



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
231 Corstorphine Road
Edinburgh
EH12 7AT

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

Heart of Argyll Wildlife Organisation

1.2 Community transfer body address

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

Postal address: Crown House, Ford, Lochgilphead, Argyll

Postcode: PA31 8RH

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: Pete Creech

Postal address:

Postcode: PA31 8RH

Email: info@heartofargyllwildlife.org

Telephone:

✓ 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 _____
- or**
- a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) and its charity number SC047167 _____
- 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: NR 79677 91849

Area in hectares: 0.52

Name and description of the land: Barrandaimh

Wet meadow/scrub, small area of hard standing for parking of up to 10 vehicles.

(Site Map in supporting information)

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

Address: Barrandaimh, Bellanoch, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8SN

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: £99,384.00
 Based on cost of employing a development worker for 3 years to access higher levels of funding, increase community engagement and seek new sources of unreserved revenue.
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?

Notification of closure of access track/right to install additional passing place on track and inheritable right of access. Verge maintenance by FLS for length of track beyond that which we have responsibility for, that allows pedestrian access to viewpoint.

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 We are not prepared to pay as we maintain remaining stretch of access track.

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.

We intend to further develop the wildlife ranger and environmental interpretation, education and information centre and community space created in 2017. We believe the social enterprise model we have adopted represents the way forward for this vital Ranger Service resource, much diminished by austerity cuts and the economic effects of the pandemic. Those individuals, community groups, schools, HE/FE students, tourists and national institutions making use of this resource over the past 5 years amply demonstrate the need for what we aim to provide.

Ownership will underwrite the higher-level funding applications the organisation needs in order for it to be able to match its capacity to the increasing demand for its services. The asset's value will be reflected in our balance sheets, enabling us to fulfil the balance-sheet requirements imposed by organisations providing these higher-level and longer-term funding packages. In the short-term we aim to secure multi-year funding for a Development Officer. The presence of this asset on our balance sheet will help to provide security for funders willing to give ongoing support.

Security of tenure: This request aims to provide a long-term, effective and viable resource for the foreseeable future. Security of tenure will help underpin this aspiration. It will act as a buffer against presently unforeseen policy changes that could impact on the organisation's finances and ongoing presence at this site.

Our current total-maintenance lease currently renders us responsible for all ongoing care and maintenance. Removal of the rent burden (and future rent rises) will not subject us to any increased costs as we already shoulder all of the responsibilities.

We intend to explore the utilisation of the space within the byre, currently used for storage, as an education room for visiting school and other groups. This will allow these groups to make use of the centre when it is open to the general public.

We will install simple 'pod'-type accommodation for use by visiting wildlife tourists and locals wishing to experience this unique place 'out-of-hours'.

Land to be restored to wet meadow status to maximise benefit to butterfly species (e.g. Marsh fritillary) in conjunction with NatureScot. Access paths for public, increase amenity to highlight plant diversity.

Employment of either a p/t or f/t development worker to maximise opportunities of higher-level funding that will become available through ownership of this asset and to facilitate and extend community use.

Reduced administration costs and cessation of rental payments.

Investigate feasibility of office space in loft area. (previous use historically as living space) and mezzanine in byre for storage space.

Further investigate species/status/use by bats of bothy building with a view to longer-term protection in consultation with NatureScot.

Further development of barn as a community space (eg sheltering one aspect). It is already used by Scout and Duke of Edinburgh groups, the local spoon-carving group and for local foraging and wellbeing courses. The enclosure of the aspect subject to the prevailing winds will extend its seasonal use and make it far more comfortable for its existing users.

Car/bike charging point or camper-van space.

Restricted space for volunteers/interns, move to finance/provide additional space.

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.

By providing a more “resilient, adaptable resource, with greater natural capital value, that supports a strong economy, a thriving environment, and healthy and flourishing communities.” (Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019–2029).

The buildings and land lend themselves to a variety of uses that can be further developed to enhance their natural, environmental and cultural capital. Their location will allow us to demonstrate the natural capital represented by the temperate rainforest that surrounds the site and to enhance that capital through the sympathetic management of the land contained within this asset. Similarly, through our education and information services we will make those visiting the site aware of the unique environmental capital this place represents. We believe that increased knowledge of its uniqueness and vulnerability will help protect this and similar places for future generations. We have yet to fully explore the cultural heritage represented by the asset, farmed for at least 400 years in a landscape influenced by humans for over 5,000 years, Barrandaimh was an integral component of a once thriving, populous and dynamic agrarian community. This story and the surrounding

land, now returning to native woodland, will form part of the centre's overall interpretation. We know from recent information received that we can trace its occupation back to an individual born at Barrandaimh in 1680. Their relatives still live in the local area.

We will form a fundamental component of the area's local economy. Tourism is one of Mid-Argyll's key economic drivers, with some 20% of the population engaged in tourism-related businesses. Of that sector, wildlife tourism is one of its fastest growing components, as well as one of its most lucrative. It is also one of the most sensitive to disruption and any development needs to be both inclusive, organic and sustainably managed in order to bring long-term local economic benefit. Beaver-related tourism, and the aura of 'wildness' and natural regeneration that they represent has grown steadily in the past ten years. The beavers also fulfil the role of the 'poster-species' for the incredible natural diversity and habitats already within the area. We provide the only face-to-face centre for this form of tourism in Scotland. By being able to access more funding and revenue through purchase of the asset we can open for more days per year and provide more local outreach services. This will build upon the current 4,000 people that currently visit the centre and 2,000 people that interact with our events and activities.

By helping to tackle the Climate Emergency. We will provide a unique, off-grid, sustainable centre representing a model for such facilities within remote rural areas.

We will provide 'Boots on the Ground', an increasingly scarce resource, but one that when used in partnership with other local organisations can maximise capacity, support recreational and environmental needs and help to notify those bodies we work with (such as FLS and NatureScot) of potential issues that arise in the area.

We will promote Scotland's national forests and land for visitors and communities. We will enhance this objective through face-to-face information, visitor services and the production/distribution of materials to encourage greater use of the forest as a natural resource with the wider aim of improving both mental and physical wellbeing.

Adapting to changing visitor and tourism requirements: Our business model lends itself well to being able to react quickly to both change and opportunities. We are both board members of the local destination marketing group and through the timely and accurate provision of information throughout the pandemic have helped support 40 local businesses through extremely challenging times. Through partnership working and acting as an information point for these businesses we will further enhance the local economy and enable the efficient use of limited resources.

Increasing opportunities for communities to benefit from the national forests and land. We will enable greater knowledge, access and protection of this asset via guided walks, awareness raising and wellbeing activities. We will take and guide people from our community into the forest estate. Despite living in a rural area, a significant proportion of

our local population, both children and adults, have had little experience of forest ecosystems and the species within. Part of our charitable purpose is the provision of environmental education and we will provide this both formally and informally to our local school and community groups.

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.

SSSI: We currently comply with all environmental restrictions in consultation with NatureScot.

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.

We cannot think of any negative consequences as a result of this transfer. Our polls and consultation events have shown that less than 1% of those responding oppose the transfer.

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.

A 5-year track-record. Since leasing the building and land in 2017 Pete Creech and Oly Hemmings have managed the resource effectively and efficiently and have improved facilities, buildings and public access.

As the instigators of the organisation we have backgrounds in community development, creation and management of charitable limited companies and social enterprises, practical land/project management, rural tourism, and local economic development.

Oly Hemmings: BSc (Hons) in Countryside Management specialising in Environmental Interpretation. Education Ranger for Scottish beaver Trial (2010-15) including creation, development and delivery of formal and informal environmental education classes, walks and talks. Financial and administrative skills relevant to project management via Dalriada Project Landscape Partnership Scheme and Argyll and the Isles Countryside Trust (ACT). Event management. Field survey work experience. Digital and social media. Director of Heart of Argyll Tourism Alliance. Part-time Lecturer at UHI Argyll College (2017 to date) teaching HNC/HND level Ecology and soils modules. Member of Scottish Countryside Rangers Association. Outdoor First Aid certificate.

Pete Creech: BSc (Hons) in Sustainable Rural Development. Project, funding and volunteer development experience as Coordinator of Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise Ltd (2011 to 2017). Communications Officer for Dalriada Project Landscape Partnership Scheme (2008 – 2010). 'Branching Out' trainer (teaching of woodland skills to mental health service users). Experience of magazine production, maintenance of social media and websites. Event planning, footpath, woodland and general building maintenance skills and experienced public speaker. Current Chair of Heart of Argyll Tourism Alliance. Part-time Lecturer at UHI Argyll College (2017 to 2022) teaching HNC/HND level ecology and Higher Environmental Science modules. Member of Scottish Countryside Rangers Association. Outdoor First Aid certificate. Mental Health First Aid certificate.

Our board of trustees:

Philip Price (Chair): Wildlife cameraman, owner of Loch Visions, which delivers wildlife photography experiences throughout Mid-Argyll. He has run wildlife workshops and tours exclusively in Argyll for 10 years. He has won many awards for both his photography and tour business Loch Visions including Loch Visions winning best British Countryside Award for Rural Enterprise and was a finalist in the National Visit Scotland Thistle Awards. Philip's awards include Scottish Abstract Nature Photographer of the year and being a finalist in the British photography awards. Philip also works for 'Scotland: The Big Picture' (SBP works to drive the recovery of nature across Scotland through rewilding, in response to the growing climate and biodiversity crises) and Seawilding, a marine restoration charity based in Mid-Argyll. Philip is based in Ardfern.

Will Self: Will is a long-term resident based in Tayvallich. BSc Natural Resources. Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. Rural Development consultant specialising in natural resources research, natural and cultural history explorations, integrated project cycle management and community development research. Background in The Dalriada Project Landscape Partnership Scheme, Feedback

Madagascar conservation and development in Madagascar and Project Trust overseas educational programmes.

Anne Smart (Finance Officer): Anne has broad experience of financial management in the charities sector having most recently been responsible for financial management at Kilmartin Museum. Anne is a dynamic leader of the 19th Argyll Scouts, currently planning their next life-changing adventure, this time to Nepal. Anne is based in Kilmichael.

Fiona Lowrie: Fiona has extensive experience in guiding fast-growing technology firms. Fiona began her career at Bain & Company in London before joining Optos where she was part of the management team. Fiona has undertaken a mix of Chief Executive roles, with a focus on strong revenue growth, and strategy advisory work. Much of the advisory work has been for private equity firms, conducting commercial due diligence and supporting turnarounds in the portfolio companies. Fiona is based in Tayvallich.

Chris Goldsmith: Chris has property/land developments skills and is the managing director and creator of Turnstone Estates (formed in 1989) by his early successes in property consultancy. He has since combined his complementary skills in financial services, development and portfolio management to great effect, steering the company through the vicissitudes of the market to its present enviable position.

Our Volunteers:

Michael Reid: Based in Lochgair, Michael has worked with us for the past 3 years for one day per week. His environmental consultancy and project management experience has proved invaluable, particularly in regard to forming future strategy and feasibility planning. Michael has developed our GIS skills, vital for the accurate long-term monitoring of the area's wildlife.

Clare Saxby: Based at Dunardry on the Crinan Canal, Clare is a freelance editor. Our most recent regular volunteer (Clare also spends one day per week at the centre) her professional skills have helped move on and sharpen up our promotional material, everything from new leaflets to synopses of the books sold in the centre. Clare has also taken over a sizeable proportion of our beaver-monitoring, working with camera-traps throughout Knapdale.

Lynsey Gibson: Based in Ardrishaig, Lynsey is a passionate wildlife advocate and keen amateur photographer. She is one of our regular walk volunteers, assisting with our beaver walks between April and September. Her broad knowledge of local species adds an extra dimension to our activities. Lynsey also helps out within the centre and with various events, time, work and children permitting.

Phil Hemmings: Based in Ford, Phil has brought his experience of countryside management, 25 years' experience of practical conservation having previously monitored species from wolves to water voles. Phil also assists as one of our walk leaders and with practical repair and maintenance tasks.

Dave Decamps: Dave is based in Cairnbaan and first started popping into the centre as part of his regular dog-walking routine. He also kept us updated on the latest signs of beaver activity. During lockdown, when Oly was seriously ill, Dave arrived, unmasked and with sandwiches in hand, and provided vital support for the entire season; everything from endless brews of tea to dealing with members of the public.

In addition, we draw on the experience of a wider circle of help from occasional volunteers that between them help us with tailored first-aid courses, environmental health, construction, plumbing, woodworking etc.

As demand for our services increase we will continue to offer high-class volunteering opportunities. Our most recent recruits are two students from the University of Copenhagen, partaking in full-time internships of 1 month and 5 months this summer, adding to both our skills base and capacity-building abilities.

We have a sound business case for the development of the land and centre. We have already secured permission from NatureScot for the provision of a simple accommodation 'pod' on-site for visitors wishing to experience this unique place and its species outwith our normal hours and providing us with an unreserved revenue stream. We will work in conjunction with other local wildlife tourism businesses to promote both this and the opportunities for wildlife viewing from the recently installed hide (the rental of which will provide another income stream).

Numbers interacting with the centre, both individuals, community organisations and businesses have continued to increase year-on-year since 2017. For example, we are now in our fourth year of partnership with Wilderness Scotland, delivering very popular guided walks to a mostly international customer base and providing a valuable source of unreserved income.

We have brought the buildings into a sound condition and enhanced their value through the installation of an effective solar-PV system that meets all of the buildings' power requirements, shielding us from an increasingly volatile energy market.

Succession planning: Having paid staff, as opposed to volunteers, allows the trustees to advertise a position with a financial incentive, should it become vacant. This avoids a fundamental weakness of voluntary organisations, that often stand or fall based on the efforts of one or two people. A robust financial contingency plan also helps mitigate against future and unexpected business interruption, as was proven at the onset of the pandemic.

Maintenance responsibility for five years.

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.

In consultation with Highlands and Enterprise and the Community Land Scheme our local area of influence is that which encompasses the electoral ward of Mid Argyll.

We are a membership organisation. Current membership stands at 63 individuals and 2 organisations.

Outside our membership we engage with members of the community in the following ways:

As visitors to the Argyll Beaver Centre

As participants of our walks and activities

Through our presence at local events, e.g. Tayvallich Gala, Lochgilphead's Celtic and Pictish Festival, The Craignish Wild Seas Weekend etc. At these events we took details of our proposals (see attached images) and asked people to comment on the proposed transfer and to suggest and activities or uses they would like to see implemented at the centre.

Via a poll of the members of our Facebook Group. We have 2,600 members, that constitute both local people and a much wider (worldwide) community of interest. It is not possible to identify local respondents precisely, but Facebook analytics tell us that of the 2,426 members in the UK, 603 identify with the Lochgilphead area.

601 of the 607 responses were in favour of the transfer. We directly approached the 6 members who were opposed to understand their concerns. 2 of the 6 responded. (The poll question, response to objectors and their responses are included in the supporting information as well as the comments added by those in favour.)

Through our education work at local schools and other community groups such as the local Cubs and Scouts, outdoor nursery, after-school club etc.

Meeting a community need:

Through the involvement of local people in events hosted by national and other organisations, e.g. courses run by the British Trust for Ornithology and the involvement of local artists with the Argyll Hope Spot.

By providing activities and a community space for the local Scouts, Cubs, Brownies and Beavers.

By assisting local participants of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. capacity and making most of opportunities

Through formal education at local primary schools and outreach citizen science with these schools.

By becoming involved in projects in partnership with local community councils and having the support of these organisations.

All of the above organisations and individuals are supportive of our request and we have received letters of support, a positive response to a social media poll and via an ongoing consultation at the centre that encourages local visitors to indicate their support or otherwise.

We cannot think of anything other than positive impacts on those communities that surround the Mid-Argyll area (HOATA and ripple effect from positive impacts). Many of those who partake in the services we offer are drawn from these communities and those further afield. None of the adjoining communities have organisations that offer anything comparable.

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.

Community Land Scheme will cover land transfer costs up to 95%

Private donor has offered to make up the additional 5%

Ongoing maintenance costs from cashflow: £3,465.00

Cost of core activities from cashflow: £27,570.00

Donations (based on 2020 figures): £4,300.00 per annum

Volunteer contributions: Based on the National Lottery Heritage Fund's matrix of volunteer value.

4 hours per week professional: £200.00

7 hours per week skilled: £140.00

5 hours per week unskilled: £50.00

All present costs are covered currently by combination of funding and generated income.

A' Chruach Windfarm Fund longer-term funding. Submission of interest has been made, a positive response has been received, we have now been invited to make a stage two application. This will be for £10,000 per year for a 3-year Development Manager staff position. We intend to match this funding with an application as part of our Community Land Fund submission.

All other proposals will only go ahead if funds are available and/or sufficient levels of unreserved income are available to cover projects.

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 Will Self

Address

Date 08.09.22

Position Trustee

Signature *Will Self*

2. Name Anne Smart

Address

Date 08.09.22

Position Trustee

Signature *A Smart*

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: Argyll Beaver Centre Business Plan 2022 – 2026

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

Documents attached: Site map

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

Documents attached: N/A

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: Business Plan and Cashflow

Section 5 – evidence of community support

Documents attached: with images of consultation process.

Section 6 – funding

Documents attached: List of former and current funders