion in the overall budget for design and management that can help support core staff costs.

Table 4 maps particular actions of the project, identified in Section 7 of the feasibility study to particular funders according to their interests.

Table 4: Particular project actions mapped to funding sources			
Action	Purpose	Funding Sources	Justification
Path works and related infrastructure	Improve public access and recreational opportunities	<p>Paths for All: Their Community Paths Fund is limited to £1,800. A path network from Lochaline into or through Lochaline Community Forest might be eligible for their Community Project Transition Fund (£5,000-£100,000). Also the Ian Findlay Path Fund offers 100% of design costs and up to £100,000 for construction costs (with 30% match funding). (https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/community-paths/cmp-grants)</p> <p>Rural Transport Infrastructure Fund</p> <p>National Lottery Community Fund (https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-scotland)</p> <p>RTIF Rural Development Fund - Funding VisitScotland.org</p>	These funders support community-led projects that enhance public access and promote active travel.
Signage, interpretation and promotion	Enhance visitor experience and engagement	<p>Heritage Fund (https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding)</p> <p>Scottish Forestry Community Fund (https://forestry.gov.scot/forests-people/communities/community-fund) RTIF Rural Development Fund - Funding VisitScotland.org</p>	These funders support projects that improve heritage interpretation and community engagement.
Woodland play park and/or gym	Provide recreational facilities for children and adults	<p>National Lottery Community Fund (https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-scotland)</p>	These funders support projects that promote health and well-being through

		Paths for All https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/community-paths/cmp-grants	outdoor activities.
Volunteering, skills, education	Develop community skills and engagement	Scottish Forestry Community Fund https://forestry.gov.scot/forests-people/communities/community-fund National Lottery Community Fund https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-scotland	These funders support community capacity building and educational projects.
Renewable Energy Generation	Develop sustainable energy sources	SSE Sustainable Development Fund https://www.sserenewables.com/communities/sustainable-development-fund/ Morvern Community Development Company https://www.morvern.org/community-fund Scottish Hydro Electric Community Trust How to apply - Scottish Hydro-Electric Community Trust (specifically for grid connection costs)	These funders support renewable energy projects and community sustainability initiatives.

5. Delivery

A phased approach offered below may be amended to suit priorities.

The grants and trust fund environment is fluid and ever changing, so it is well worth keeping up to date with new funding opportunities, changes in strategy or approach from funding organisations and news from as many sources as possible.

Phase 1: Preparation & Capacity Building (Months 1–3)

Objectives:

- Post CATS/SLF application consolidation.
- Clearer assessment of staff need, agreeing office/staff hosting arrangements with MCDC
- Prepare core fundraising materials and closer investigation of options

Key Actions:

- Develop a fundraising communications toolkit (case for support, visuals, FAQs)
- Identify and prioritize funders and grant deadlines
- Build connections with local & national initiatives, e.g. Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest, Loch Abar Mor.
- Confirm legal structure (e.g. BenCom or CIC) and FCA registration if pursuing community shares

Phase 2: Early-Stage Fundraising & Community Engagement (Months 3–6)

Objectives:

- Launch initial funding applications
- Build local awareness and support
- Consider and if agreed, prepare for community share offer and/or crowdfunding

Key Actions:

- Submit applications to Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and Foundation Scotland
- Host community events to celebrate progress and continue engagement.
- Begin planning for a community share offer (if applicable)
- Develop a crowdfunding campaign strategy
- Engage with Scottish Forestry and other key stakeholders

Phase 3: Major Campaign Launch (Months 6–12)

Objectives:

- Secure major funding commitments
- Launch public-facing fundraising campaigns
- Begin infrastructure and access improvements (if funding secured)

Actions:

- Launch community share offer and/or crowdfunding campaign
- Submit applications to SSE Sustainable Development Fund, and others
- Approach corporate sponsors and CSR partners

- Begin delivery of funded activities
- Monitor and report on early impacts

Phase 4: Expansion & Delivery (Year 2)

Objectives:

- Deliver full project activities
- Maintain fundraising momentum
- Build long-term sustainability

Key Actions:

- Implement woodland restoration, croft development, and visitor infrastructure
- Continue applying for grants (e.g. Gannochy Trust, National Lottery)
- Launch educational and volunteer programs
- Evaluate impact and refine fundraising strategy

Phase 5: Sustainability & Legacy (Year 3+)

Objectives:

- Ensure long-term financial and operational sustainability
- Deepen community ownership and engagement

Key Actions:

- Establish income-generating activities (e.g. eco-tourism, events)
- Maintain donor and member relationships
- Report on outcomes and share learning
- Plan for future phases of development or expansion

Resource Required

We recommend that delivery of significant funding for this project is achievable with approximately 0.6 FTE (3 days a week) initially, but perhaps starting at 2-days per week from September 2025 to consolidate after submission of the CATS/SLF applications. This could be either staff or volunteer time, ideally with experience in environmental and/or community fundraising and trust applications.

We expect this to reduce at the end of year two of the project or early year 3, to approximately 0.4 FTE (2 days a week).

Initially we envisage the role of project/development manager to focus on prospect research, preparatory work (such as generation of fundraising materials), relationship building and preparation, completion and submission of multiple funding applications.

As time progresses and the project becomes less grant dependent, we see the role becoming more of contribution to delivery against outputs and relationship management with funders. An important yet often overlooked aspect of fundraising work.

This work could be integrated with other work to create a full-time post with job description that changes over time. Or it could be a standalone post.

Potential sources of funding for a standalone post include Esmee Fairburn Foundation, National Lottery Community Fund, Foundation Scotland and the DTAS Strengthening Communities programme.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Cases for support tailored to particular funders

Foundation Scotland – Place-Based Funds

Primary Focus - Community-led development in rural and island areas

Project Alignment - The project strengthens community resilience and sustainability by developing woodland crofts, enhancing public access, and restoring native habitats.

Suggested Framing - Highlight the alignment with local priorities, the project's role in stimulating rural economic development, and its contribution to environmental sustainability and social cohesion.

SSE Sustainable Development Fund

Primary Focus - Supporting communities near SSE renewable energy developments

Project Alignment - The initiative will contribute to sustainable tourism infrastructure, explore renewable energy opportunities, and build community resilience.

Suggested Framing - Focus on the project's potential to enhance sustainable tourism, integrate renewable energy solutions, and support long-term community-led development in the region.

The Pebble Trust

Primary Focus - Promoting sustainability and climate action in the Highlands

Project Alignment - The forest project will enhance biodiversity, support low-impact livelihoods, and build resilience to climate change.

Suggested Framing - Emphasize the project's role in climate mitigation, biodiversity enhancement, and the creation of a sustainable, self-reliant rural community.

The Robertson Trust

Primary Focus - Reducing poverty and trauma across Scotland

Project Alignment - The initiative will create sustainable employment opportunities, foster community resilience, and offer skills development and volunteering pathways.

Suggested Framing - Highlight the project's impact on reducing rural poverty, building confidence and capacity within the community, and providing inclusive opportunities for learning and growth.

The Gannochy Trust

Primary Focus - Supporting capital and revenue projects that benefit young people and communities

Project Alignment - The project will engage young people through woodland crofts, skills training, and community-based environmental initiatives.

Suggested Framing - Focus on the project's potential to empower young people, provide hands-on learning experiences, and strengthen intergenerational community ties.

The Tudor Trust

Primary Focus - Supporting smaller, community-led organisations across the UK

Project Alignment - Lochaline Community Forest is a grassroots initiative that promotes sustainable livelihoods, environmental stewardship, and community resilience.

Suggested Framing - Emphasize the deeply community-led ethos of the project, its long-term sustainability goals, and its capacity to serve as a model for rural regeneration.

The Craignish Trust

Primary Focus - Supporting environmental and community projects in Scotland

Project Alignment - The project will restore biodiversity, support sustainable land use, and strengthen the local community through active engagement.

Suggested Framing - Highlight the environmental and social benefits of the project, including biodiversity restoration, sustainable land management, and inclusive community participation.

Appendix 2: Esmée Fairburn & Foundation Scotland Cases for support

Esmée Fairburn

Executive Summary

The Lochaline Community Forest project aims to transform a local forest into a sustainable community resource. This initiative will enhance biodiversity, provide educational opportunities, and support local economic development. Funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation will enable us to achieve these goals and create lasting benefits for the community.

Project Description

The Lochaline Community Forest project involves the acquisition and management of a local forest area. Our objectives include promoting biodiversity, offering educational programs, and fostering community engagement. We plan to implement sustainable forestry practices, create nature trails, and develop facilities for environmental education.

Objectives

1. Enhance biodiversity through sustainable forest management.
2. Provide educational opportunities for local schools and community groups.
3. Foster community engagement and volunteering.
4. Support local economic development through eco-tourism and sustainable resource use.

Need for Funding

Funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation is crucial for the success of the Lochaline Community Forest project. The funds will be used for land acquisition, infrastructure development, educational program implementation, and ongoing maintenance. Without this support, we will be unable to achieve our objectives and create the envisioned community benefits.

Impact

The Lochaline Community Forest project will have a significant positive impact on the local community and environment. It will enhance biodiversity, provide educational opportunities, and support local economic development. The project will also foster a sense of community ownership and stewardship, encouraging long-term sustainability.

Budget

The total budget for the Lochaline Community Forest project is estimated at £500,000. This includes £200,000 for land acquisition, £150,000 for infrastructure development, £100,000 for educational programs, and £50,000 for ongoing maintenance. We are seeking £250,000 from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to match funds already secured from other sources.

Conclusion

The Lochaline Community Forest project represents a unique opportunity to create lasting benefits for the local community and environment. With the support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, we can achieve our

goals and ensure the long-term success of this initiative. We look forward to the possibility of partnering with the Foundation to make this vision a reality.

Foundation Scotland

Executive Summary

The Lochaline Community Forest project seeks to secure funding from Foundation Scotland's Social Investment Fund to support our mission of sustainable forest management, community engagement, and environmental stewardship. This funding will enable us to enhance biodiversity, provide educational opportunities, and create economic benefits for the local community. We propose a blend of repayable loan and grant to achieve these goals.

Project Description

Lochaline Community Forest is a community-led initiative aimed at managing and preserving our local forest. The project involves sustainable timber harvesting, habitat restoration, and the development of recreational facilities. Our approach balances ecological health with community benefits, ensuring long-term sustainability.

Objectives

1. Enhance biodiversity through habitat restoration and conservation efforts.
2. Promote environmental education and awareness among local residents and visitors.
3. Generate economic benefits through sustainable timber harvesting and eco-tourism.
4. Foster community engagement and participation in forest management activities.

Need for Funding

Funding from Foundation Scotland's Social Investment Fund is crucial for the success of the Lochaline Community Forest project. The blend of repayable loan and grant will provide the necessary capital to invest in infrastructure, equipment, and staffing. This financial support will enable us to implement our project plan effectively and achieve our objectives.

Impact

The Lochaline Community Forest project will have a significant positive impact on the environment, economy, and community. Key impacts include:

- Increased biodiversity and improved habitat quality.
- Enhanced educational opportunities and environmental awareness.
- Economic benefits through job creation and sustainable timber revenue.
- Strengthened community cohesion and participation in forest management.

Budget

The total budget for the Lochaline Community Forest project is estimated at £250,000. We are seeking a combination of a repayable loan and a non-repayable grant from Foundation Scotland's Social Investment Fund. The budget breakdown is as follows:

- Infrastructure and equipment: £100,000

- Staffing and training: £75,000
- Habitat restoration and conservation: £50,000
- Community engagement and education: £25,000

Conclusion

The Lochaline Community Forest project represents a unique opportunity to create lasting environmental, economic, and social benefits for our community. With the support of Foundation Scotland's Social Investment Fund, we can achieve our vision of a sustainable and thriving community forest. We look forward to the possibility of partnering with Foundation Scotland to make this vision a reality.

Appendix 3: Philanthropist Case for Support: Lochaline Community Forest

Executive Summary

The Lochaline Community Forest project aims to preserve and enhance the natural beauty and biodiversity of the Lochaline area while providing sustainable benefits to the local community. We seek philanthropic support to ensure the long-term success and impact of this initiative.

Community Impact

Your support will directly contribute to the well-being of the Lochaline community by creating job opportunities, promoting environmental education, and fostering a sense of stewardship and pride in our natural resources. The project will also enhance recreational spaces and improve the overall quality of life for residents and visitors.

Environmental Stewardship

The Lochaline Community Forest project is committed to preserving the area's unique ecosystems and wildlife habitats. Philanthropic contributions will enable us to implement sustainable forestry practices, restore degraded areas, and protect endangered species. Together, we can ensure that the forest remains a vibrant and resilient part of our environment for generations to come.

Legacy Giving

Legacy giving offers philanthropists the opportunity to make a lasting impact on the Lochaline Community Forest project. By including the project in your estate plans, you can help secure the future of the forest and its benefits for the community. We offer various options for legacy giving, including bequests, charitable trusts, and endowments.

Named Recognition Opportunities

We are pleased to offer named recognition opportunities for major donors. Philanthropists can choose to have their names associated with specific areas of the forest, educational programs, or community facilities. This recognition serves as a lasting tribute to your generosity and commitment to the Lochaline Community Forest project.

Conclusion

Your philanthropic support is crucial to the success of the Lochaline Community Forest project. Together, we can create a sustainable and thriving environment that benefits both the community and the natural world. We invite you to join us in this important endeavor and leave a lasting legacy for future generations.

Appendix 4: Case for Support: The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund

Project Title:

Lochaline Community Forest – Sustainable Access and Visitor Infrastructure

Lead Organisation:

Morvern Community Woodlands (MCW), in partnership with Highland Council

Project Summary:

This project will deliver a suite of visitor infrastructure improvements within the proposed Lochaline Community Forest, a community-led initiative to acquire and manage 96ha of woodland adjacent to Lochaline village. The project will enhance the visitor experience, reduce pressure on local roads and informal parking, and support sustainable tourism growth in this remote Highland location.

Proposed Infrastructure:

- Creation of a multi-use path linking Lochaline to Achabeag, suitable for walking, cycling, and horse-riding
- Improved car parking at Achabeag East forest entrance (up to 4 vehicles)
- Signage and interpretation highlighting local heritage, biodiversity, and woodland crofting
- Boardwalks and drainage on wet trail sections to improve accessibility
- Visitor shelter for events, education, and forest-based tourism

Strategic Fit:

- Aligns with the Highland Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan (STIDP)
- Supports VisitScotland's responsible tourism goals
- Enhances infrastructure in a remote rural area with growing visitor interest (e.g. ferry access, walking trails, rainforest restoration)
- Reduces pressure on the B849 and Lochaline village centre

Community Benefit:

- Supports local economic development through woodland crofts and tourism
- Encourages active travel and low-carbon visitor experiences
- Builds community capacity and resilience
- Enhances biodiversity and landscape value

Estimated Cost: To be confirmed following design grant and costings

Funding Request: Design Grant (up to £20,000) followed by full RTIF application (up to £250,000)

Appendix 5: Alignment of Project Actions with Scottish Forestry Funding

Scottish Forestry Community Fund

Eligible activities

These include activities associated with woodland-based:

- school care clubs and play schemes
- schemes that promote physical activity such as walking, safe routes to school, natural play and adventure play
- volunteer group establishment and the induction of volunteers
- volunteering facilitation focused on skills training, health improvement and community development
- projects promoting Gaelic

They also include activities such as:

- providing resources to involve communities in the decision making process of managing their local woodland
- costs incurred by community bodies (such as valuation costs) when developing Community Asset Transfer Scheme applications – funding will not normally cover legal fees
- developing materials (in appropriate languages e.g. English, Scots, Gaelic, Polish, Urdu etc.) that promote the health and well-being benefits of using woodlands

Funding is not suitable for:

- land-based and infrastructure spending that can be supported by the Scotland Rural Development Programme
- formal education, including forest schools and forest kindergarten – advice and support for these activities can be accessed via Outdoor and Woodland Learning Scotland
- continued professional development activities for staff
- funding staff who work for public sector organisations such as local authorities
- capital funding for the acquisition of fixed assets such as land and buildings, or mobile assets for public sector organisations

How do I apply?

There are 2 separate application processes:

- for applications up to £1000 via an application letter
- for applications above £1000 via an application form

The level of funding will be on a sliding scale as follows:

- up to 100% for projects with a total cost of up to £1,000
- up to 90% for projects with a total cost of between £1,001 and £5,000
- up to 75% for projects with a total cost exceeding £5,000

Appendix 6: Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS):

Relevant options under Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG)

Woodland Planning: Woodland plans are requirement for securing both felling licenses and access to forestry grants. Long-term Forest Plans are required for woodlands over 100 ha in extent. Woodland plans are an option for smaller woodlands. Excluding the woodland croft areas, but including the woodlot area, the total woodland plan area for the community forest might be 71ha. The one-off long-term forest plan grant would be worth £1775. There is no grant for simpler woodland plans, even with thinning, which is an option for areas less than 100ha. If a master plan for the area is being developed anyway and the additional cost to turn out a long term forest plan can be done for less than the cost of the grant, then an application for this grant is worth it.

Deer Management Plan: Depending on the methods and costs of deer management it may be cost effective to apply for 'deer management plan' and 'reducing deer impact' and 'native woodland' grants. The risks are that the cost of making an application, reporting and claiming the grants, let alone doing the deer control, do not justify the income from the grant.

Restructuring Regeneration: £550/ha where felled areas need to be re-planted with a diversity of species.

Habitats and Species: for removing conifers and non-native shrubs from native woodland areas, grant rates start at £50/ha for hand-pulling seedlings to £1,800/ha for felling and removing/mulching trees up to 6m tall.

Sustainable Management of Forests (SMF)

Once suitable public access paths are in place, it may be justifiable to apply for Public Access-Rural Woods grant, but again the income is likely to be low in comparison to the costs involved in administering the grant. For a 3km of path network in the community forest the eligible grant might be £1,500/year. Trails accessible to and used by vehicles are not eligible in the length/are count of public access routes.

Forest Infrastructure

Infrastructure funding can be applied for to help make smaller, under-managed woods accessible for management. This could be applied to for improving the access from Achabeag East to service the Woodlot area, but its eligibility for the grant would need to be carefully presented as a means of supporting innovative and small-scale systems of managing a small area of woodland (less than 60ha) and generating more community and environmental benefits.

Similarly, to access the woodland crofts the FGS Infrastructure grant could be applied to on a similar basis; that the grant will support access to small-scale woodland areas that will be managed in more intimate, socially and environmentally beneficial ways. Woodland crofts managed for agricultural purposes and eligible for Crofting Grants would be better off applying for them rather than a Forest Infrastructure grant.

Appendix 7: Grants for Woodland Crofts

There are two crofting grants potentially available to woodland crofters, through the Croft House Grant Scheme (CHG) and the Crofting Agricultural Grants Scheme (CAGS). Neither of these is automatic, nor will every woodland crofter be eligible for them. Full details are available via the footnote links below, but the following represents a summary of the key features of the schemes.

Croft House Grant

The Croft House Grant is available to both tenants and owner-occupier crofters who are inadequately housed, or have a need to live on the croft because of the type of agricultural or non-agricultural activities undertaken or proposed. Grant support is available towards new house construction, for rebuilding and improvement, or energy efficiency improvements.

In all cases the maximum grant available is £38,000 in the high priority geographical areas (which include Morvern). However the basis for the grant differs: for new house construction it is a lump sum; for rebuilding and improvement, it is 60% of costs; and for energy efficiency improvements it is 80% of costs.

It is important to note however that the scheme is competitive, and applications are prioritised against a range of factors, so even an eligible application is not guaranteed to be approved for the CHG. There are also several exclusions to the scheme, so the full scheme guidance should be studied before making any application. There are four application rounds each calendar year, i.e. assessment of applications is carried out quarterly against published deadlines.

Conditions apply to the grant for a period of 10 years, and a business plan for the croft must be agreed and adhered to as part of the scheme. In the case of new house construction, there are limits to the size of house which can be funded, and limits to what can be funded (for example mobile homes and temporary structures are not eligible for funding). Finally, although the new croft house should usually be on the croft, it can be built on land adjoining or adjacent to the croft provided the applicant can demonstrate that this would be a more feasible option than building on the croft.

Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme

This scheme provides grants for crofters to make improvements to their crofts, and help to sustain their businesses. A range of items is fundable including sheds, tracks, hard standings, drainage, livestock facilities etc. However, it is an agricultural grant scheme which has implications for woodland crofters, both in terms of eligibility, and in terms of what can be funded.

In regard to eligibility, a woodland crofter is only eligible to apply to CAGS if they are running an agricultural business, in addition to any woodland business they run. Many woodland crofters will combine both, and thus be eligible, but some (who do not) will currently be excluded from applying to the scheme.

Furthermore, even those woodland crofters who are eligible for the scheme are only entitled to assistance for agricultural improvements. For example, an agricultural shed to house agricultural equipment or livestock feed would be fundable; a forestry shed to house a mobile sawmill and sawn timber would not.

As the requirement in crofting law is actually to 'cultivate' the croft, whose definition includes traditional agricultural activities but is much broader, many consider the current grant scheme inequitable as it funds certain aspects of cultivation but not all. Representations to that effect have been made to the Scottish Government over a period of years; the issue was accepted by them, and a commitment subsequently made that the successor scheme to CAGS (in development) would be available to all crofters.

This commitment was given in the National Development Plan for Crofting (2021): "All crofters will be allowed to apply for (future) CAGS support. As in the current scheme, sufficient business justification will always need to be demonstrated before any approval of grant." At the time of writing, neither the timescale for the introduction of the new scheme, nor the scope of its eligible works, is clear and so CAGS currently remains of limited use to woodland crofters. Furthermore, as with the CHG there are a number of exclusions to eligibility in addition to the above, so the full scheme guidance should always be consulted.

Appendix 8: National Lottery

Awards for All Scotland

This can fund projects that'll do at least one of these things:

- bring people together to build strong relationships in and across communities
- improve the places and spaces that matter to communities
- help more people reach their potential, by supporting them at the earliest possible stage
- support people, communities and organisations facing more demands and challenges because of the cost-of-living crisis.

Applications can be for funding to deliver new or existing activity, or to support organisations to change and adapt to new and future challenges, with funding from £300 to £20,000 for up to 2 years.

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-scotland>

Community Action (Scotland)

This fund is for communities in Scotland, be they communities of interest or geographical communities. Projects will help people connect more with each other and are open, inclusive and led by their community. Funding is from £20,001 to £250,000 for up to 5 years.

Applications must show how the project will:

help people come together through an activity or place, that's online or in person

- reach and support people who experience poverty, disadvantage or discrimination
- be community led
- build on the skills, experiences and strengths of the community
- understand the activities or services that are already available to the community, and show how the project will fill a gap.

The project must achieve at least 2 of these outcomes:

- build positive relationships
- support people's health or wellbeing
- help people improve their access and connection to nature
- make a positive difference to the environment.

Scottish Land Fund

The primary funding source to support community land and asset acquisition in recent years has been the Scottish Land Fund (SLF), which supports urban and rural communities to become more resilient and sustainable through the ownership and management of land and land assets. Grants of between £5,000 and

£1 million are available to fund the purchase of land or land assets. Applicants must demonstrate that their project will help their local community to:

- Achieve more sustainable economic, environmental and/or social development through ownership of land and buildings;
- Have a stronger role in and control over their own development and;
- Own well managed, financially sustainable land and buildings.

In the past, up to 95% of eligible project costs have been supported by SLF, with a minimum of 5% of funding coming from other sources. With the latest round of funding coming to a close, there is increased competition for limited funds and grants may well be capped at significantly less than 95%. Any request for a lower intervention rate may be looked at favourably. SLF can also provide some post-acquisition revenue funding, but it is our understanding that this too will be limited, as funds from this round of the SLF will need to be spent by 31 March 2026. Potential alternative sources of funding include:

- Community fundraising and wider crowd funding;
- Charitable trusts;
- Renewable energy distributor funds (Both the community and Ardtornish Estate hydro schemes have community funds that can be applied to.)
- Funds (loans) secured against future income, e.g. from timber harvesting or the sale of affordable house plots.

There are several ways in which community forest acquisitions can potentially use anticipated future income from timber harvesting to leverage the purchase, options include:

- bank loan;
- advance sale of timber to a forest management company;
- loan or finance agreement from a forestry investment company;
- long term lease agreement over all or part of the forest with a forestry management company.

The options listed above operate over different timeframes: bank loans and advance sales would probably only cover the first 10 years, whereas a long-term lease agreement might extend to 99 years, i.e. covering not only the current crop but its successor. Of these options only a bank loan is realistic, given the anticipated use of the woodland by the community.

It might also be possible to structure a deal whereby part of the initial acquisition price is met by selling off parcels of land for housing or other developments. Such arrangements need to be discussed in advance with the Scottish Land Fund, but there is precedence for this in the Saraig Loch Duich CATS application. This is illustrated in the plans prepared by Rural Design where they show woodland croft homes interspersed by affordable housing units (LCF-Ardness woodland crofts x3). These might be sold to Morvern Community Development Company (MCDC) to allocate or develop as low-cost housing for local occupation. Not only do the house plots help balance the cost of land purchase, it also helps justify the cost of installing access roads and services. However, it may not appeal to all potential Woodland Croft tenants who might wish to utilise potential development space as part of their woodland croft enterprise.