

Poll questions, Responses and Comments

Facebook Poll question

We have been running the Argyll Beaver Centre for over 5 years. We currently leased it from Forestry and Land Scotland. We have the opportunity to transfer the buildings and land into our ownership to secure our long-term future. Under Scottish land legislation we can apply for an 'Asset Transfer' with assistance from the Community Land Fund. Ownership will secure the building in perpetuity, reassure potential funders of our long-term sustainability, enable us to enhance the buildings in the future and buffer us from any future changes in policy. Forestry and Land Scotland and Highlands and Islands Enterprise are both supporting this move and providing assistance.

As part of our stage 1 application we need to establish if the community is in support of this ambition and would be grateful if you could indicate this in the poll below.

Please feel free to add any comments or message us. It'd also be very helpful if any of the many community groups we've worked with over the years could provide letters or emails of support.

info@heartofargyllwildlife.org

I support the transfer

I do not support the transfer

Comments

I think that's a great move! We're a bit far away, but I'd be happy to ask if the Island Trust would be willing to draft a letter of support if you need/want it.

What an excellent idea. You are doing so much to enable both visitors and residents to understand the natural world in Knapdale that it would make real sense to provide you with the security of knowing that the building which you have developed can continue to be used for its current purpose. We most definitely support you in this application.

Good for you— what an asset you guys are

Very good idea. I will try and share to Achnamara Village Hall page

Well done. HOATA Letter of support on its way. You're doing an amazing job for the community, education and visitors alike.

That's a great idea will support you all the way

Great move!

I support the transfer, to secure the future of a great asset

All power to ya Pete. You have my backing

Support! I've joined several of your events with kids and they've loved them all. Great resource for the area.

What a great opportunity!

Fantastic opportunity

Excellent, this can help you source more funding too.

The sort of work going on here has to be applauded. Just the sort of focus our planet needs right now.

I support the transfer excellent well-run facility. A local asset

Brilliant suggestion, good luck with the funding. Both Rachel & I support this project.

A local asset. Good luck moving forward.

I have recently been involved in a local community enterprise asset transfer from a local health

board, it is well worth it, although takes time and effort, I would vote to support the transfer, but don't live locally, although have enjoyed walks at the centre and have been following your pages, all the best with it.

The centre and all your activities are an asset to the community and an invaluable attraction for tourism. What you all do for local environmental education is marvellous. You make a positive difference to life in Argyll.

Our response to those who voted against the transfer

Dear ...,

You recently responded to a poll run by us (Heart of Argyll Wildlife) where you indicated that you were not in favour of us seeking an asset transfer to take over ownership of our centre from Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS). As part of the process we have been asked by FLS to establish why you are opposed.

We'd be grateful if you could let us know and we will submit your thoughts (anonymously) along with the rest of the information we have to provide. If you have any questions about the process we will be happy to answer these for you.

Thanks, Pete

Responses to the above question

1. There is no requirement from my position for you to keep my reply anonymous, I really don't have anything to hide, please feel free to share my name and feedback with FLS.

I have lived in Cairnbaan since late 1988. Part of the reason for choosing to move my job and family to Cairnbaan was the undiscovered nature of the location, the peace and quiet and the rural lifestyle and up until about 10 years ago this was the status quo. Over the past few years there now seems to be an abundance of tourists with an increased range of visitor attractions, including your centre - ranging from mobile coffee shops to fast boat trips / regular events, expansion or conversion of wild paths to marked walks and cycle tracks and routes involving Sustrans and others. The knock-on effect of this is that on numerous occasions, it can be impossible to have a peaceful walk in my own local area - or a cycle without being in the crowds, Mid Argyll has lost the balance of preserving the area for people who actually live here and I feel the focus is more on attracting visitors and tourists, this is wrong in my opinion.

Specifically, with your asset transfer, this gives you additional freedoms to expand and adapt for your own purposes which do not match my wishes for Mid Argyll which has been my home for the past 31 years. Having walked past 'your centre' in 1990 - I would never meet a single person, nowadays it's not possible to have a walk to the viewpoint without dodging bikes, cars or people - or actually find a place to park - it is my strong opinion that your development including asset transfer from FLS contributes to these issues and is very detrimental to my own preferences and the more freedom = your control that you will have with this asset - and this will only make Mid Argyll worse from my position. It will provide your organisation via the centre and immediate area with too much control. It will no longer be publicly owned / not part of Scotland's central government belonging in theory to the public of Scotland - there will be less recourse available for myself and others to make future objections to any use or development or expansion plans - you may have now or in the future.

I have witnessed previous similar asset transfer to community or third sector group control with other situations and locations in Mid Argyll, e.g Tayvallich, Crinan , and it seriously concerns me that places I once had access to I am now either prevented from using , or I am charged to use , its not acceptable and I do not support this asset transfer to your organisation by FLS and I strongly disagree with this.

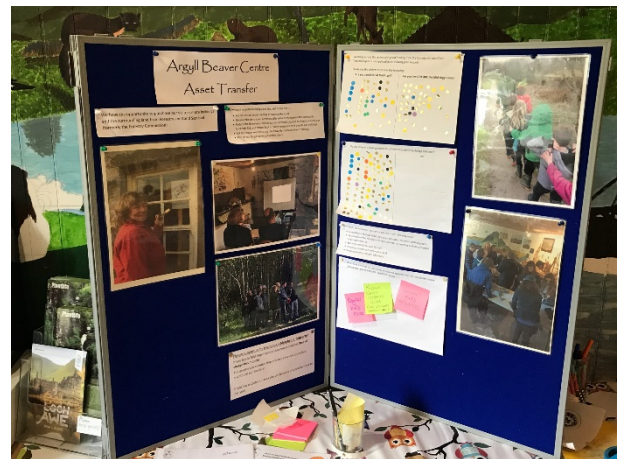
Thank you for the opportunity to provide further comment concerning my original response opposing this.

2. My main objection is the taking over of an asset which belongs to the people of Scotland as do the forests under the management of FLS. All off the assets and forests are free for all to use at any time and benefit peoples' health and well-being. In my opinion it is a gradual creeping extension by FLS to dispose of the national forest estate as attempting to sell off the two largest districts years ago ended in a total disaster. The whole estate should remain in public hands and at no point should any group be charging people to see wildlife in our forests. Past projects have already cost the taxpayer a six -figure sum plus in maintenance, repairs, structures, and damage to our forests.

In-person consultation

We have the opportunity to purchase our centre buildings and the surrounding land from FLS

- Owning the centre buildings and land will mean that:
- We can attract more funding by owning the asset
- Develop the centre and the activities offered to fit the needs of the activity
- Reduce the 3-way communication currently required between ourselves, our landlord (FLS) and NatureScot in future development of the land and buildings
- Put the money we use to pay rent towards community-based projects.
- Plan for our longer-term sustainable future



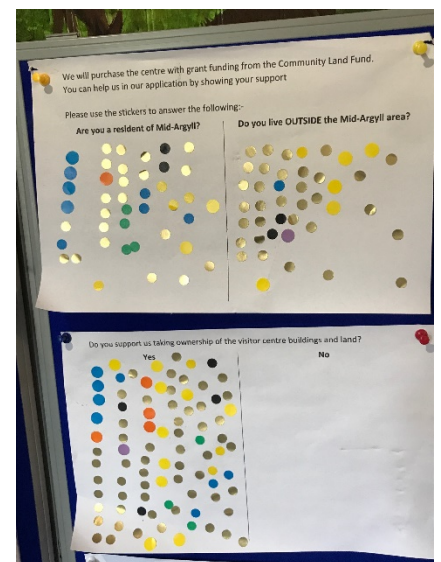
Questions:

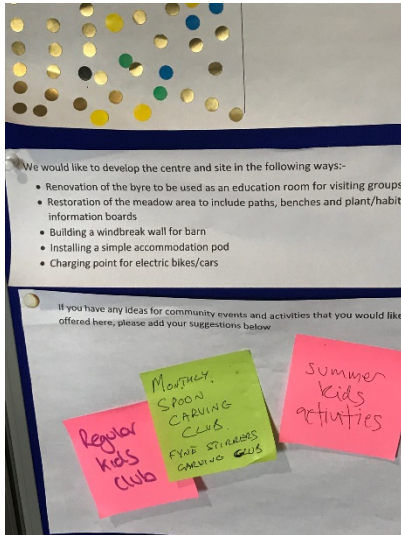
We will purchase the centre with funding from the Community Land Fund. You can help us in our application by showing your support. Please use the stickers to answer the following:

Are you a resident of Mid-Argyll? Yes/No

Do you support us taking ownership of these buildings and land? Yes/No

Post-It notes were provided for visitors to add suggestions for future community uses of the centre. The consultation is ongoing at the centre and has been taken to the Tayvallich Gala, Celtic & Pictish Festival and the Wild Seas Weekend. All local events held in Mid-Argyll





Results to date:

Residents for: 42

Residents against: 0

Non-residents for: 44

Non-residents against: 0

Suggested new activities: Kid's club, summer activities for children, woodworking, foraging courses.