



Forestry and
Land Scotland
Coilltearachd agus
Fearann Alba

Community Asset Transfer Scheme (CATS) for our national forests and land

ASSET TRANSFER REQUEST FORM

Introduction

Please read the relevant parts of the [Community Asset Transfer Scheme](#) (CATS) Guidance before completing this form. You may also wish to refer to the Scottish Government's [Asset Transfer Guidance for Community Bodies](#).

The Request must be submitted in writing, either as a hard copy or by email. Please answer all the questions. You can attach additional information as extra sheets or electronic documents. Please be specific. When answering the questions you do not need to repeat any information you have already given, but simply refer to an earlier answer or attached document.

Please return the completed form and supporting documentation to:

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

E-mail: fls.communities@forestryandland.gov.scot

We will confirm receipt of your Request within 5 working days and you will receive a formal acknowledgement letter within 15 working days to confirm whether your Request is valid or requesting further information. We may also ask you for more information during the assessment and evaluation process.

CATS: ASSET TRANSFER REQUEST FORM

This is an asset transfer request made under Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

SECTION 1: Information about the community transfer body making the request

1.1 Name of the community transfer body making the asset transfer request

Morvern Community Woodlands

1.2 Community transfer body address

This should be the registered address, if you have one.

Postal address:

Rhemore, Drimnin, Oban,

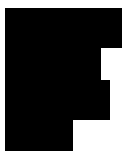
Postcode: PA80 5XZ

1.3 Contact details

Please provide the name and contact address to which correspondence in relation to this asset transfer request should be sent.

Contact name: Sam Firth

Postal address:



Postcode: [REDACTED]

Email: moverncommunitywoods@gmail.com

Telephone: [REDACTED]

CATS: Asset Transfer Request Form

☒ We agree that correspondence in relation to this asset transfer request may be sent by email to the email address given above. *(Please tick to indicate agreement)*

You can ask the Forestry and Land Scotland to stop sending correspondence by email, or change the email address, by telling us at any time, as long as 5 working days' notice is given.

1.4 Type of eligible community transfer body

Please select **one** option and mark with an “X” in the relevant box to confirm the type of community transfer body and its official number, if it has one:

- a Company ☒ and its company number is SC275782
- or
- a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) ☐ and its charity number is _____
- or
- a Community Benefit Society (BenCom), ☐ and its registered number is _____
- or
- Unincorporated organisation ☐ (no number)

Please attach a copy of the community transfer body’s constitution, articles of association or registered rules.

- If the organisation is an eligible community transfer body under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 go to **Section 2**.

1.5 If the organisation is **not** an eligible community transfer body under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015:

a) Has the organisation been individually designated as a community transfer body by the Scottish Ministers?

No ☐ Yes ☐

Please give the title and date of the designation order:

or b) Does the organisation fall within a class of bodies which has been designated as community transfer bodies by the Scottish Ministers?

No ☐ Yes ☐

If yes what class of bodies does it fall within?

Section 2: Information about the land and rights requested

(see CATS Guidance Section 1.2)

2.1 Please identify the land to which this asset transfer request relates.

You should provide a **grid reference** and attach a **map** clearly showing the boundaries of the land to which this asset transfer request. You should also provide any name by which the land is known, and you may also wish to provide additional description. You can contact your Forestry and Land Scotland [Region](#) office for assistance in providing a copy of the map.

Grid Reference (6 figure): NM665454

X (Easting) , Y (Northing): 166576 , 745439

Latitude , Longitude (decimal): 56.542782 , -5.7986526

Latitude , Longitude (degs, mins, secs): 56°32'34"N , 005°47'55"W

What3Words : reference.treaties.crisp

Address (near) :B849, Sruthan, Lochaline, Highland, Scotland, PA80 5AB, United Kingdom

Postcode (nearest) :PA80 5AB

Area in hectares: 95.92ha

Name and description of the land:

The land is not currently known by a specific name, but forms part of the Lochaline block of Fiunary Forest, part of the National Forest Estate. We propose to adopt the name 'Lochaline Community Forest' for this area. The land adjoins the village of Lochaline and is largely forestry plantation, first planted in the early 20th century and harvested on two cycles. Part has recently been clear felled, part is standing conifer, and a smaller area was planted with native broadleaves around 20 years ago. The land extends above the B897 Lochaline to Drimnin road. The land is on south-facing gently sloping ground at an altitude of between 50m and 100m above sea level. There are a few small burns running through the land. Before afforestation, this area was a mixture of pasture and hill ground, and has relatively good, fertile soils.

If your request is for a building, you should provide a street address and the Unique Property Reference Number ([UPRN](#)) if known.

CATS: Asset Transfer Request Form

Address:

UPRN (if known):

Section 3: Type of request, payment and conditions

(see CATS Guidance Section 1.4)

3.1 Please tick what type of request is being made:

- ☒ for **ownership** (under section 79(2)(a)) – go to **Section 3A**
- ☐ for **lease** (under section 79(2)(b)(i)) – go to **Section 3B**
- ☐ for other **rights** (section 79(2)(b)(ii)) – go to **Section 3C**

3A – Request for ownership

What price are you prepared to pay for the land requested (see CATS Guidance Section 2.2)?

Proposed price: £100,000. This requested discount of £450,000 accounts for the significant community benefit this site has the potential to bring as outlined below, the strong community desire for this project as evidenced in the Live Life Morvern Community Action Plan and Local Place Plan, the risks inherent in the undertaking for Morvern Community Woodlands and the level of voluntary time and investment that will be made and has already made into the project. Please see the attached best value assessment document for more detail. We are open to discussion on this matter.

Please attach a note setting out any other terms and conditions you wish to apply to the request.

3B – Request for lease

a) What is the length of lease you are requesting?

b) How much rent are you prepared to pay? (see CATS Guidance Section 2.2)
Please make clear whether this is per year or per month.

Proposed rent: £ per

Please attach a note setting out any other terms and conditions you wish to be included in the lease, or to apply to the request in any other way.

3C – Request for other rights

a) What are the rights you are requesting?

Vehicular access along adjacent forest roads to enable management access and timber harvesting. Contributory costs towards maintenance according to use

CATS: Asset Transfer Request Form

would be expected. Right to abstract water from burns running into the site for small scale agriculture if this is required – noting that this won't apply to burns where existing private water supplies are in place above the water catchments, for as long as those supplies are being used.

Shared fencing obligations around the perimeter of the site.

Do you propose to make any payment for these rights?

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

If yes, how much are you prepared to pay? Please make clear what period this would cover, for example per week, per month, per day?

Proposed payment: £ per

Please attach a note setting out any other terms and conditions you wish to apply to the request.

Section 4: Community Proposal

You may wish to refer to relevant sections in supporting documents.

4.1 Please set out the reasons for making the request and how the land or building will be used.

This should explain the objectives of your project, why there is a need for it, any development or changes you plan to make to the land or building, and any activities that will take place there.

It is the community's wish to bring this area of woodland into community ownership to be used as woodland crofts, community forest and community woodland for the long term sustainability, health and well-being of our community.

Our central objective is to create a community forest that provides long lasting social, economic and environmental benefits to the local community. We want to:

- 1) Give local people access to land to build their own homes, harvest timber and start land based enterprises
- 2) Enhance local opportunities for recreation and community engagement
- 3) Restore and create native woodlands and local rainforest
- 4) Reduce carbon emissions and food miles
- 5) Provide locally grown timber products using low-impact woodland management
- 6) Create more locally based jobs in forestry and woodland management
- 7) Reforge long-term intergenerational connections between the people of Morvern and the land they live on

The area for the purchase is adjacent to the largest and most economically diverse population centre on the peninsula, maximising its potential to have an impact on the local community.

We firmly believe this community forest will create a thriving, resilient, low carbon community that looks after its forests and woodland.

The Need:

The Morvern peninsula, particularly Lochaline, faces significant and interconnected social, economic, and environmental challenges. Demographically, the population is declining and ageing. The roll at Lochaline Primary School has fallen from 64 in the 1970s to just 8 in 2024, highlighting the strain on essential services and the difficulty in retaining young families.

Access to affordable housing and secure employment is limited. Although Morvern is rich in natural resources, much of the land is owned and managed externally, and the forestry,

despite covering over 5,000 hectares, offers little local employment. Young people struggle to find both housing and work opportunities, forcing many to leave the area.

There is also a loss of traditional crofting and land-based skills, and very limited opportunity for residents to engage with or benefit from woodland management. Community access to local forests for recreation or sustainable use is constrained, with many public paths overgrown, and little infrastructure to encourage outdoor activity.

Environmentally, the dominance of commercial conifer plantations has reduced biodiversity and compromised the landscape's potential for nature restoration. Deer pressure remains high, threatening regeneration efforts and the recovery of native woodland.

Morvern's isolation, with just one road in and out and limited public transport, further compounds these issues, making it difficult for residents to access services or seek employment elsewhere.

The community has a high number of strong local organisations such as Morvern Community Development Company, the Community Land Association managing the allotments, the award winning Gaelic Choir '*Burach*', The Community Association of Lochs and Sounds, The Watersports club and Social club and has a determined will to improve its prospects, it lacks access to the key asset needed to drive sustainable change: land. Without land to live on, work on, and care for, efforts to reverse depopulation, build resilience, and create a sustainable future will remain constrained. Land ownership represents a pathway to addressing these long-standing issues with locally driven, long-term solutions.

Access to woodland and forestry to grow food, supply timber and support businesses is essential for the economic development and environmental sustainability of the Morvern community. Simultaneously, there is conclusive evidence that the most effective form of land conservation is "when local communities play a central role, such as when they have substantial influence over decision making or when local institutions regulating tenure form a recognized part of governance." [Dawson et al, 2021, Ecology and Society 26(3):19]

Community ownership of this area would give people living in Morvern access to land through a variety of different mechanisms.

We would use this land to create a community forest consisting of crofts, amenity native woodlands, a path network and community supply of local timber and firewood. We aim to use small-scale continuous cover forestry wherever possible and incorporate rainforest restoration in parts of the area.

Woodland crofts would be home to numerous local woodland based businesses integrated with native woodland creation and management. Crofters would have the opportunities to build homes on their crofts alleviating the acute local housing shortage. The proposal also incorporates woodland education and recreation.

Amenity woodlands would provide a training ground for skills sharing relating to woodland restoration and management as well as a meeting space and recreational area within walking distance of the village of Lochaline.

This is a rare chance to reverse decline through an ambitious, locally-led, and environmentally sound development capturing the dynamism of the young people wishing to return and stay here. It will empower the community to shape its own future - rooted in the land, connected to its culture, and sustainable for generations to come.

[Dawson, N. M., B. Coolsaet, E. J. Sterling, R. Loveridge, N. D. Gross-Camp, S. Wongbusarakum, K. K. Sangha, L. M. Scherl, H. Phuong Phan, N. Zafra-Calvo, W. G. Lavey, P. Byakagaba, C. J. Idrobo, A. Chenet, N. J. Bennett, S. Mansourian, and F. J. Rosado-May. 2021. The role of Indigenous peoples and local communities in effective and equitable conservation. *Ecology and Society* 26(3):19. <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-12625-260319>]

4.2 Benefits of the proposal

Please set out the benefits that you consider will arise if the request is agreed to (see CATS Guidance Section 3.2). This section should explain how the project will benefit your community, and others.

Please refer to the guidance on how the relevant authority will consider the benefits of a request.

Creating crofts, woodlots and community owned woodland in Morvern next to the village of Lochaline will have multiple benefits, socially, economically and environmentally in the following ways:

Part A: Financial Benefits

Creating crofts, woodlots and a community-owned woodland in Morvern, adjacent to Lochaline village, will yield a substantial financial return, directly and indirectly:

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.

Woodlots

Small-scale woodlots differ from industrial forestry, offering localised benefits through firewood, timber, crafts and biomass. Around 6,255 people are engaged in such activities across Scotland, generating £69.8 million/year. These woodlots promote diversified income and community resilience, estimated at £20,000–£30,000 over 5 years in Morvern.

Job Creation

Managing and developing the crofts and community owned woodland will create up to three part time community sector jobs (e.g. project manager/administrator/forester) valued at £188,000 over five years. These roles cover timber management, training, woodland access, and community liaison. Although the cash flow forecast shows these tailing off from core management activities it is expected these would become self-sustaining through income from future projects on the site.

Apprenticeships

Annual apprenticeships in woodland management, forestry, and community leadership will provide employment and upskilling opportunities. These are estimated to bring £24,000/year in value by Year 5.

Volunteering

Volunteer work is embedded in the Morvern community. Based on Achnaha's experience, manual volunteer input will add approx £6,000 p/a over 5 years. Specialist volunteer time (e.g. ecologists, foresters) is valued at £25,000 over five years, supporting governance, training and delivery.

Third Sector Investment

Ownership enables access to £5,000–£50,000/year from sources such as the Glensanda Community Fund, Ardtornish Estate Fund, and the Pebble Trust. MCW has prior experience securing such funding.

Total 5-Year Financial Benefit Estimate:

Low Range: £25,000 | High Range: £250,000 | Median: £137,000

Part B: Quantitative Outcomes within first five years

- 6–8 crofts established
- 1–3 new part-time or full-time jobs created
- 1–2 annual apprenticeships by Year 3
- £25,000–£50,000/year in external funding leveraged
- 96 ha of forest under sustainable, community-led management
- Regular volunteer engagement through work parties (minimum 5 per year)
- Woodlot area created and leased to locals
- Path network re-established and/or created

Part C: Qualitative Outcomes

Community Resilience & Circular Economy

Woodland crofts and woodlots will support food and fuel security. Croft business plans include food production and woodland management, helping the village become less reliant on imported goods. Timber management will support firewood and local construction, with collaboration from local businesses like Savary Sawmill and Jamie Boulton Designs.

Retention of Young People

High local demand for crofts comes from young people with Morvern ties. Crofts enable them to remain or return, supporting a mixed-age community and the sustainability of Lochaline Primary School - an essential local employer and hub.

Cultural Heritage

Morvern currently has only 3 crofts which is significantly lower than surrounding areas. The project reconnects the community with its land-based heritage, repopulating previously cleared land and reviving small-scale stewardship.

Health and Wellbeing

The new woodland, accessible from the village, will enable year-round recreation. Improved path networks will support physical activity for all ages, including elderly residents and young people, enhancing both mental and physical health.

Education

The proximity of the woodland will reduce reliance on transport and expand outdoor education at the school. Future infrastructure will allow flexible and frequent use, with crofters also offering forest school sessions and woodland restoration and management training.

Community Spaces

The woodland will provide space for arts, events and gatherings, expanding on the success of Achnaha, which has hosted groups including RSPB, Ewan's Room, Scouts and SRUC.

Environmental Impact

The site lies within a nationally significant rainforest restoration zone. With adjacent remnants of species-rich woodland, the plan is to transition from clearfell to continuous cover forestry, increasing biodiversity, carbon storage, and forest resilience. This will reduce landscape scarring visible from the Sound of Mull and expand on restoration already underway on nearby estates.

Public Sector Cost Savings

Improved access to outdoor spaces will support physical and mental wellbeing, reducing demand on health services. Croft development reduces local authority housing burden, and local produce and fuel reduce transport reliance. School transport savings and enhanced service provision from a retained youth population also support public sector value.

Alignment with National and Local Outcomes

Scottish Government National Outcomes

This project supports multiple National Outcomes of the Scottish Government:

- We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy – The project supports entrepreneurship through croft-based enterprises, woodlot businesses, and local supply chains, fostering sustainable economic development and job creation.
- We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe – The community has led this project from the start, and its ownership of the forest will strengthen local control and resilience while deepening community cohesion.
- We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society – Training opportunities in forestry, land management and community leadership will build local capacity and provide lifelong learning opportunities.
- We are healthy and active – Proximity to woodland paths and recreation will increase active lifestyles, mental health, and access to nature.
- We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment – Through rainforest regeneration and continuous cover forestry, the project will enhance biodiversity and reduce environmental degradation.
- We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally – By placing land and resources into community hands, the project empowers local people to build secure livelihoods and reduce rural inequality.

Highland Council Strategic Priorities

The project also aligns with Highland Council's 5-year strategic priorities:

- A Fair and Caring Highland – The project will improve quality of life and opportunity by addressing rural inequality, providing jobs, homes, and skills training.
- Resilient and Sustainable Communities – By enabling local control of natural resources and

promoting circular economy models, the project will build resilience to social, environmental and economic shocks.

- Accessible and Sustainable Highland Homes – Crofting development will enable construction of low-impact and affordable homes, meeting local housing needs.
- A Sustainable Highland Environment – The forest will be managed to promote biodiversity, restore native woodlands, and model low-carbon rural land stewardship.

A more detailed version of this best value assessment is provided as an appendix at the end of this application.

4.3 Restrictions on use of the land

If there are any restrictions on the use or development of the land, please explain how your project will comply with these. Your Forestry and Land Scotland [Region](#) office can provide assistance in identifying any restrictions and how to comply with them.

Restrictions might include, amongst others, environmental designations such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), heritage designations such as listed building status, controls on contaminated land or planning restrictions.

Referring to the feasibility report: There are no environmental or landscape designations pertinent to the area. There are no scheduled ancient monuments within the area and several historic environment records. None of the area is listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory.

The households drawing water from the woodland have been regularly consulted throughout the feasibility study and in preparation for this application. Their catchment areas have either been excluded from the purchase area or have been mapped out of the potential woodland croft areas. The catchment areas within the community forest will be managed in partnership with the relevant households and will be focus areas for rainforest restoration.

We are aware there is asbestos in buildings ruins on the RSPB tree nursery site which will need to be removed before further development.

4.4 Negative consequences

What negative consequences (if any) may occur if your request is agreed to? How would you propose to minimise these?

You should consider any potential negative consequences for the local economy, environment, or any group of people, and explain how you could reduce these.

| Negative impact | Mitigation |
|-----------------|------------|
|-----------------|------------|

| | |
|---|--|
| <i>Local economy</i> | |
| None, only positive | |
| | |
| <i>Environment</i> | |
| More human activity on site might disturb wildlife. | Mixed land use activity will create more diversity. Option to advise against keeping cats on woodland crofts, but dogs will help discourage deer from using the area, improving the chance of success for native woodland regeneration. |
| | |
| <i>Amenity Values</i> | |
| Neglect of woodland crofts | MCW is proposing a fair and transparent system for allocating woodland crofts, and a strong system of governance to manage the tenancies, supported by the Crofting Commission. Oversight of woodland croft management plans by Scottish Forestry. Leases terminated if necessary. There will be the option for MCW volunteers to support woodland crofters where they are creating native woodland or additional wildlife habitat. MCW building a culture of mutual support. |
| | |
| <i>Neighbours</i> | |
| Water supplies | No additional abstraction of water from burns already supplying water to households. Native woodland restoration within riparian areas and water supply catchment areas. |
| Disturbance | Development areas being kept away from existing homes. Woodland establishment to screen developments. |
| | |
| <i>Landscape</i> | |
| Woodland croft development | Homes, work yards, storage units and other structures will be well-screened by woodland. |
| | |
| Volunteer burn out | Using grants (initially) and then income generated from the project to pay for staff to manage and administer the project. |

4.5 Capacity to deliver

Please show how your organisation will be able to manage the project and achieve your objectives.

This could include the skills and experience of members of the organisation, any track record of previous projects, whether you intend to use professional advisers, etc.

Morvern Community Woodlands was established in 2004 and since then have taken forward a number of successful local projects. In 2014, we acquired 8ha of land at Achnaha Community Woodland, which has become a well-loved and very well used area. We maintain a small shelter, used by the local primary school and nursery groups and an area of land on the foreshore used for group events. We have built a path network through the woods, which now takes in the majority of the woodland area. We undertake regular volunteer maintenance days in the woods along with a number of annual events and this supports the organisation financially.

The woodland is well used and very popular. It is hired out for events often and used by other organisations. The main feedback we get is a lack of pedestrian and cycle access to the village.

MCW currently has no staff employed on the project and all work to date has been carried out by volunteers. However, we see the creation of paid staff roles as essential to the project and envisage eventually having two members of staff managing the site and its development.

Morvern Community Development Company which has run a number of large scale infrastructure projects including Barr Hydro scheme are key partners in the project lending support and expertise.

We currently have a range of experienced individuals driving our project.

The current chair of MCW is Calum Montgomery who grew up locally and is an electrician. Calum also has a range of land-based skills and many connections in the local community. The current secretary is Ellen Bird who is the project manager for RSPB's Saving Morvern's Rainforest project. The current treasurer is Clara Montgomery who is the conservation manager for Ardtornish Estate. The current trustees are Alasdair Firth, who is a consultant ecologist and crofter with a wide range of experience of marine and land management issues, Jamie Boulton who runs a local jewelry design business and is an experienced deer stalker, Lisa Robertson who is a musician and composer and Helen Woolston who is a tree nursery manager and animator. The majority of the trustees grew up locally and all live and work in the local area. Other key individuals involved are Sam Firth, a crofter and film-maker who is the chair of the steering group and is coordinating the CWA's work on the feasibility study and business plan, Suzanne Pender, MCDC operations manager, Henry Dobson, Ardtornish Estate land manager (previously Woodland Trust and FLS), Minty MacKay, crofter, Roberto Nichitta, distillery worker and Mark Lawrence, marine salvage project manager.

Although the community of Morvern is small, we have a huge range of skills. Within the trustees and the steering group experience includes project design, fundraising, business and financial management, community consultation, infrastructure and construction, land management, ecology, forestry and agriculture.

Section 5: Level and nature of support

5.1 Please provide details of the level and nature of support for the request from your community and, if relevant, from others (see CATS Guidance Section 3.2)

You should describe the community your body represents and include information on the proportion of your community who are involved with the request, how you have engaged with your community beyond the members of your organisation and what their response has been.

You should also show how you have engaged with any other communities that may be affected by your proposals.

Morvern Community Woodlands (MCW) represents the community of Morvern (as defined by postcode), a remote peninsula in the West Highlands with a population of around 320. The main population areas are in Lochaline (approx. 150) and in Drimnin (approx. 40).

MCW is a well-established, locally rooted charity with **123 members** representing a significant proportion of the local population and **780 followers on Facebook**. The proposal to bring Lochaline Community Forest into community ownership is the result of years of local engagement and planning.

Initial public consultation took place as early as **2015**, where access to land, housing, and employment emerged as long-term community concerns. A steering group was formed then between Morvern Community Woodlands and Morvern Community Development company called Future Forests and the two organisations have been discussing partnerships on the project ever since. These consultations were formally captured in the **Live Life Morvern Community Action Plan (2022)**, which was developed through extensive community engagement. Key priorities identified included affordable housing, protecting Morvern's rainforest, 21st century crofts, apprenticeship schemes, walking routes, and accessible spaces for young people—all of which this project helps to address.

In **2023**, MCW hosted a public meeting specifically for those interested in crofts. **31 people attended**, and the response was very positive. We invited expressions of interest and received **17 business proposals**, 15 from local residents. This demonstrated a clear appetite for crofting as a route to employment, housing, and sustainable land use.

As part of the **feasibility study** delivered by the **Community Woodlands Association** and funded by the **Community Regeneration Fund**, further community engagement was undertaken in **2025**. A public consultation event hosted by CWA was attended by **21 people**, with an additional 8 written submissions received. Support for the proposals was enthusiastic and well informed.

In parallel, the proposal was also **consulted upon as part of the Morvern Local Place Plan**. Of the **70 responses received through the online consultation**, support for the community forest and croft

development was overwhelmingly positive. Only two objections were submitted, both from non-residents.

We also conducted **direct consultation with all immediate neighbours** of the forest site, and engaged with local businesses including **Savary Sawmill** and a **local firewood supplier**, both of whom expressed support for community involvement in local timber production.

The project is formally supported by **Morvern Community Council, Morvern Community Development Company (MCDC), Savary Sawmill** and **Ardtornish Estate**, who have all contributed to shaping the proposals through a collaborative project steering group.

Engagement has been broad and inclusive, reaching far beyond MCW membership and ensuring that the proposal reflects the priorities, values, and vision of the wider community. This support underlines a shared desire to create sustainable livelihoods, access to land, and a more resilient local economy through community ownership of Lochaline Community Forest.

Section 6: Funding

Please outline how you propose to fund the price or rent you are prepared to pay for the land, and your proposed use of the land

(see CATS Guidance Section 1.5)

You should show your calculations of the costs associated with the transfer of the land or building and your future use of it, including any redevelopment, ongoing maintenance and the costs of your activities. All proposed income and investment should be identified, including volunteering and donations. If you intend to apply for grants or loans you should demonstrate that your proposals are eligible for the relevant scheme, according to the guidance available for applicants.

Please refer to the cashflow attached.

We have had Stage 1 Scottish Land Funding and had our application for Stage 2 Scottish Land Funding checked. The only eligibility concerns were related to timescales within this fund and ability to complete the sale..

Signature

Two office-bearers (board members, charity trustees or committee members) of the community transfer body must sign the form. They must provide their full names and home addresses for the purposes of prevention and detection of fraud.

This form and supporting documents will be made available online for any interested person to read and comment on. Personal information will be redacted before the form is made available.

We, the undersigned on behalf of the community transfer body as noted at section 1, make an asset transfer request as specified in this form.

We declare that the information provided in this form and any accompanying documents is accurate to the best of our knowledge.

- | | | |
|----|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | Name | Calum Montgomery |
| | Address | <div></div> |
| | Date | 1st August 2025 |
| | Position | Chair of Morvern Community Woodlands |
| | Signature | |
| 2. | Name | Sam Firth |
| | Address | <div></div> |
| | Date | 1st August |
| | Position | Company Secretary |
| | Signature | |

Checklist of accompanying documents

To check that nothing is missed, please list any documents which you are submitting to accompany this form.

Section 1 – you **must** attach your organisation’s constitution, articles of association or registered rules

Title of document attached: Morvern-aoa-approved

Section 2 – any maps, drawings or description of the land requested

Documents attached: Please see attached feasibility study and business plan.

Section 3 – note of any terms and conditions that are to apply to the request

Documents attached: to follow

Section 4 – about your proposals, their benefits, any restrictions on the land or potential negative consequences, and your organisation’s capacity to deliver.

Documents attached: Please see feasibility study and business plan.

Section 5 – evidence of community support

Documents attached: Please see letters of support from Morvern Community Council, Morvern Community Development Company, Ardtornish Estate and local councilor Sarah Thanet. There is also evidence within feasibility study relating to community consultations and the Local Place Plan Consultation.

Section 6 – funding

Documents attached: Please see cash flow forecast and business plan.

List of Appendices

Lochaline Community Forest Feasibility Study by Community Woodlands Association
Lochaline Community Forest Business plan by MCW and CWA
Lochaline Community Forest Cashflow
Letter of Support from Morvern Community Council
Letter of Support from Morvern Community Development Company
Letter of Support from Ardtornish Estate
Letter of Support from Sarah Thanet Local Counsellor
Letter of Support Savory Sawmill

Detailed Best Value Assessment

Appendix: Detailed Best Value Assessment

Detailed Best Value Assessment

Lochaline Community Forest Community Asset Transfer

Financial benefits

Jobs & Income

Crofts

The Crofting Commission's report on [The Value of Crofting](#) estimates that crofting adds £588 million GVA/year to the Scottish economy, estimating that the direct economic impact from crofting is £29,000 GVA/year, with additional direct supply chain benefits from investment in crofts totalling £102,000 GVA/year. The additional economic impact being from non-crofting employment, tourism and housing. These figures are based on the [Economic conditions of crofting: survey 2019 to 2022](#) which gives an average croft income of £4,538/year.

Crofting income is variable, but there is potential for new crofts to create higher than average income, for example, where a crofter is running a new business from their croft, which is what we are expecting with this project and given the business plans we have received. If we accept Biggar Economic's use of the average croft income and use the number of registered crofters, the assumptions is:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| · Average croft income | £4,538/year |
| · Number of registered crofters | 14,731 |
| · Crofting activity | |
| · GVA direct impacts | £29,000,000 GVA per year |
| · GVA direct and supply chain impact | £102,200,000 GVA per year |

The economic value per registered crofter is therefore:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| · GVA direct impacts only | £1,969 GVA per croft/year |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|

CATS: Asset Transfer Request Form

· GVA direct and supply chain impact £6,938 GVA per croft/year

If we take the this over 5 years, using a discount rate of 3.5% HM Treasury (2020) Green Book: appraisal and evaluation in central government and assume the crofts are established by Year 2, this gives an NPV per croft over 5 years of £7,231 to £25,483.

| Year | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NPV |
|-------------------------|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|
| Direct | | £1,969 | £1,969 | £1,969 | £1,969 | £7,231 |
| Direct and supply chain | | £6,938 | £6,938 | £6,938 | £6,938 | £25,483 |

By creating 6-8 crofts our expectation is that the direct and indirect GVA of the crofts alone will be between £152,898 to £204,000.

New site-wide third sector jobs

As these will be community-managed crofts and woodlots an additional job/jobs of administrator/forester will be created, managing and administering the crofts and the accompanying community woodland for the use of the local community and visitors to the peninsula.

This role or roles would include managing areas of standing timber on the site on behalf of the community on a much more localised level so that small scale extraction can be undertaken, enabling distribution to individual households and facilitating non-timber related business to buy timber for firewood and building materials. This will involve more administrative time than current forestry practices on the site allow for.

The administrator/forester will also be responsible for delivering much more intensively focussed woodland management than is currently delivered to create, regenerate and expand on existing native woodland on the site as part of a programmer to restore and regenerate temperate Scottish rainforest on the peninsula, including the coordination of skills sharing and training. The community owned woodland area will be used as a training ground for the new crofters as well as an educational base on rainforest recovery for local schools and visitors.

The newly created job roles will also include community consultation, development and fundraising and will be responsible for bringing in both public and private funds to further develop the site and projects within it, including delivering access and other infrastructure support to the crofts, affordable housing or temporary housing structures and other development within the woodland as well as raising funds for the jobs themselves.

We envisage within 5 years the project will support 1 to 2 full time posts initially using funds from the community hydro scheme and eventually self-supporting.

| Year | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | TOTAL |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------|
| Investment in new additional jobs | 8820 | 40995 | 45441 | 46350 | 26087 | 188,291 |

Apprenticeships

Our aspiration is to create annual apprenticeships in forestry, woodland management, and community development and leadership to accompany the third sector jobs that we will be creating. These will come at a cost, which we would hope to raise through grant funding, but there will be a social and economic benefit to the local community that far outweighs this. As a community surrounded by forestry and woodland creating a project to give access to land it is critical that there are forestry and woodland skills within the community - particularly in low impact, small scale extraction.

We estimate that this will bring an additional value to the community in jobs of at least £24k a year by year 5 of the project.

Volunteer Labour

Morvern is a particularly active community in terms of volunteering. Our existing community woodland at Achnaha has a minimum of 5 work party days a year attracting on average 10 people for 3-6 hours. As this community woodland will be larger and in closer proximity to the village we envisage attracting at least this level of in-kind manual labour from the community.

| Year | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | TOTAL |
|--------------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Volunteer labour @£15 per hour | £750 | £1000 | £1250 | £1500 | £1500 | £6000 |

There is a wealth of experience in native woodland ecology and management, forestry and woodworking experience on the peninsula (Gordon French, Donald and Maggie Kennedy, Steve Hardy, Alasdair Firth, Henry Dobson, John Hodgson, Clara Montgomery, Isabel Isherwood, George Beckett) along with people with high levels of project management and community development experience who are prepared to give their time and have already contributed a great deal. We envisage the project will generate substantial volunteer input from these specialists giving additional GVA to the project through education, training and involvement overseeing the project as part of a steering group. Some of these hours may also be contributed by employers such as Ardtornish Estate and the RSPB. (This is in addition to the in-kind labour of the crofters accounted for in the crofting GVA.)

| Year | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | TOTAL |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| Specialist volunteer input @ £250 p/d | £5000 | £5000 | £5000 | £5000 | £5000 | £25,000 |

In addition to this community ownership will enable significant income from local and national NGO funds such as the Glensanda Community Fund (administered by Morvern Community Trust), Ardtornish Estate Community Fund and the Pebble Trust to be invested into the development of this site. Morvern Community Woodlands has already received funds in this way and the trustees have a relationship with the fund administrators. We believe this may be worth anything between £5,000- £50,000 per year, particularly in the first few years of ownership.

Eventually MCW and the local community would like to see the tree nursery that is currently being set up on the site by the RSPB managed and run or leased by the local community and envisage this providing extra employment on a full or part time basis. The RSPB currently have funding to manage the site for the next 5 years and are keen that, in the longer term, the site is taken on and managed by the local community.

We also expect to work with local businesses such as Savary Sawmill and Jamie Boulton Designs to further develop the local economy.

Based on the CATS best value guidance through creating crofts, community management jobs, volunteer time and Third sector funding outlined above the enhancement that community ownership of this area could generate is substantial. We have calculated that the median investment over the first 5 years of community ownership could be:

| | Median | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Crofts GVA | 178,381 | |
| Woodlots GVA | 25,000 | |
| Project Management job creation | 188,000 | |
| Apprenticeship schemes GVA | 24,000 | |
| Unskilled voluntary time | 24,000 | (in kind) |
| Specialist volunteer input | 25,000 | (in kind) |
| Third sector investment | 137,000 | |
| <u>TOTAL</u> | £601,381 | |

This is before adding the additional social, health and well being benefits and not including the costs of restocking, core path maintenance, fence removal and improvements which the Community Woodlands Association have calculated as being approx. £90,000.

Social Benefits

In addition to jobs and income this project has the potential to have multiple social benefits outlined below:

Community Resilience and Circular economy

Food

The village of Lochaline has a small shop. Most produce is brought in from outside of the peninsula (i.e. milk, eggs, fruit and vegetables) making the community reliant on national and international food distribution and infrastructure. Most of the croft business plans already submitted to us from local residents include small scale food production either for household use or for sale in the local community alongside woodland management and creation.

Fuel & Timber

There is currently no formal mechanism for individual households to buy timber for building or for firewood production. Community owned forest with standing timber would allow Morvern Community Woodlands to work with the local sawmill and others to create a number of different mechanisms for local people to buy/process firewood and timber for multiple purposes.

Woodlots

Small-scale, community-managed woodlots offer significant economic benefits that differ fundamentally from large-scale commercial forestry. While industrial plantations prioritize high-volume, export-oriented timber production—often with long rotations and limited local processing—community woodlots emphasize local supply chains, multiple land uses, and economic resilience.

While commercial forestry contributes significantly to the economy, with timber and woodfuel market benefits estimated at £441 million annually in the UK, these operations often have limited local economic integration. Large-scale plantations may lead to reduced biodiversity and fewer local employment opportunities due to mechanization and centralized processing.:

Community-managed woodlots, though smaller in scale, provide diversified economic benefits, enhance local employment, and contribute to ecosystem services. Their focus on local engagement and sustainability positions them as valuable assets for rural economic development and environmental stewardship.

Community woodlots facilitate the production of value-added goods such as furniture, crafts, and biomass fuel, enhancing local economies and retaining wealth within the community.

Retention of Young People

There is a high level of interest in woodland crofts from young people in the community who have either grown up on the peninsula or who have a connection to the area. A sustainable community is one with a mix of people of different ages particularly those who are retired and of working age. We strongly believe giving young people access to land is a way of ensuring this mix for the foreseeable future.

Local Heritage

Crofting is an important part of the local heritage and yet there are only five crofts on the Morvern peninsula compared with 793 in Argyll and Bute (including 123 on the neighbouring Isle of Mull). Morvern therefore has a relatively much smaller number of crofts than the rest of the Highlands and Islands. A vision for the project is of repopulating the peninsula and reconnecting people to a land that was once tended but suffered a high level of depopulation during the clearances.

There is historic evidence throughout the peninsula of small-scale land holding and farming including on this site and we would like to reconnect with this heritage.

Health & Well-being

People do use the forestry tracks for recreation but it is difficult to find circular trails and hard to anticipate when they are being heavily used by large vehicles. There was a path network around the village of Lochaline but FLS have not been in a position to maintain this for a few years now. Many of these paths were created by local people through forestry that has now been clear-felled, making the paths unusable.

The existing community woodlands in Morvern, although small, are very well used. For most people on the peninsula visiting necessitates having access to a private vehicle. Having a much larger community woodland with a well-maintained path network within walking distance of the village of Lochaline would open up access to recreational activities in the woodland for a much larger proportion of the population. Children and young people would be able to use the woods with depending on lifts. With the creation of appropriate paths and access, there are several elderly people in the village using mobility scooters who would be able to visit and spend time in the woodland. A path network would be created to connect the existing small community woodland at Achnaha with Lochaline village, making access by bicycle much safer.

Some of the business plans from the prospective crofters include health and well-being related to woodland as part of their planned activities.

Housing

The creation of new jobs as a result of investment by the Lochaline Quartz Sand, the RSPB, Ardtornish and Drimnin Estates, NcNean Distillery, CAOLAS and MCDC has made a marked difference to the local community over the last few years but it has also put pressure on local housing.

The creation of crofts will enable many people to build houses who might not have access to land to do so otherwise, whilst croft housing grants provide financial support and incentive for crofters to build. Giving people access to land and timber also opens up possibilities for innovative forms of mobile and off grid housing . These opportunities are supported by many of the younger members of the community.

Morvern community woodlands would envisage creating a site specifically for those who want to build and live in “Tiny Homes” in the first five years of ownership of the site.

Skills development and training

The creation of crofts adjacent with a community woodland will require crofters and those with access to woodlots to gain skills in woodland regeneration and forestry management. There are already several older members of the community who have offered to share their skills and knowledge in these areas to the crofters.

Education

Having a community woodland close to the village will open up possibilities for an educational space similar to the shelter built at Achnaha wood which is now twenty years old. The primary and nursery schools both use the shelter extensively (with the nursery delivering all classes in the woodland for a three month period while the school was being refurbished). Morvern Community Woodlands also provided a Forest School for several years after the purchase of Achnaha.

A new woodland educational space within walking distance of the school would allow for much more flexible use of woodlands and forest by the school and enhance the school’s relationship with local woodlands and nature.

Some of the business plans from prospective crofters have also included forest school provision.

Community spaces

A community woodland with new usable spaces that links the existing community woods to the village can only enhance the use of the woods as a community space for theatre, arts projects, community meetings and activities which Achnaha woodland has a strong track record in. The current community woodlands has been used by many different organisations over the years to host events including Ewan's Room, RSPB, Raleigh International, UHI, the Scouts and SRUC. We envisage this increasing with a larger community woodlands more easily accessible from the village of Lochaline, and from Mull and Ardnamurchan.

Environmental Benefits

Rainforest Restoration

The Morvern peninsula has internationally significant sites for the Scottish Rainforest. The hazelwood rainforest along the west coast of Morvern is a particularly unique habitat, with some of the most biodiverse native woodlands (especially in terms of rainforest species indicators) that can be found in Scotland.

Morvern is one of only a handful of Scotland's key priority areas for landscape scale rainforest restoration and significant funding has been directed towards the peninsula as a result. It has been evidenced that the most successful conservation projects involve a high level of community involvement, stewardship and ownership.

The two major estates on the peninsula are actively involved in rainforest restoration and it is a high priority for the local community.

Lochaline Community Forest could, and should, play an integral part in the national campaign to restore Scotland's rainforest as a training ground for rainforest education, a test site for native woodland regeneration and rainforest creation and an exemplar of a community actively involved in the protection of its own local landscape.

Communities and Conservation

This Community Forest will connect the local community living on the peninsula with native woodland on multiple levels. The households allocated crofts will play an active role in woodland creation. Local people will have access to native woodland (with resident red squirrels) to walk in and be able to watch and play an active role in the creation and maintenance of the woodland through membership of Morvern Community Woodlands, involvement in the committee or attending woodland events.

Reducing Food and Fuel/Timber Transportation

This project will also help encourage people to buy locally, use local wood for fuel and timber.

As a result of conversion from a clearfell model to a smaller-scale continuous cover forestry model, impacts on the landscape from forestry will be significantly reduced. The project will create an area that blends the remainder of the National Forest Estate with the neighbouring village and farmland, rather than creating sharp, stark boundaries. This will be particularly evident when viewed from the Lochaline - Fishnish ferry or from the sound of Mull. Currently forestry clearfell has a major detrimental impact on the area.

A fragment of species-rich rainforest exists immediately adjacent to the proposed area (specifically on the southern edge of Lot 3) and a project to expand from this area is part of the long-term proposal for woodland management.

Carbon Capture

Our aim for the entire site we are purchasing is to use a slower, continuous cover forestry (CCF) transition from non-native conifers to native woodland. This would offer carbon benefits by avoiding the large, immediate emissions associated with clear-felling. By maintaining canopy cover and forest structure, this approach retains more standing biomass and soil carbon, reduces disturbance to soils and hydrology, and allows carbon sequestration and storage to continue during the transition. A CCF approach would support both climate mitigation and biodiversity enhancement objectives while building long-term forest resilience.

Public Sector Cost Savings

Strong links have been evidenced between access to outdoor spaces and mental health.

Giving the local community ownership of this woodland will improve access and create a number of land based jobs where people are working in and with nature. This will have an impact on the fitness and well-being of the local community saving the public health funds.

The promotion of locally grown produce and woodland skills will also have positive health benefits for the local community.

The local mental health charity Ewen's Room already use Achnaha woods and a community forest would provide the opportunity for an expansion of these activities.

The creation of crofts usually results in the creation of more housing, saving local authorities administrative costs in affordable housing provision.

The local primary school currently need to use a mini-bus service to visit the existing community woodlands for woodland education and play and would not need to do this.

Retaining and attracting young people to the area may have many positive benefits in years to come in the provision of key services in the community relating to the health and welfare of an aging population.

Outcomes - qualitative Improved community cohesion; enhanced local services etc.

The Lochaline Community Forest project will generate a wide range of positive social and cultural impacts, contributing to a stronger, more connected, and more resilient community in Morvern.

Improved Community Cohesion

The creation of woodland crofts and other community-led uses of the forest will help attract and retain residents from a wider age range, contributing to a **more mixed and balanced population**. By offering affordable housing and viable livelihoods—particularly for working-age adults and families—the project will counter rural depopulation and isolation. Planned developments such as shared workspace, crofter

training, and outdoor gathering areas will provide **social spaces** for young people, families, and older residents to meet, learn, and collaborate—fostering deeper **intergenerational connection and cohesion**.

Retention of Young People

Access to land and opportunity is a critical factor in enabling young people to stay. By giving young people a reason to remain or return, the project will support the long-term **viability of Lochaline Primary School**—a vital employer, community hub, and key to attracting and retaining families on the peninsula.

Enhanced Local Services

The forest's proximity and accessibility will expand opportunities for **outdoor learning and woodland education**, especially for Lochaline Primary School. This will support both formal curriculum activities and wider wellbeing for children and young people.

A More Skilled Community

Crofters and community members will gain **practical and land-based skills** through forestry, food production, and small enterprise. Training, apprenticeships, and informal volunteering will enable **skills sharing between generations**, strengthening local leadership and increasing community confidence and capability.

A More Resilient Community

The forest will contribute to a **circular economy**, offering local sources of fuel and food, and retaining value within the community. This reduces dependence on external supply chains and builds long-term **self-sufficiency**. By offering real opportunities to live and work on the land, the project will help to **retain working-age residents**, support families, and increase local economic resilience.

Outcomes Aligned with Scottish National and Local Government Outcomes

The Lochaline Community Forest project is a model of community-led development that supports several of Scotland's National Outcomes:

We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy.

The project will stimulate local entrepreneurship through woodland crofts, sustainable forestry, and the development of off-grid holiday accommodation. These activities promote low-carbon rural enterprise, create employment, and generate income within an economically fragile area. By supporting land-based skills and local supply chains, the forest will contribute to a greener, more inclusive economy.

We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.

The project has been developed by and for the Morvern community. Extensive consultation, feasibility planning, and local participation have shaped the vision. Community ownership of the land will give local people real control over their future, building capacity, empowerment, and long-term resilience.

We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society.

The forest will be a platform for learning and training—supporting crofters, apprentices, volunteers, and schoolchildren. It will foster intergenerational knowledge-sharing, offer pathways to employment, and increase land-based skills across the community.

We are healthy and active.

The forest will provide access to walking routes, outdoor learning, and social spaces—encouraging physical activity, wellbeing, and social inclusion in a safe, natural environment.

We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment.

The shift from commercial forestry to continuous cover forestry and rainforest regeneration represents a bold commitment to biodiversity, carbon storage, and nature recovery. The community will lead efforts to restore native woodland ecosystems and build a model for environmental stewardship.

We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally.

Through land ownership, affordable crofting opportunities, and community governance, this project represents a meaningful redistribution of power and resources. It will help address rural inequalities by creating affordable places to live and work.

Alignment with Highland Council Strategic Priorities

The project also supports the priorities of Highland Council's 5-year strategy:

A Fair and Caring Highland – by improving the quality of life for residents through better access to housing, work, and outdoor space.

Resilient and Sustainable Communities – by enabling local economic activity, skills development, and environmental regeneration.

Accessible and Sustainable Highland Homes – by delivering woodland crofts that provide affordable homes and land for young people and families.

A Sustainable Highland Environment – by supporting rewilding, low-carbon forestry, and community-led climate action.

Lochaline Community Forest embodies a place-based, community-driven approach to land use that supports national and local ambitions for a fairer, greener, and more resilient Scotland.