

**BUSINESS PLAN FOR  
A PROPOSED COMMUNITY ACQUISITION AND  
DEVELOPMENT OF  
LAND AT CALLOP, GLENFINNAN**



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# 1. Introduction

The Glenfinnan Community Facilities SCIO (GCF) wishes to purchase an area of land near Glenfinnan from Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) using the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process.

The land identified for purchase comprises two adjacent parcels of land covering a total area of approximately 27.76ha. The larger parcel of 23.57ha is mainly woodland on ground adjacent to the River Callop, and the smaller parcel of 4.19ha is a combination of wet heath and deeper peat land on land adjacent to the A830 trunk road approximately 1 ½ miles east of Glenfinnan at Callop.

This business plan is based upon, and arises from, the accompanying feasibility study which explored the major project issues in detail. The purposes of this business plan are to outline the development route to creating a mobility hub at Callop and of connecting this to the major tourism attraction of the Glenfinnan Viaduct through the provision of a Park-n-Ride system and active travel options. It is also to demonstrate the community benefit that could arise from owning the land. These benefits include the potential for reinstating a former boardwalk that ran through part of the woodland, community involvement in woodland management and additional community facilities and services provided.

The desired outcomes from the project include a sustainable transit system that resolves the current chaotic and unsafe parking practices along the A830, the elimination of “wild toileting” and other undesirable side effects of mass tourism, and the creation of new employment opportunities for local people.

## 2. Methodology

A combination of desk-based and primary research methods have been used to collect and analyse data to inform the feasibility study's analysis and conclusions.

### Desk-Based Research

Desk-based research was undertaken to inform the strategic context within which potential community ownership of Callop sits. This principally involved reviewing extensive prior studies that have been carried in order to address the traffic situation in Glenfinnan.

Key information sources included:

- Glenfinnan Vehicle Count Data, 21/08/23 – 16/09/23
- Glenfinnan Travel Management Plan, Ansons 2023
- NTS Glenfinnan Traffic Management Options Report, Sigma PM, 2025
- Fort William Opportunities Around Rail, Systra, 2021
- Hitrans – Viaduct Via Rail, Systra, 2025
- The Highland Council Pre-Application Advice for Local developments Ref: 25/04140/PREAPP
- Traffic data
- NTS Glenfinnan Visitor Experience, Galmstrup Architects, 2023
- East Loch Shiel Land Management Plan Scoping, Forestry and Land Scotland, 2025

### Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews were conducted with representatives of the following organisations and individuals:

- Glenfinnan Community Council
- Glenfinnan Station Trust
- The Dining Car at Glenfinnan Station
- MOWI
- The Stage House B&B
- Chef/Manager of The Dining Car/former chair of the Community Council & GCF Trustee)
- St Mary and St Finnan Roman Catholic Church
- Factors of Conaglen Estate and Fassfern Estate
- Hitrans
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- The Highland Council Planning Department
- Shiel Buses

## Technical Assessments

Specialised technical assessments were also undertaken regarding the following:

- An examination of parking and access requirements for the land at Callop.
- A site appraisal and design options study on the entirety of the proposed land area.
- An architectural study of options for building provision at the mobility hub at Callop.

## Community Consultation

Following the background research, stakeholder interviews and technical assessments the information was brought together in a feasibility study which presented a range of options available to the community in terms of transit hub layout, intensity of building development at the transit hub and opportunities for managing the associated woodland. A consultation event was held in The Jetty Hut, Glenfinnan on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at which the options were shared and discussed with community members.

### 3. Key findings from stakeholder consultations

#### Stakeholder Consultation

Semi-structured conversations were conducted with representatives of stakeholder organisations during January and February 2026. The sample of organisations was identified in agreement with Glenfinnan Facilities SCIO and was designed to ensure engagement with a range of relevant local, regional and national organisations and individuals. They included:

- Glenfinnan Community Council
- The Dining Car
- National Trust for Scotland
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- Glenfinnan Station Museum Trust
- Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (Hitrans)
- Glen Alladale Estate
- Glenfinnan House Hotel
- The Stage House B&B
- Fassfern Estate
- MOWI Scotland Ltd.
- Craigag Lodge
- Boardwalk Restoration Project
- The Church of St Mary and St Finnan

The conversations covered the following core themes:

- Impacts of increased volume of visitors and traffic
- Additional car-parking and related facilities
- Path/boardwalk development
- Sustainability and capacity

#### Impacts of Increased Volume of Visitors and Traffic

The steam train passing through Glenfinnan has been a tourist attraction for nearly 30 years. However, the significant increase in visitor numbers to the area is a relatively recent phenomenon. One fuelled by the iconic status conferred upon both the train and Glenfinnan Viaduct by the global popularity of the Harry Potter films and a post-COVID pandemic upsurge in visitors. Prior to the release of the Harry Potter films, Glenfinnan was not an especially well-known tourist destination, to the extent that a small community co-operative, Visit Glenfinnan was established in the early 2000s to encourage more visitors to the area. As one interviewee ruefully noted, *‘be careful what you wish for’*.

The ‘*tsunami of visitors*’ descending on the small community of Glenfinnan in recent years was described by another interviewee as ‘*a double-edged sword*’. Tourism is viewed as a necessity for many local businesses, but the uniqueness of Glenfinnan’s situation brings two distinctive types of visitors. Firstly, ‘experiential tourists’ who see Glenfinnan as a destination and want to spend an extended period of time there (including overnight stays). Secondly, ‘checkbox tourists’, only interested in seeing the steam train crossing the viaduct, capturing the image on their smart phones and leaving Glenfinnan soon afterwards.

There was widespread acknowledgement amongst interviewees that both types of visitors need to be catered for in a way that is sustainable for the Glenfinnan community. That need is underscored by the significant disruption to village life experienced in the summer months because of the influx of ‘checkbox tourists’, as noted by interviewees:

*‘August is the worst for visitor volume. Probably because there are a lot of people on holiday from all over the world. They arrive in Glenfinnan totally stressed and the driving and parking that happens is absolutely off the scale. The actual rudeness and the absolute disregard for people that are living and working in the area and the impact on traffic that has to go through there.’*

*‘You feel disrespected and trampled on. So, it’s not a good thing for the general psyche of the village.’*

One interviewee indicated that the viaduct was not an organised visitor attraction and was unusual in that visitors had to be at the location at a specific time for the experience of seeing the steam train crossing. They suggested that adds to the ‘*crazy pressure*’ locally.

On the busiest days such pressure is generated by cars being parked illegally on damaged verges, or blocking driveways and other access points, or simply being abandoned as visitors run along the road towards vantage points as the steam train approaches. Commercially operated coaches and other tour-providers add to the pervading sense of chaotic congestion when their customers disembark, often on the road. Several interviewees also highlighted health and safety risks caused by the traffic congestion, highlighting the potential difficulties of getting emergency vehicles to accidents if needed. Interviewees also highlighted the negative environmental impacts

of cars and coaches leaving their engines running to give the impression they are not parking.

Aside from the stress generated by such congestion, local people are said to adapt their own travel times out of Glenfinnan when traffic into the village is at its peak. Specifically, they tend not to leave before 10am as it is impossible to overtake due to the constant flow of incoming traffic with visitors coming to see the steam train cross the viaduct at 11am.

## Callop Car Park

There was consensus amongst interviewees regarding both the need for additional car parking to help alleviate current demand and regarding the envisaged site at Callop being the most appropriate location for it. Interviewees expressed a hope that more parking choice would mean that people would be more relaxed. There was also a belief among some interviewees that some of the same problems regarding verge parking would remain as the Callop site would not be large enough to meet all demand. However, it would provide another option for use. In such circumstances, it was suggested by one interviewee that Bear Scotland would have to physically prevent vehicles from parking by installing obstructions on the verge.

A new car park at Callop was not considered likely to have any detrimental effect on the existing timber felling operations in the area. However, some technical issues regarding the proposed site in Callop were raised by interviewees. One highlighted the issue of access suitability and the potential need to improve sightlines due to the curve in the road. The scope for an extra lane to help right-turn entry was also highlighted although recognised as a potentially costly measure.

Several other issues of relevance to the car park were also raised by interviewees. They included a view from one interviewee that coaches should be allowed to go into the National Trust for Scotland car park but not gain access to the proposed car park in Callop.

Another interviewee speculated whether it might be possible to pre-book a space in the community car park in the village at an elevated price for a guaranteed spot.

It was also suggested that creating an extra car park required co-ordinated information and promotion of a 'park and ride' shuttle bus service. One interviewee said that such information should include advanced signage warning when the village car park was full and highlighting the need to use the 'park and ride' service. Another suggested that the proposed *'shuttle bus needs to go to the station and through the village to a car park above the station where there is a turning space'*. Some of the practicalities of running a 'park and ride service were also highlighted by an interviewee. Specifically, the

frequency of the service and where to wait for it coming back to the Callop car park. A related suggestion was to also promote electric bikes and a woodland walk as active travel options if the path on the adjacent area of land in Callop is also (re)developed.

## Related Facilities

There was broad agreement amongst locally based interviewees on the need for toilet facilities to be located at the proposed car park in Callop. Similarly, the possibility of including parking and related facilities (i.e. charging points, shower block, waste disposal) was viewed favourably by interviewees. One interviewee suggested that servicing motorhomes and campervans would meet an existing demand which they suggested was partly linked to the popularity of the North Coast 500 route. Another interviewee saw the provision of such parking spaces as beneficial if it alleviated current campervan blocking of the forest road which is disruptive to commercial traffic going to the onshore site for the MOWI fish farms.

The possibility of also including retail provision at the proposed car park in Callop drew more mixed views from interviewees. There was overall agreement that any such new provision would not lead to the displacement of current provision due to the high volume of visitors coming to the village. Several interviewees also noted the lack of available land within the community's control to develop additional facilities.

One interviewee advocated a phased approach to any such provision, stating:

*'We need to crawl before we start running. It needs to grow organically.... First and foremost, we need overflow parking with a park and ride... [with the subsequent possibility of] a small retail area, possibly a café.'*

Another interviewee suggested:

*'[S]pace on a new camping site to have a sort of cafe\retail\craft, sort of all-in-one facility where you could get small souvenirs, that would be open seven days a week. So you can still get a bowl of soup and a sandwich on a Sunday and you can visit the toilets. I think the village needs that and it would hopefully take away from the pressure within the village itself and allow the villagers to still go about their day-to-day work.'*

The same interviewee said that Glenfinnan was viewed as a disappointing destination for ‘experiential’ visitors due to its lack of facilities and a central ‘hub’, noting that *‘it either needs to be a focal point and a destination, or nothing happens at all and it suffocates itself’*.

The possibility of including retail space for selling local crafts and other services was also highlighted by several interviewees, as was the possibility of providing a community-owned space for skills development. However, it is important to note that not all interviewees were in favour of including retail provision as part of the proposed car park development. Two interviewees stated:

*‘We are happy about the site. We are very worried about having anything above parking there. Toilets great. But a cafe? I think that takes away a very precious space and also means you need much more of a development on a really quite precious site in terms of the ecology. [We] also don't like ‘out of the village’ developments. Retail units have been described to us and we're definitely not in favour of that.’*

Another interviewee said that they were *‘not excited’* by the potential inclusion of a retail element at Callop but could see the attraction of building that into the overall planning of a new car park.

## Path/Boardwalk Development

There was broad consensus amongst interviewees in support of purchasing the second area of land adjacent to the proposed car park site to develop a walking/cycling route to the village. One interviewee expressed an ambition to proceed with the boardwalk project as soon as the land is purchased, ideally via the SCIO. They also suggested that the project could go ahead even if the wider car parking project does not proceed or is delayed. There was also recognition that the path should be fully accessible for people of all abilities and that including a bike-hire facility at the proposed car park in Callop could further encourage active travel.

## Sustainability and Capacity

The issue of how the SCIO can remain financially viable in the long-term was raised, with one interviewee suggesting that it will require more than a car park to achieve that. The potential scope for the SCIO to also focus on other facilities, assets and services for

community benefit was also raised. Separately, the SCIO's capacity to manage the current project was highlighted by one interviewee, who stated:

*'Having dealt with quite a number of community groups in the past, I have to say that this community is by far the best I've ever come across in terms of the experience that they've got. [T]hey are hugely proactive and obviously experienced and are doing it for all the right reasons.... So, I've got no qualms about the ability of this community to take this on and continue it on.'*

As noted above, Callop is viewed by interviewees as the best site for the proposed car park. However, some concern was expressed about the financial implications of being left with a 'redundant' car park if the steam train were to stop operating leading to a decline in visitor numbers. Conversely, it was also felt that another operator would most likely take over the service were that to happen.

It was also noted by one interviewee that a new car park and related facilities may bring employment in Callop, but perhaps not be for the local community in Glenfinnan. The same interviewee highlighted the need to emphasise the environmental benefits of the proposal to enhance the viability of any funding bids to support its completion.

## Community Consultation Meeting

A 'drop-in' community consultation meeting was held in Glenfinnan on February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026, to get views on four specific mobility hub options for Callop which have been prepared by the consultancy team.

Participants provided views in relation to various aspects of the different mobility hub opportunities. The following is a summary of individual comments, rather than general emerging themes.

To reduce **environmental impacts**, a preference was expressed to contain as much traffic as possible in Callop. Option D was considered preferable by one participant to avoid the flood plain and the possibility of gravel being washed away. It was also suggested that designs should reflect historic links.

The boardwalk should be '**wheelchair accessible**' to meet the 'mobility' ethos of the proposed hub.

**Capacity issues** were also highlighted. It was suggested by one person that 250 car parking bays would be required on a Bank Holiday weekend and that maximum parking capacity was required, with preserving the village being a priority. More capacity for

motorhomes was also highlighted, with a suggested increase from 10 to 20 bays. The need to provide electric hook-ups for mobile homes was queried due to the perceived '*prohibitive*' cost of providing electricity.

**Traffic management** issues to consider included local resources to manage the basics of parking etc. and to act as bus workers. One comment indicated that in the view of the writer a light rail connection is the only long-term solution along with a ban on parking in the village. It was also suggested that to be successful, a strong Glenfinnan preventative system needs to operate. It was recognised that traffic is difficult to police with the A830 being a main road. The issue of price and other mechanisms to keep visitors at Callop was also highlighted.

Other traffic management suggestions included prohibiting campervans, motorhomes and cars from parking in the village unless pre-booked with a pass. One comment stated that it would also be essential to have a car park at the west end of the village and a bus shuttle going through the village with a stop at the station. It was also suggested that an alternative walking route would be less attractive due to time constraints faced by most visitors.

**General comments** included the need to have parking as the priority with ancillary services and a need to clarify timescales. A further suggestion was to turn Callop into a reason to spend a day in Glenfinnan with 'Harry Potter' only being an element of the experience rather than the prime focus.

At a practical level, it was felt important to have lined bays in the car park. It was also suggested that the campervan aires and toilets should be located further east. A further suggestion was that more land should be purchased if the price is right to ensure future proofing.

## Site Layout Options

Participants were asked for their views about the various site layout options presented at the meeting.

Several comments were made in relation to **access**. Specifically:

- Whether the old road could be used for entrance and then exit at the current road.
- Access seems to be 'bottle-necky'. Pedestrians need to be kept separate.
- Concern that the Callop entrance with toilets could cause a bottleneck.
- The possibility of having a layby at the entrance to enable passing cars/lorries.

Option D was the preferred option of those who made written comments as follows:

- D preferred but would suggest more land is included to allow expansion.
- D option with necessary alterations according to regs + Planning advice
- Option D. Interesting to note 34 fewer car spaces if coach parking added.

## Building Options

Participants were also asked for their views about the building options presented at the meeting for consideration.

Comments on **capacity** included favouring the idea to expand the space and having an open plan shop and café to allow for multiple businesses to share the space.

Comments on **design** included having toilets accessible through a café/shop to encourage footfall in retail spaces. Another comment was that unisex toilets and showers are best.

Several comments relating to **facilities provision** suggested that electrics and washing machines are unnecessary as they will encourage stays that are longer than single overnight stays, when Callop is not intended as a site/destination. It was also highlighted by one response that the permanent café was least favoured in the village survey – yet appears on all 4 options D. One comment asked whether there would be a space for the ranger/proposed apprentices/school groups indoors (space inside a building).

Only two comments were provided in relation to **building design preference**. One comment expressed a preference for Option 1, indicating that commercial/retail provision was ‘*non-essential*’. The other comment stated, ‘*Prefer something like Option 3 – some individual units to see how this goes – workshop/retail units for crafters/artisans/food*’.

## 4. Project Development

The design team developed 4 hub layout options (A to D) and 4 building options (1 to 4) for the site.

**Option A** works within the constraints of the site proposed in the brief bounded by the Callop River to the south and the tributary to the east. The building providing toilets and services is to the north of the access road between the accessible parking and the campervan aires.

**Option B** is a development of Option A, seeking to provide further overspill provision to the east of the identified site on ground that was formerly forested, but is now earmarked for peatland regeneration by FLS. The accessible parking bays are located where the campervan aires were in Option A and the aires are moved to the east of the site adjacent to the overspill parking.

In **Options C & D** the services building and the pick-up/drop-off point are on the south side of the access road. A turning area is introduced to allow the shuttle bus to enter the site, turn and pick up passengers. The campervan aires are placed on the north side.

**Option C**, like Option A retains a footprint within the originally identified boundary but achieves a more intense development of the area, with a greater number of spaces than Option A.

**Option D** differs from the other options in that it avoids the flood risk zone altogether. Like Option B it has an overspill provision to the east of the site. The drawing also highlights an area for further potential overspill parking provision in the future should demand continue to increase.

The parking space available in each option is as follows:

|                       | OPTION |     |     |     |
|-----------------------|--------|-----|-----|-----|
| Bay Type              | A      | B   | C   | D   |
| Standard              | 110    | 174 | 163 | 167 |
| Accessible            | 8      | 9   | 7   | 7   |
| Day campervan/minibus | 7      | 10  | 7   | 7   |
| Campervan Aires       | 7      | 7   | 9   | 9   |

The four building layouts reflected different levels of development intensity.

Option 1: A simple building with a waiting area, public toilet and café facility.

Area = 134m<sup>2</sup>.

Option 2: Similar to option 1 with the addition of a retail space. An extended version includes showers provision for overnight campervan users.

Area = 166/200m<sup>2</sup>.

Option 3: Option 1 with additional hard standings for up to 3 pop-up food/shop trailers.

Area = 134 + 96m<sup>2</sup>.

Option 4: A main building with sheltered waiting area linked to a toilet block and 2 smaller buildings for commercial enterprises/retail.

Area = 166 + 80 + 95 + 95m<sup>2</sup>.

Following a community consultation event in Glenfinnan GCF decided that a greater number of general parking spaces, a greater number of aires and a modest sized building containing toilet and retail space with private provision for shuttle drivers/rangers and with hard standings for additional businesses would be the best approach for developing the site. The group also favoured a more easterly location for the buildings. Therefore, a modified version of Option D was developed for the business plan along with an option 5 for the building provision.

## 5. Callop Mobility Hub Development Proposals

The land at Callop offers the opportunity to provide parking, mode of transport transfer, and a range of services onsite. This section outlines the various proposals in detail.

### Parking

The primary need of the site is to provide parking for vehicles. Here we first explore the issues associated with that provision.

### Coaches

There have been different suggestions made as to who should be accommodated on site, with some thinking that coach provision should be made at Callop, while the majority think that this be provided for in Glenfinnan, close to the NTS Visitor Centre.

Having reviewed the prior studies, considered the potential operation of the Callop site, and held discussions with NTS GCF favours the provision of parking for coaches to be focussed on Glenfinnan for the following reasons:

- The decanting of coach passengers at Callop to then board a bus introduces inherent inefficiencies. It adds in the unloading and loading of passengers but still requires a bus to take those passengers into the village. In doing so it would add in time to a hard-pressed coach schedule for little, if any, benefit in reducing vehicle numbers heading into the village. The principal problem lies instead with large numbers of cars with smaller numbers of passengers.
- The addition of coach passengers to the Park & Ride bus service would increase the requirement for bus provision and associated drivers, adding considerably to the cost of providing the service.
- It is likely that at peak times the service would not be able to cope with the level of demand leading to delays, low customer satisfaction levels and negative social media comment on the service. This could encourage car drivers to revert to old habits of abandoning vehicles on the A830.
- It is likely that there would be considerable pushback from coach drivers and companies and a level of non-compliance; drivers could still exercise their right to use the A830 and decant their passengers by the roadside, leading to continued public safety issues.
- If coaches are not prioritised at Glenfinnan there will be a greater number of cars able to park there. This will create an increased number of vehicle movements within the village and will send mixed signals to car drivers. The more cars that can park in Glenfinnan the greater the incentive to drive there first to see if there is a space.

Taking these issues into account the logical location for coaches is within the existing two car parks, adjacent to the visitor centre.

## Cars & Day Visit Campervans

The accompanying LUC report identified the need for a minimum target of 170 spaces to accommodate vehicular needs. These will be needed for peak times so that at quieter times it can be expected that a lesser portion of the car park will be used. Noting that cars have been growing in size and that rural areas tend to have a larger proportion of larger SUV-type vehicles the designs prepared by RaeburnFarquharBowen (See section 6) have a parking bay size of 6m x 3m, rather than the typical standard of 5m x 2.5m. A further larger bay size of 8m x 4m is also required for larger vehicles such as campervans stopping to visit the viaduct. Overnight provision for campervans is discussed below.

### *Longer Stay*

Viaduct visitors are currently typically spending no more than two hours on site. Therefore, the turnover of cars in the car park will be rapid. However, there will also be those who are looking to stay for much of the day, or indeed several days.

As well as the visitors to the viaduct there are two other groups who will look to use the car park that involve longer stays. taking advantage of the opportunity to switch to active travel modes which GCF wishes to encourage; whether that is to head into Glenfinnan or walk the hills or cycle the forest roads to the south. Glenfinnan is also the start point for a modest but significant number of people who take a two or three day walk to Inverie through the remote Bounds of Knoydart, with the potential to return to the start point via public transport via Mallaig. Some may also go further, following the Cape Wrath Trail. At least some of the people in these groups will be ones who are currently using the small parking area to the south of the Callop River and which FLS and others would like to see closed off.

These people will require appropriate ticket pricing that covers a vehicle for a full day and for longer periods of up to a week. As longer stay visitors are not the cause of the intense congestion and GCF wishes to promote a slower and more thoughtful form of tourism GCF will price tickets by the day and not by shorter time periods. This will also act as an encouragement to intended short-term viaduct visitors to stay longer if they become aware of other reasons to linger in the area. GCF will also charge only a slightly higher rate (say £10) for multi-day stays in order to discourage inappropriate parking elsewhere.

## Shuttle Service

The site is approximately 1.5 miles from Glenfinnan and therefore a shuttle service will be required<sup>1</sup> to transport passengers from Callop to Glenfinnan. Shiel Buses suggested that a single low floor bus could operate on a 15-minute timetable shuttling from Callop to Glenfinnan with a potential 10-minute service at busy times. This could be supplemented by the 500 service from Fort William to Mallaig calling in to uplift additional passengers. The company is of the view that this approach should be profitable and therefore would not require a subsidy. Given the numbers of people visiting Glenfinnan and the short round trip it is reasonable to expect this to be the case. GCF will therefore work to come to an agreement with a private company to operate the service at its own risk.

Assuming a maximum capacity of 70 people sitting and standing in a large low floor bus the maximum throughput rate would be in the order of 280 to 350 people per hour in either direction for a single bus, with modest additional capacity provided by the service bus. If numbers of people arriving in cars parking at Callop exceed this level queues will develop and waiting times be extended if there is only one bus available. This would be a distinct risk at times, particularly in advance of the 10.45 steam train so a second bus may be required. Key to maximising turnaround times will be ensuring that the shuttle bus is able to move with the minimum interference from cars looking for parking.

## Ticketing & Revenue Management

The maximisation of throughput on the buses will be enabled if everyone purchases a ticket prior to boarding; whether electronic or paper. These could then be shown to the driver or scanned automatically on entry. To ease the process GCF will aim to have a single ticket for parking and riding on the bus. GCF will seek to manage this by agreeing a price for the bus service at the start of each season, collecting the revenues and passing them on to the bus operator. Such a system will also have the side benefit of ensuring compliance with parking charges without the need to check cars for tickets.

The second area to consider for shared ticketing and revenue is with the National Trust for Scotland. In this case, rather than charging for 2 services (parking and shuttle) it will be collecting joint revenues from a single pooled parking resource. There are several potential benefits here:

- The creation of a single combined car park at Glenfinnan will enable the rationalisation of access to a single-entry point, instead of the current confusing two entry situation.

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<sup>1</sup> Active travel options are considered at section 8

- The SigmaPM report noted that a reorganisation of the car park could produce extra capacity for 22 cars, 6 coaches, 2 minibuses and 2 motorhomes (or equivalents).
- The pooling of parking areas at Glenfinnan will allow for the most appropriate parking layout and pedestrian routes to be created, enabling a more intuitive pedestrian movement than is currently possible. It could also resolve the issue of coaches parked so close to the visitor centre building that they obscure the access points to it.
- GCF currently employs 3 people at peak and NTS 2.5 or thereabouts in their respective car parks. It is possible that a combined Glenfinnan car park would be able to make efficiency savings, requiring fewer staff to manage a better organised layout which is not operating over capacity (as at present) because Callop is also available.
- A combined team over two sites will allow for staff to co-ordinate with one another, switch from one site to another as required, and allow for all staff to work to the same protocol and be trained to the same standard.
- Pooling the car park will also share risk between the two parties. It will equalise the risk of any one type of vehicle generating less revenue than another and would

GCF will work with NTS to agree to divide revenue according to the total amount of space committed by each party to the joint parking venture. A Memorandum of Understanding will be drawn up to outline how the arrangement will operate which will outline matters of responsibility and liability such as:

- Insurance
- Obligations
- Who employs parking attendants
- Term of the arrangement
- Repair responsibility and cost
- Signage
- Definition of net income and how this is distributed

## Cycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

GCF wishes to encourage visitors to use active travel options to travel onwards to Glenfinnan and to use Callop as a base from which to access the local countryside. The Callop site is ideally placed to support this as it is already an access node for different users.

The adjacent forest road that exits the A830 travels west then south-west down the shores of Loch Shiel, connecting back to the trunk road network at Polloch, allowing for a circular day trip around Ardgour by continuing on the road network. Alternatively, there is the option to head south on the Conaglen estate road and then path over to Conaglen itself which has a wide gravel road for a further 10 miles to the shore of Loch Linnhe. On the north side of the A830 there are a range of tracks through the forest and onto open ground beyond on the Fassfern Estate.

Callop is the preferred starting point for hillwalkers to access the nearby Corbetts of Sgorr Craobh a' Chaorainn, Sgurr Ghiubhsachain and Stob a' Bhealach an Sgriodain, and the Grahams of Meall na Damh and Glas Bheinn. The most commonly used guidebooks published by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust<sup>2</sup> direct walkers to the existing car park to be used as a start point, as do websites such as Walk Highlands<sup>3</sup>.

In creating a new car park within 100m of the existing one these two groups of users will be well serviced and there will be no incentive for them to park informally elsewhere.

To encourage active travel to Glenfinnan safe pedestrian/cycle routes will be required through the site (see Section 8) and in addition to parking stands for bikes there is the opportunity to provide a public bike repair stand with integrated tools<sup>4</sup> to help cyclists service bikes while in the area.

### *Bike Hire*

It is unclear what level of demand there may be at this stage for bike hire on site. However, given the extremely high number of visitors, it would only require a very small percentage of them to wish to hire a bike to generate a significant demand. A preferred first option is for GCF to offer the opportunity for a private business to operate a bike hire business on site. This would reduce the burden of management on the community which wishes to focus on ensuring the parking operation runs successfully. It would also offer the opportunity for a mountain/trail biking enthusiast to develop a business in a highly attractive location.

If no tenant is forthcoming GCF will seek to manage the bike hire facility itself, potentially using staff who could combine this side of the work with traffic management duties.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://scottishmountaineeringpress.com/product/the-corbetts-smc/> and <https://scottishmountaineeringpress.com/product/the-grahams-the-donalds/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/fortwilliam/sgurr-ghiubhsachain.shtml>

<sup>4</sup> See for example: [https://securecyclestore.com/product/public-bike-repair-stand-with-pump-mantis-classic-ral5002-blue/?gad\\_source=1&gad\\_campaignid=22202445275&gbraid=0AAAAAC-qDtzgX0YhI53eizfr29CVON9o5&gclid=CjwKCAiAwNDMBhBfEiwAd7ti1Bskgf0YuZubliVYQ7efLZzYb776wLwMZyT8t4FA-31mx1PjjPKDBoCXGYQAvD\\_BwE](https://securecyclestore.com/product/public-bike-repair-stand-with-pump-mantis-classic-ral5002-blue/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=22202445275&gbraid=0AAAAAC-qDtzgX0YhI53eizfr29CVON9o5&gclid=CjwKCAiAwNDMBhBfEiwAd7ti1Bskgf0YuZubliVYQ7efLZzYb776wLwMZyT8t4FA-31mx1PjjPKDBoCXGYQAvD_BwE)

## Campervan Aires

Aires are low-cost designated sites for campervans and motorhomes that provide basic services such as water and waste disposal for users. In providing these services they fall between the full-service campsites which typically provide toilets, washrooms and other services, and so-called 'wild' camping where vans simply park at the side of the road or in a secluded spot on an informal basis, with no payment being made to the landowner. GCF will provide access to the toilet block and the opportunity to dispose of waste so as to resolve current wild toileting and dumping of waste problems that affect the area. It will not provide showers and other services that would encourage users to treat the location as a longer stay campsite rather than as a transit stop.

Payment will be made via a card operated ticket machine with tickets to be displayed. Alternatively, an online booking system such as freetobook <https://en.freetobook.com/> will be used to generate business in advance and assist with site management.

GCF will provide 24 pitches at a charge of £15/night. Further revenue will be gained from charging for waste disposal for non-resident vans who are passing through the area.

## Risk Management

In needing to create a car park to accommodate the maximum number of vehicles coming to Glenfinnan each day there is considerable risk for GCF SCIO that a downturn of interest in the Glenfinnan viaduct could have a disproportionate impact upon income. If this were to happen the presence of the campervan pitches will help to spread the risk by providing an alternative income stream. In designing the parking spaces to be 3m wide the opportunity is left open for the SCIO to create additional pitches if some of the parking were no longer required by grassing over very second parking space and creating pitches with a 6m gap between them.

## Business Space

### Development Context

- There are currently no business premises available to let within Glenfinnan and there are no proposals to develop new space by any public sector actor. This creates considerable difficulty for the local community in trying to create new economic opportunities and provide suitable products and services for both locals and visitors.
- The local manager of the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) Visitor Centre has indicated that it would like to provide some retail space for local businesses within its redeveloped building.

- The Pre-Application Advice from The Highland Council states:

*“A small ancillary retail element may also be supported, provided it remains subordinate to the primary use and does not undermine nearby centres.”*

*“Full details of retail development will need to be provided at future application stage, however, a limited, community-focussed retail element may be capable of support provided it serve as an ancillary operation to the car park use and that it will primarily serve users of the facility, or visitors already coming to the locality rather than acting as a new trip-generating destination. Its scale and design should be appropriate to the rural setting, and that the proposal will need to demonstrate that it will not have any significant adverse impact on the vitality or viability of existing centres.”*

## GCF Approach

The accompanying feasibility study explored issues of local demand and the potential to supply business space. Noting the guidance of the pre-application advice, the significant capital cost of creating buildings, and GCF’s primary goal of resolving local transport and congestion issues, GCF will build a modest services building and provide nearby stances for the provision of seasonal and pop-up retail opportunities for businesses to operate from mobile trailers. This approach will minimise risk to GCF while also giving market access to existing and potential businesses looking to grow their offering.

## 6. Hub Layout Proposal

As noted above in Section 4 the team developed 4 options A to D for the site to illustrate the types of layout that could be delivered and the opportunities and limitations of each design. Full details are given in RaeburnFarquharBowen's Callop Site Appraisal & Design Options accompanying study. Option D was preferred over the other options.

### Site Characteristics

The site has a large rocky outcrop in the centre which is a distinctive feature. The design keeps this feature rather than seeking to remove it for two reasons:

- As the site is in a rural area and adjacent to an SSSI it is appropriate to work with the landscape, rather than against it, and to moderate the intensity of development to a level that is suitable for a rural area.
- It is estimated that it would cost in excess of £300,000 to remove the outcrop and that the necessary work including blasting would be problematic, especially with the closeness of the A830.

The south eastern corner of the site is in an area identified by SEPA as a flood risk zone. The proposed solution avoids trying to develop in this area.

Access is via the existing FLS forest road and then the eastward spur which terminates in low lying peatland to the east of the site. A barrier will be installed across the FLS road beyond the entry point to the proposed car park to prevent access to unauthorised vehicles. The barrier will be positioned so as to allow articulated vehicles with trailers to stop without impeding traffic behind seeking to enter the car park.

**Option D** has an overspill provision to the east of the site as the initial identified area would not generate sufficient parking spaces to meet estimated demand.

Option D provides:

- 198 parking bays
- 7 accessible parking bays
- 8 day visit campervan bays
- 24 campervan aires

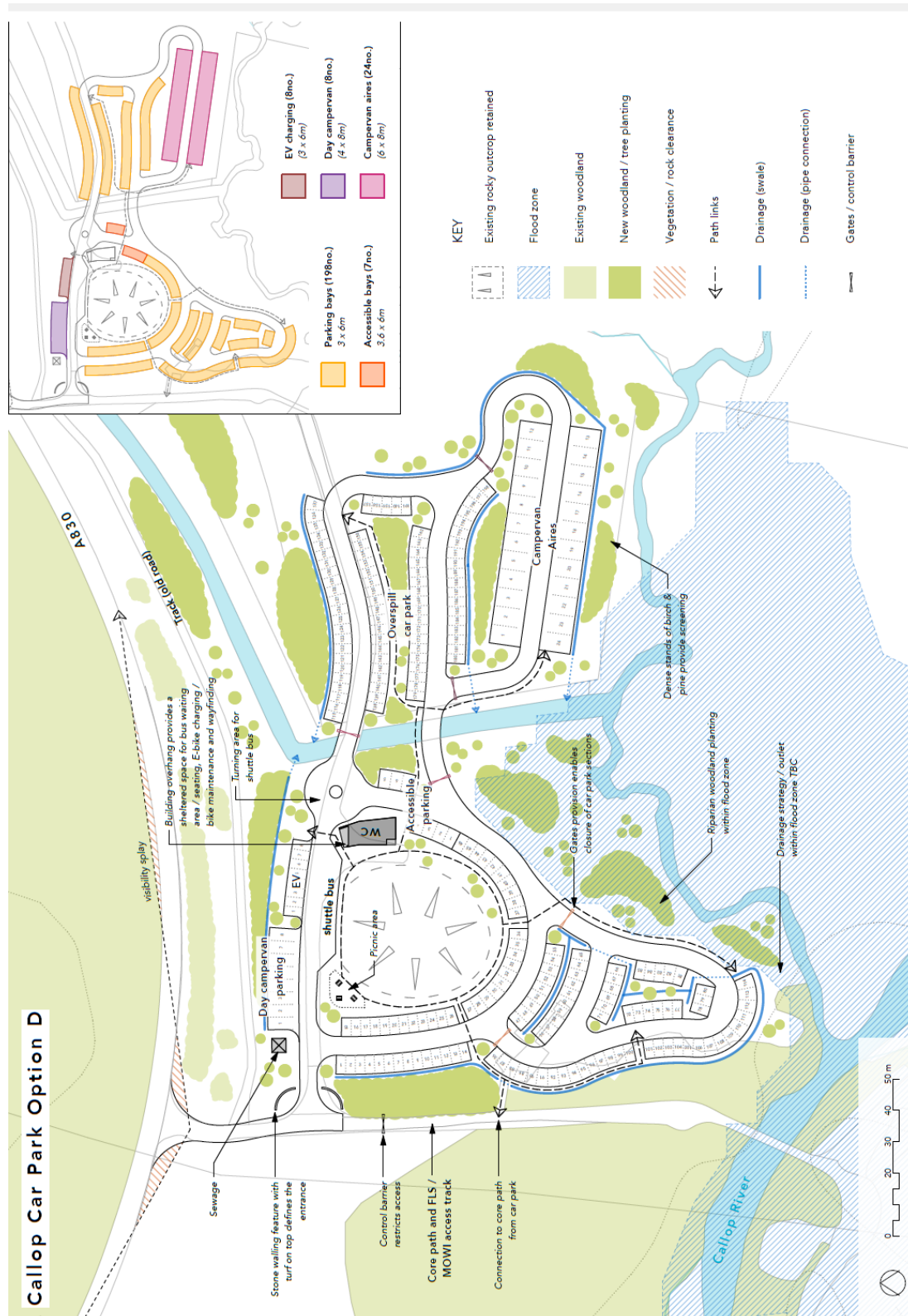


Figure 1: Hub Layout Proposal

## 7. Callop Woodland

Sections 4&5 have considered the key issues related to developing the park and ride facility at Callop. Sections 6&7 will now explore the Callop Woodland and considers its role as a potential community asset and as an active travel link to between Callop and Glenfinnan. This assessment is laid out in 4 sections:

- 1. Physical description**
- 2. Woodland Management**
- 3. Rural skills, volunteering, environmental education**
- 4. Employment, enterprise and costs**

### Physical description

The boundaries and rationale for choice of Callop Area A are described in the footnote<sup>5</sup> below.

Callop (area A) extends to 22.54 hectares south of the Callop River, it contains fen, swamp and wet grassland, stands of riparian trees, open bodies of water and higher drier land, including knolls, with mixtures of tree species over bracken, blueberry, acid grassland and heather.

The riparian woodland fringe includes scarce habitat – Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) woodland on floodplains – with Common Alder, Downy birch (*Betula pubescens*) and Willow species (*Salix caprea*, *Salix, cinerea* and others). On higher, drier ground, up from the floodplain and next to the forest road, vegetation includes Downy birch, Willow, Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*) and Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*, var *Scotica*). There are three lochans on the floodplain south of the river, including Lochan Dubh-ghlaic, and when the site was visited in December most of the western portion – joining Loch Shiel – was under water. The site includes Caledonian Woodland Habitat, as detailed by Forestry and Land Scotland Land Management Plan (LMP) – East Loch Shiel LMP<sup>6</sup>, notably on the Torran Giubhais promontory.

Walking northwest on the forest road, from the small car park on the south side of the bridge, which provides forest and Cona Glen estate cottage access, on the flat, at roadside, there are pockets of Downy birch (*Betula pubescens*) some over bracken, this

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<sup>5</sup> Area A (22.54 ha) is part of the ground identified in the FLS map system as Forest:519 Block:51. Specifically that area bounded on the south by the northern verge of the forestry track (so that the track is NOT included in the CAT request), bounded on the north, by the south bank of the River Callop. Bounded on the west by a line extending in a south-south easterly direction from grid reference NM90845 80322 to grid reference NM 90960 80077, that line being chosen specifically to avoid overlap with the Special Protection Area that covers the whole of Loch Shiel and its banks, and bounded on the east by the line of the forest road as it turns North East to cross the bridge over the River Callop at grid reference NM 92428 79223.

<sup>6</sup> [East Loch Shiel Land Management Plan | Forestry and Land Scotland](#)

above the fens and wet grassland of the floodplain. As the ground rises next to the road, (heading west), tussock grassland dominates the floodplain riparian habitats with patches of bracken on higher drier ground. Downy birch is common and there is the odd Sessile oak and occasional Scots pine. Where trees dominate, the stands may best be described as open woodland, Downy birch and alder on the floodplain, and oak-birch-pine on a series of promontories that overtop the floodplain. The areas of higher ground have a mix of bracken, blueberry and heather vegetation, one appears to be an extension of Sroine Garbhe, and the other, the more northerly is called Torran Giubhais. Both named promontories have paths, a well-used and existing circular path on Torran Giubhais and a disused ex FLS created path on Sroine Garbhe.

Natural regeneration of trees was not immediately evident across much of the site, however, there is good anecdotal evidence (from an experienced local forester), that there is regeneration of Sessile oak, albeit somewhat suppressed due to deer browsing, this mostly on the morainic knolls. Natural regeneration was abundant on Torran Giubhais, this perhaps because of the paths and human traffic which may discourage deer, and much regeneration was on steeper slopes. Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Rowan, Downy birch, Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), appeared plentiful, beech and birch having grown beyond browse height.

The Callop area is covered by a number of conservation designations, including the Ardgour Pinewoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC)<sup>7</sup>, the Loch Shiel SSSI<sup>8</sup> and the Loch Shiel Special Protection Area. The latter Loch Shiel designations pertain principally to the oligotrophic nature of Loch Shiel and the number of breeding Black-throated Divers<sup>9</sup>. Additional notified features include native pinewood, upland oak woodland, the bryophyte assemblages and Chequered skipper butterflies.

The Ardgour pinewoods SAC<sup>10</sup> specifically identifies native Scots pine stands, at the north of Loch Shiel, as is present on Torran Giubhais, and to a lesser extent on Sroine Garbhe. It also identifies the Alder, alluvial forests, as notified – of which there is only 14.81ha within the 1,645.96ha of SAC area. A proportion of these floodplain Alder woodlands are likely within the Callop area.

## Woodland management

The Callop area identified by GCF for purchase from FLS has high conservation value, which is according to NatureScot (SNH) condition assessment surveys compromised

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<sup>7</sup> [conservation-advice-package.pdf](#)

<sup>8</sup> [sssi-citation.pdf](#)

<sup>9</sup> [spa-citation.pdf](#)

<sup>10</sup> [site-management-statement.pdf](#)

by a mix of environmentally damaging factors including, high levels of deer browsing and the presence of invasive exotic plants, such as *Rhododendron ponticum*.

Active management of Callop will provide opportunities for volunteering and training, thus delivering a mix of ecological and socio-economic objectives, however such management is, to an extent, reliant on the quality of site access. The site has access from two points –

1. From the north, Glenfinnan Visitor Centre, along a path that is need of some TLC, to a bridge over the Callop River, and thence up a path on to Torran Giubhais and beyond the FLS haul road. Boardwalk has been removed by FLS and could be reinstated (dealt with elsewhere). This access could be used by work parties, school groups and guided walks, accessing the site on foot, and,

2. From a small car park, on the south side of the bridge connecting the forest road to the A830 (FLS single point of access to Glenhurich Forest). This access is used by large lorries for timber haulage and for transporting fish farm feed and live/processed fish. Access solely along the length of the FLS forest road for woodland management is less than optimal. It would be desirable, over time, to create linked paths, walkways from the small car park, northwest across the site.

Management activities will include, but not be limited to the following, and will be carried out and supervised by a GCF employed Community Ranger/Project officer, guided by experienced community members working with volunteers, trainees and apprentices,

- Conserving and expanding woodland and protecting naturally regenerating trees such as Sessile oak, Holly and Scots pine. This by erecting small scale deer fenced exclosures (10m\*10m) around groups of regenerating trees and building individual tree boxes/cages around individual tree saplings (see Training below),
- Removing exotic invasives including *Rhododendron ponticum*, this may also apply to Beech, *Rhododendron* bushes can be cut back and glyphosate plugged or sprayed,
- Access construction and path maintenance –short sections of linked path/boardwalk, taking pedestrian volunteers and trainees away from the forest road, is key to accessing much of the site. This can be done by building short sections of boardwalk using local material (timber cut from locally sourced larch), and constructing short path sections by cutting back vegetation (trimmer and brush cutter training),
- Seed collecting – pine, alder and oak seed collection for a small local tree nursery (see Business Opportunities),
- Training in Rural Skills for young people – as well as equipping young people with Lantra certified skills, training will be used as a management

mechanism to carry out maintenance tasks, such as vegetation management – linking to potential Rhododendron based clearance on neighbouring Estates, path and board walk construction and maintenance, tree care – including protecting natural regeneration and new planting,

- Seasonal guided walks and educational visits. Guided walks will be themed i.e., historical, biodiversity or landscape/geology. Educational visits can tie in with Environmental education provision, see below.
- In the event of Red deer continuing to impact the site it may be necessary for GCF to consider options relating to deer culling. Whilst there may be a legal impediment on FLS doing so at present, this may not be the case on community owned land.

## Rural skills, volunteering, environmental education

### Rural Skills

Woodland management at Callop will be carried out through the provision of rural skills courses for young local people, and older folk if there is demand. A suitably qualified Community Ranger/Project officer, employed by the community group, will manage a rural skills training programme. Such a programme will be designed for secondary pupils, from Mallaig High School and/or Lochaber High School; with the Community Ranger providing the organisation and oversight of LANTRA certified courses for young people, such as, basic chainsaw, pesticide spraying and quad biking. Other examples of rural skills courses include rope access and stock/deer fencing and could include mobile saw milling and timber handling – a local estate has a mobile sawmill and there are experienced and trained local people available to coordinate this activity.

Youngsters may be drawn from CDT Department courses – if taught in local secondary schools – or from SVQ courses. The presence of UHI in Fort William, which offers Countryside Skills and Rangering SCQF 5<sup>11</sup>, could provide trainee partnership working, and /or candidates for Modern Apprenticeships (see Employment). Alternatively, links to other Lochaber based groups such as Lochaber Hope<sup>12</sup> and Lochaber Rural Education Trust<sup>13</sup> could assist in identifying potential candidates for rural skills training.

A comparator for this type of training is Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust (HPCLT) who have successfully run Rural Skills courses for 8 years, working closely with the Rural Skills Department at Breadalbane Academy. To date some 84 young people have been trained, and gone on to find employment, most in the land-based sector.

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<sup>11</sup> [NQ Countryside Skills with Ranger Training SCQF 5 \(Fort William and Abriachan\) course](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Training | Lochaber Hope](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Lochaber Rural Education Trust](#)

Most youth on these courses are 16-19 years old, are often not fully engaged with academia and have a leaning towards land-based industries such as gamekeeping, farming and forestry. The HPCLT course has attracted funding from SSE, local wind farms and Scottish Charitable Trusts and has culminated in two annual Modern Apprenticeship places (see Employment below).

## Volunteering

Volunteer working is an excellent way to engage the wider community and members of the public and to give people an appreciation of the value of the Callop environment. Working in small teams to achieve environmental improvement, albeit in sometimes unglamorous tasks, is a way to provide a feeling of worth and wellbeing from working outside.

A volunteering programme will facilitate outdoors opportunities for Glenfinnan and beyond for more mature members of the community, notably recent retirees, as well as for part time workers and those interested in acquiring outdoor skills and gaining associated health and well-being benefits.

## Environmental education

Callop will offer environmental education activities such as tree planting days, bug hunts, pond dipping and outdoor events for local Primary Schools, such as Arisaig, Lady Lovat, Mallaig, Banavie, Caol, Inverlochy and Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig. A Community Ranger, employed by the GCF, could liaise with local schools and establish the potential demand/need for environmental education and lead school-based activities. There are local community links, at Glenfinnan, to the Lochaber Rural Education Trust LRET<sup>14</sup>, whose audience includes local Primary Schools and the LRET may also be a route to young people seeking Rural Skills Training.

## Employment, enterprise and costs

### Employment

**GCF Employee** - GCF will employ a Community Ranger/Project officer to oversee land management and outreach activities (training, volunteering and education). This post will operate on a 3-day week; one day running volunteering activities/educational activities (on site or at a local school), one day with trainees/apprentices), and one day administration and co-ordination.

**Apprentices** - GCF could provide an extension to the Rural Skills training concept, by employing two young people, for a year, as Modern Apprentices. This type of working

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<sup>14</sup> [Lochaber Rural Education Trust](#)

has been pioneered by Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust (HPCLT) who are working with local partners, Forestry and Land Scotland, National Trust for Scotland at Ben Lawers and the Dalchosnie & Kynachan Estate, to provide Rural Skills Modern Apprenticeships for those who have successfully completed the [Dùn Coillich Rural Skills Traineeship](#).

Apprenticeships operate across land held by the partner organisations, and this is entirely feasible at Glenfinnan with FLS as neighbours and partners at Callop, the presence of NTS at Glenfinnan and the potential for working with a friendly/likeminded local estate, such as Glenaladale Estate. In the past Glenfinnan Estate hosted Outward Bound youngsters.

A yearlong apprenticeship could offer young people the opportunity to earn a wage and gain an industry-recognised qualification. Two posts could be made available per year on a fixed term contract, resulting in a Modern Apprenticeship in Rural Skills SCQF (Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework) Level 5.

## Enterprise

The land area at Callop (excluding proposed car park area) does not offer much in the way of local enterprise opportunities, the woodland is not in great shape and there is little scope for extracting timber for local use, such as firewood. There are however, a number of iconic local trees with historical links.

**Tree nursery** - the modest number of old native Scots pine at Callop are likely remnants of the South West Group of native pinewoods (as detailed in the SSSI and SAC references above), which are considered genetically distinct from those found elsewhere in Scotland. These trees could provide a valuable source of genetically different Scots pine seed for growing on in a local nursery. The recently retired Glenfinnan Estate Manager (Alistair Gibson) is experienced in cone collection, seed extraction and seedling growing. Whilst raising small numbers of seedling may not generate large amounts of income, there is scope for using locally grown seedlings, rather than seedlings brought into the area, for expanding the Callop pinewoods, and there could be potential for small batches of seedlings to be potted up and sold at the NTS Glenfinnan Centre. This also applies to local Sessile oak and Common alder seed and seedlings. Trainees and apprentices could be involved in such an endeavour.

**Biochar/charcoal** – as above there is little if any scope for using trees on the SSI and SAC land for timber, firewood or biochar/charcoal. There is a local estate, Glenaladale, who are looking at the economic potential for using Rhododendron wood, from clearance, in a new biochar enterprise. This could link to the Callop, either through trainees or apprentices, gaining experience in vegetation management. And if the enterprise were successful then it could provide employment for trainees and apprentices after completing their time at Callop within a GCF programme.

## Costs

The following costs have been extrapolated from actual costs (at HPCLT) for a part time Community Ranger / Project officer, to manage the Callop site and run a trainee and apprenticeship programme.

| <b>GCF Costs of Callop Trainee and Apprentice Scheme</b>                 | <b>Year 1</b>  | <b>Year 2</b>  | <b>Year 3</b>  | <b>Totals</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| <b>Wages</b>                                                             |                |                |                |               |
| Project officer (£19/hr (£34,580)+ pension contribution) 4 days per week | 22428          | 22428          | 22428          | <b>67284</b>  |
| <b>Apprenticeship Costs</b>                                              |                |                |                |               |
| Wages (28hr week @Real living wage (£12.60/hr) (£18,345.6)+ pension)     | 37118          | 37118          | 37118          | <b>111354</b> |
| Training fund (£1.5K per apprentice)                                     | 3000           | 3000           | 3000           | <b>9000</b>   |
| Travel apprentices (50 miles/week)                                       | 1200           | 1200           | 1200           | <b>3600</b>   |
| PPE (boots/waterproofs/thermals)                                         | 600            | 600            | 600            | <b>1800</b>   |
| RSS Apprentice admin and Assessment                                      | 5400           | 5400           | 5400           | <b>16200</b>  |
| <b>Traineeship Costs</b>                                                 |                |                |                |               |
| Trainee training                                                         | 4829           | 4829           | 4829           | <b>14486</b>  |
| Trainee travel (Minibus hire @ £150/day for 30 days)                     | 4500           | 4500           | 4500           | <b>13500</b>  |
| Trainee PPE (£50/trainee)                                                | 400            | 400            | 400            | <b>1200</b>   |
| <b>Project Overheads</b>                                                 |                |                |                |               |
| Staff Travel                                                             | 1800           | 1800           | 1800           | <b>5400</b>   |
| Insurance (employers and public liability)                               | 1200           | 1200           | 1200           | <b>3600</b>   |
| Office costs                                                             | 2000           | 2000           | 2000           | <b>6000</b>   |
| Educational/public events/guided walks                                   | 400            | 400            | 400            | <b>1200</b>   |
| Maintenance/Materials/tools                                              | 1200           | 1200           | 1200           | <b>3600</b>   |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>                                                 | <b>86074.5</b> | <b>86074.5</b> | <b>86074.5</b> | <b>258224</b> |

## Income

Income projections are somewhat generalised, and more research is required on what funds may be available locally, and at a regional level. The HPCLT example relies heavily on local SSE Wind Farm funding, a very large Perth based funder, with priority given to Perth and Kinross, and Perth and Kinross Council, who administer an employability fund.

For GCF, Highland Council could be a potential source of funding for employability, however it is unclear what HCs commitment is to youth training and employment – their web site does not function<sup>15</sup>. A search for Highland Council grant funding for youth takes you to Play Parks<sup>16</sup> and volunteering funds are directed towards National Lottery funding. The Highland and Islands Environment Foundation<sup>17</sup> is a source of funding for communities taking environmental action and the Community Action fund<sup>18</sup>, within the National Lottery, can fund between £20k and £250k. Alternatively Young Start<sup>19</sup>, also with the National Lottery, offers between £20k and £100k.

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<sup>15</sup> [Page not found – Highland Council](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Play parks in the Highlands - Highland Council](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Grants Archive - Highlands & Islands Environment Foundation](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Community Action | The National Lottery Community Fund](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Young Start | The National Lottery Community Fund](#)

## 8. Active Travel Links to Glenfinnan

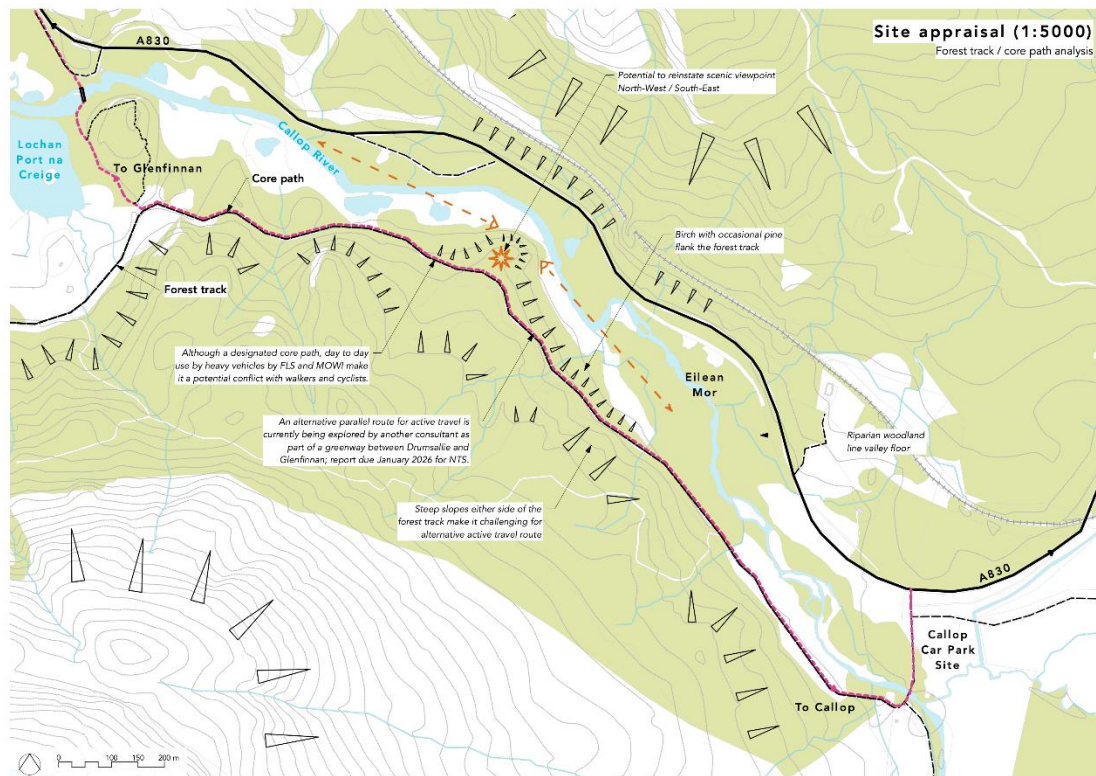


Figure 2: Core path from Callop to Glenfinnan

The potential mobility hub site at Callop has historically been linked to Glenfinnan via a Highland Council designated core path (Figure 2) which is the forest road heading north-west to Loch Shiel, running roughly parallel to the A830, then a short linking section from the forest road to a bridge over the Callop river, followed by a boardwalk to the NTS Visitor Centre in Glenfinnan.

There are three current issues with this route that have an impact upon its suitability as an all-abilities route to Glenfinnan:

- The route ascends 20m and then descends 20m between the two locations with gradients steeper than preferable.
- The linking section used to include a boardwalk which was removed by FLS after it initially decayed due to lack of maintenance and was then severely damaged in a storm.
- The road is a haul road for timber with expected major harvesting operations using the road over coming years. Therefore, FLS have concerns over public safety with lorry/pedestrian/cyclist interactions.

The separate Glenfinnan Greenway study is considering options for creating an active travel route from Drumsallie (approx. 2 ½ miles east of Callop) to Glenfinnan, which is part of a wider aspiration to extend the National Cycle Network from Fort William to Mallaig. The study is still to be published but the routes from the east under consideration all converge at Callop and there is an option being considered that would pass through the Callop woodland and would require the reinstatement of the boardwalk.

## Boardwalk Reinstatement

The boardwalk case would undoubtedly be strengthened if it was ultimately chosen as the preferred active travel route. However, it has an important role on its own as a key facilitator for locals to enjoy the area, walking from Glenfinnan to Torran Giubhais. The reinstatement of the boardwalk would enable a circular walk to be enjoyed once again which would allow people to walk around Torran Giubhais, giving them significant views over to Loch Shiel and eastwards along the Callop River. This would also make for an excellent walk for visitors who had chosen to take the shuttle bus to Glenfinnan but nevertheless wish to explore more of the local area.

## Design Options

RaeburnFarquharBowen have outlined 2 options for reinstating the boardwalk:

- **Option A** offers a minimum specification with a width of 1.5m extending to 3.5m in specific viewpoint areas. It would have a raised edge on sections that were less than 600mm above ground level and a handrail on sections above 600mm above ground level.
- **Option B** would have a minimum width of 2.5m widening out to 4m in places. This option complies with Cycling by Design guidance for a two-way shared remote track (min 2.5m width - ideal 4m width).

Option B would be preferable if significant numbers of cyclists are expected (as would be the case with this route being the preferred active travel route between Callop and Glenfinnan).

## Cost Estimates

The price of replacing the boardwalk can be estimated from the Paths for all 2023 Pricing Guide<sup>20</sup> which provides detailed specifications and price ranges e.g. £200.50-£245/m<sup>2</sup> for a low-level timber boardwalk with edge rails and £244 to £248.50/m<sup>2</sup> for raised timber boardwalk with handrails. Given the remoteness of the location and the

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<sup>20</sup> <https://walkingscotland.org.uk/resource/path-projects-estimating-price-guide/>

fact that the boardwalk will be built over partially flooded areas it is appropriate to use the figure at the upper end of the range.

#### *Option A*

- Total area of 473m<sup>2</sup> comprising 185m<sup>2</sup> without handrail and 288m<sup>2</sup> with handrail
- £127,261 for timber construction
- £152,806 for recycled plastic construction

#### *Option B*

- Total area of 729m<sup>2</sup> comprising 293m<sup>2</sup> without handrail and 436m<sup>2</sup> with handrail
- £195,827 for timber construction
- £234,926 for recycled plastic construction

There is an approximate 20% cost uplift for using recycled plastic, but it is a more durable material and would result in lower long term maintenance costs.

## 9. Financial Analysis

### Glenfinnan Community Facilities SCIO & Glenfinnan Enterprises Ltd – Existing Car Park

The community company and its trading subsidiary have been operating a 100 space car park in Glenfinnan since spring 2021 and has been highly successful and provided much needed income to help support the community company's development activities.

The capital cost of the car park and equipment was £525,000 with construction primarily funded by grants from RTIF & LEADER.

A summary of the trading performance for the 4 years ended 31 May 2025 is provided below:

| <b>Glenfinnan Car Park</b>          |                |                |                |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Car Park Income (net of VAT)</b> |                |                |                |                |
|                                     |                |                |                |                |
|                                     | 31/5/25        | 31/05/24       | 31/5/23        | 31/5/22        |
| Turnover                            | 349,647        | 270,057        | 212,371        | 181,651        |
| Wages                               | 95,066         | 60,008         | 39,682         | 22,439         |
| Rent                                | 142            | 245            | 175            | 596            |
| Light & heat                        | 49             |                |                |                |
| Hire of plant & machinery           | 975            | 845            |                |                |
| Telephone                           | 1,088          | 814            | 500            | 350            |
| Insurance                           | 4,078          | 3,748          | 2,580          | 2,133          |
| Post & stationery                   | 529            |                |                |                |
| Advertising                         |                | 377            |                |                |
| Repairs & renewals                  | 28,599         | 4,082          | 14,241         | 3,410          |
| Sundry                              | 908            | 153            | 118            |                |
| Accountancy                         | 2,739          | 1,372          | 1,200          |                |
| Professional fees                   |                | 300            |                | 618            |
| Protective clothing                 | 480            | 861            | 570            |                |
| Training                            |                | 2,105          |                | 500            |
| Finance costs                       | 37,853         | 27,153         | 19,477         | 15,762         |
| Depreciation                        | 30,569         | 30,167         | 28,878         | 27,910         |
| Total Expenses                      | 203,075        | 132,230        | 107,421        | 73,718         |
| <b>Net profit</b>                   | <b>146,572</b> | <b>137,827</b> | <b>104,950</b> | <b>107,933</b> |

Turnover has continued to increase year on year with increased tourist numbers putting additional pressure on the facilities provided. 3 individuals are now provided with employment as car park attendants during the summer months with 2 of those retained on a part-time basis during the winter months.

In the 24/25 year additional repairs were required which is to be expected as the car park is now established and has begins to show some wear and tear. Funds will need to be set aside on an annual basis to cover ongoing maintenance.

The 2025 actual financial performance per month has also been summarised below and informs the base case scenario for a new car park facility.

| <b>Profit and Loss by Month</b>         |                 |                  |                |               |               |               |               |                |                    |                 |                   |                   |                |  |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|--|
| <b>Glenfinnan Enterprises Ltd</b>       |                 |                  |                |               |               |               |               |                |                    |                 |                   |                   |                |  |
| <b>1 January 2025-31 December, 2025</b> |                 |                  |                |               |               |               |               |                |                    |                 |                   |                   |                |  |
|                                         | January<br>2025 | February<br>2025 | March<br>2025  | April<br>2025 | May<br>2025   | June<br>2025  | July<br>2025  | August<br>2025 | Septemb<br>er 2025 | October<br>2025 | Novemb<br>er 2025 | Decemb<br>er 2025 | Total          |  |
| Income                                  |                 |                  |                |               |               |               |               |                |                    |                 |                   |                   |                |  |
| 1 Car Park Sales                        | 8,523           | 5,097            | 11,487         | 38,000        | 47,108        | 45,604        | 53,358        | 56,088         | 45,421             | 33,098          | 8,123             | 8,267             | 360,173        |  |
| Expenses                                |                 |                  |                |               |               |               |               |                |                    |                 |                   |                   |                |  |
| 229 Rent                                |                 |                  | 25             |               |               | 25            |               |                |                    |                 | 25                |                   | 75             |  |
| 230 Rates & Water                       | 65              | 65               | 65             | 65            | 65            | 260           | 195           | 130            |                    | 130             | 130               | 130               | 1,300          |  |
| 233 Light & Heat                        |                 | 37               | 12             |               |               |               |               |                |                    |                 | 38                | 12                | 99             |  |
| 255 Wages                               | 3,425           | 3,790            | 8,896          | 9,663         | 10,413        | 10,170        | 12,308        | 11,599         | 10,803             | 16,863          | 6,736             | 6,733             | 111,399        |  |
| Pension                                 | 72              | 67               | 204            | 208           | 219           | -             | -             | -              | -                  | -               | -                 | -                 | 770            |  |
| Taxes                                   | 263             | - 217            | 914            | -             |               | 191           | 227           | 201            | 191                | 296             | 148               | 148               | 2,363          |  |
| 263 Telephone & Internet                | 50              | 50               | 50             | 50            | 50            | 50            | 50            | 50             | 50                 | 50              | 50                | 50                | 600            |  |
| 264 Post & Stationery                   |                 |                  | 529            |               |               |               |               | 450            |                    |                 |                   |                   | 979            |  |
| 272 Repairs & Renewals                  | 184             | 3,909            | 3,357          | 2,204         | 5,638         |               |               |                | 8,063              | 330             |                   |                   | 23,685         |  |
| 280 Sundry                              |                 |                  | 37             |               | 100           |               |               |                |                    | 199             |                   | 56                | 392            |  |
| 285 Accountancy                         | 348             | 1,735            |                | 174           |               |               | 174           |                | 34                 | 2,025           |                   |                   | 4,490          |  |
| 326 Protective clothing                 |                 |                  | 480            |               |               | 241           |               |                |                    |                 |                   | 683               | 1,405          |  |
| 378 Bank Charges                        |                 |                  |                |               |               |               |               |                |                    |                 | 25                |                   | 25             |  |
| 379 Transaction fees                    | 921             | 550              | 1,241          | 4,104         | 5,088         | 4,925         | 5,763         | 6,057          | 4,905              | 3,575           | 877               | 893               | 38,899         |  |
| Purchases                               | 323             | 96               |                | 285           |               | 283           |               | 5,142          |                    | 1,089           |                   | 515               | 7,734          |  |
| Report on transport infrastructure      |                 |                  |                |               |               |               |               |                | 1,775              |                 |                   |                   | 1,775          |  |
| <b>Total for Expenses</b>               | <b>5,651</b>    | <b>10,082</b>    | <b>15,810</b>  | <b>16,753</b> | <b>21,573</b> | <b>16,146</b> | <b>18,718</b> | <b>23,629</b>  | <b>25,821</b>      | <b>24,557</b>   | <b>8,030</b>      | <b>9,220</b>      | <b>195,990</b> |  |
| <b>Net Operating Income</b>             | <b>2,872</b>    | <b>- 4,986</b>   | <b>- 4,324</b> | <b>21,247</b> | <b>25,535</b> | <b>29,458</b> | <b>34,641</b> | <b>32,458</b>  | <b>19,600</b>      | <b>8,541</b>    | <b>94</b>         | <b>- 953</b>      | <b>164,183</b> |  |
| Other Income                            |                 |                  |                |               |               |               |               |                |                    |                 |                   |                   |                |  |
| 130 Interest Received                   |                 | 0                | 3              | 1             | 201           |               | 1             | 0              |                    |                 | 4                 | 0                 | 210            |  |
| <b>Total for Other Income</b>           | <b>-</b>        | <b>0</b>         | <b>3</b>       | <b>1</b>      | <b>201</b>    | <b>-</b>      | <b>1</b>      | <b>0</b>       | <b>-</b>           | <b>-</b>        | <b>4</b>          | <b>0</b>          | <b>210</b>     |  |
| <b>Net Income</b>                       | <b>2,872</b>    | <b>- 4,985</b>   | <b>- 4,320</b> | <b>21,248</b> | <b>25,737</b> | <b>29,458</b> | <b>34,642</b> | <b>32,458</b>  | <b>19,600</b>      | <b>8,541</b>    | <b>97</b>         | <b>- 953</b>      | <b>164,394</b> |  |

## Financial Illustration

A financial illustration has been prepared to consider how the income and expenditure of a new car park at Callop may work once the car park is fully operational using the 2025 existing Glenfinnan base case scenario as a starting point.

### Callop car park income

It is assumed that the pattern of income at Callop will follow a similar seasonal and daily pattern as it does in the existing car park albeit that there will be increased revenue from an additional 198 spaces versus the existing 100 spaces. Income is based on 143 spaces though as the LUC Transportation Note suggests that a minimum target of 143 spaces is required, but possibly up to 170 to provide some future-proofing, therefore it is prudent to use the lower target figure for financial projections.

However, given that it is expected that the existing car park will continue to provide parking which is in closer proximity to the local attractions, therefore Callop with a higher capacity may not fill each space as many times in the day. The assumption has therefore been made that the income will be reduced by 20% per space. This 20% reduction is informed by the LUC report. However, given that the demand peaks in July & August, the shoulder months of April & October have been adjusted by a 40% reduction and May, June & September by 30% reduction to ensure that the projected income is not overstated when there is still some potential capacity at the original car park.

It is also assumed that this new car park will only operate in the 7 main summer months as it does not make sense to operate this larger car park when the original car park is much quieter in the winter months.

It is assumed that at this level of income would be achieved by year 3 with a step up to this level over a 2 year period as knowledge of the new car park facility becomes known and an increased level of usage occurs.

### Car park operating expenses

Car park operating expenses have been informed by the known costs from the existing car park. For most expenses, this assumed that there is a similar level of operating costs for the two car parks, including the same number of car park attendants. The car park is likely to be closed in the winter months, however, as with the original car park, there is anticipated to be some wage costs over the winter as there will be management costs required to prepare for the next season and as with the existing car park the community company has a desire to retain staff even on a part time basis over the winter as a good employer and to maintain continuity of staffing into the subsequent season.

The transaction fee costs however are based on a percentage of the income level to reflect the existing arrangement.

A monthly profit and loss illustration has been prepared for the new car park at Callop.

## Campervan Aires

Option D for car parking includes 24 campervan Aires. An annual income and expenditure illustration has been prepared showing the potential income generated from this additional revenue source.

It is assumed that the Aires will not include electricity hook-ups, but there could be an increased level of income if electricity hook-ups are provided and there would also be associated electricity provision costs as well.

|                                                  |                                                    |                            |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Callop</b>                                    |                                                    |                            |
| <b>Projected Annual Income &amp; Expenditure</b> |                                                    |                            |
| <b>Campervan Aire</b>                            |                                                    |                            |
|                                                  |                                                    | <b>Without electricity</b> |
|                                                  |                                                    |                            |
| <b>Income</b>                                    |                                                    | 24                         |
| Campervan hook-ups                               | £15 per night, seasonal, 60% occupancy, Net of VAT | 32,400                     |
|                                                  |                                                    | 32,400                     |
|                                                  |                                                    |                            |
| <b>Expenditure</b>                               |                                                    |                            |
| Campervan hook-up electricity                    | 10% provision                                      |                            |
| Cleaning                                         | 1hr per day x 26 weeks x £25 plus on costs         |                            |
| Admin                                            | 8hr per week x 26 weeks x £25 plus on costs        | 5,980                      |
|                                                  |                                                    | 5,980                      |
|                                                  |                                                    |                            |
| <b>Net surplus</b>                               |                                                    | <b>26,420</b>              |

## Business Units

Business units would not be built on the site, but this is space available to provide space for the location of 3 mobile units on the site which would be leased for a ground rent to suitable tenants looking to deliver catering and retail opportunities on the site.

Rental income from these units is illustrated at a basic level of £3,000 per annum per unit for the purposes of these projections on the basis that it would be mutually beneficial for the tenants and GCF to have the space occupied and provide additional services to car park users, however, this would be the minimum level of rent suggested. Rent level would need to be considered at the time that the space is being advertised to reflect a reasonable market value rent at that time.

It is assumed that utility costs would be covered by the business unit tenants.

## Summary

A summary of the profit and loss accounts for 5 years are summarised below incorporating the income from campervan Aires and business unit ground rent as well for illustrative purposes.

These operating figures do however show that additional operating revenue of around £41,900 could be generated on an annual basis.

This illustration only takes into account the operating income and expenditure but none of the capital costs or further development opportunities that may be taken forward in relation to environmental restoration or forestry projects.

The cost of delivering rural skills and education in the adjacent woodland area is included in the projections as a cost to be deducted from the overall surplus generated on an annual basis with an assumption that a 25% grant could be obtained to support such a project.

In addition, there is an assumption that the organisation itself would provide a 25% capital contribution towards the boardwalk footpath project that's proposed with the remained of the funding being contributed from grant funding.

The remaining surplus will be required to enable the organisation to provide support the community company's activities as well as providing a capital contribution towards the overall costs of the car park's capital costs.

|                                                                  |                |                |                |                |                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Glenfinnan Enterprises Ltd</b>                                |                |                |                |                |                |
| <b>5 year income &amp; expenditure</b>                           |                |                |                |                |                |
|                                                                  |                |                |                |                |                |
|                                                                  | <b>Year 1</b>  | <b>Year 2</b>  | <b>Year 3</b>  | <b>Year 4</b>  | <b>Year 5</b>  |
| Income                                                           |                |                |                |                |                |
| 1 Car Park Sales                                                 | 360,173        | 370,979        | 382,108        | 393,571        | 405,378        |
| Callop Car Park income                                           | 262,828        | 292,031        | 324,479        | 334,214        | 344,240        |
| Campervan Aires net surplus                                      | 32,900         | 33,887         | 34,904         | 35,951         | 37,029         |
| Business unit rental                                             | 9,000          | 9,270          | 9,548          | 9,835          | 10,130         |
| <b>Total income</b>                                              | <b>664,902</b> | <b>706,167</b> | <b>751,039</b> | <b>773,570</b> | <b>796,777</b> |
| Expenses                                                         |                |                |                |                |                |
| 229 Rent                                                         | 100            | 103            | 106            | 109            | 113            |
| 230 Rates & Water                                                | 4,800          | 4,944          | 5,092          | 5,245          | 5,402          |
| 233 Light & Heat                                                 | 3,000          | 3,090          | 3,183          | 3,278          | 3,377          |
| Insurance                                                        | 12,000         | 12,360         | 12,731         | 13,113         | 13,506         |
| 255 Wages                                                        | 248,000        | 255,440        | 263,103        | 270,996        | 279,126        |
| 263 Telephone & Internet                                         | 1,200          | 1,236          | 1,273          | 1,311          | 1,351          |
| 264 Post & Stationery                                            | 2,400          | 2,472          | 2,546          | 2,623          | 2,701          |
| 272 Repairs & Renewals                                           | 48,000         | 49,440         | 50,923         | 52,451         | 54,024         |
| 280 Sundry                                                       | 600            | 618            | 637            | 656            | 675            |
| 285 Accountancy                                                  | 4,800          | 4,944          | 5,092          | 5,245          | 5,402          |
| 326 Protective clothing                                          | 1,800          | 1,854          | 1,910          | 1,967          | 2,026          |
| 378 Bank Charges                                                 | 50             | 52             | 53             | 55             | 56             |
| 379 Transaction fees                                             | 67,284         | 69,303         | 71,382         | 73,523         | 75,729         |
| <b>Total for Expenses</b>                                        | <b>394,034</b> | <b>405,855</b> | <b>418,031</b> | <b>430,572</b> | <b>443,489</b> |
| <b>Net Operating Income</b>                                      | <b>270,867</b> | <b>300,312</b> | <b>333,008</b> | <b>342,998</b> | <b>353,288</b> |
|                                                                  |                |                |                |                |                |
| <b>Rural skills, volunteering, environmental education costs</b> | 86,075         | 88,657         | 91,317         | 94,056         | 96,878         |
| <b>25% Grant funding towards rural skills project</b>            | - 21,519       | - 22,164       | - 22,829       | - 23,514       | - 24,220       |
|                                                                  |                |                |                |                |                |
| <b>25% contribution towards boardwalk project</b>                |                |                | 58,732         |                |                |
|                                                                  |                |                |                |                |                |
| <b>Net surplus</b>                                               | <b>206,311</b> | <b>233,819</b> | <b>205,789</b> | <b>272,456</b> | <b>280,630</b> |

The figures above illustrate the operation once it is established to illustrate the expected operating potential of the site.

Wage costs could potentially reduce by only looking to have seasonal employment or minimal staffing in the summer months, however, there is an expectation that additional management/marketing costs will arise in order to maximise the traffic management opportunities that will be created by the additional capacity of having the Callop car park. Wages cost allowances have therefore been maintained at a reasonable level to allow for an element of co-ordination in addition to car park attendants.

## 10. Project Development Challenges

There are several issues that could have an impact upon the ability to develop a successful project. These will be addressed as follows:

### Transport Scotland

Prior advice from Transport Scotland had indicated that the development of the site, particularly for coaches would require a significantly improved junction and noted that a 215m visibility splay required for a 60mph carriageway would not be achieved. It therefore suggested carrying out a speed survey which was contracted by LUC as part of this study. The study found that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed was 54.1mph (87kph) which would give a desirable stopping distance of 167m. LUC consider this achievable with the cutting back of vegetation, the removal of the rocky outcrop by the roadside and the widening of junction radii. The full findings are in Chapter 4 of its Transport Note.

### Consent to Develop on Peatland and Natural Heritage Issues

Three separate parties were identified as having a potential interest in the issues associated with developing on peatland: FLS, The Highland Council, and NatureScot. The latter body also has a wider natural heritage interest in designated sites.

#### *FLS*

In discussion with FLS regarding the potential purchase several issues were raised with respect to deep peat:

- The area to the east of the initially identified land at Callop has been designated as a peat recovery area by FLS after trees that were on deep peat have been removed. This is the area that the present consultants have identified as needed additional land for the delivery of a successful project. FLS would need to take into account the risk of fragmentation of habitat.
- It was noted that The Highland Council will take into account developing on peat in its decision-making process for a planning application.
- It was advised that the advice of NatureScot be sought over its view on development on deep peat.

It is considered that the risk of fragmentation of habitat is minor in this case because the area of deep peat in question is at the western extremity of the peat bog area and the area involved is a tiny fraction of the whole.

#### *The Highland Council*

GCF received THC's Pre-Application Advice to its test proposal while this study was underway. The Advice states:

*“The principle of the development is acceptable and is considered to accord with National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Policies 29 (Rural Development) and 30 (Tourism) which supports development where proposals enhance visitor management, improve safety, contribute to rural resilience and relieve pressure on existing infrastructure.”*

With respect to deep peat it advises:

*“The development lies within a Class 1 carbon-rich peatland area, meaning Policy 5 (Soils) of NPF4 applies. A detailed peat survey is required, and the proposal must demonstrate avoidance and minimisation of peat disturbance, with any unavoidable impacts clearly justified. Although community benefit may support the proposal in principle under Policy 5, development on deep peat requires strong evidence and careful design.”*

It further states:

*“Such proposals will only be supported where they fall within one of the policy’s defined categories, including:*

- essential infrastructure with a specific locational need and no reasonable alternative site;*
- renewable energy development that optimises the area’s contribution to emissions-reduction targets;*
- small-scale proposals directly linked to an existing rural business, farm or croft;*
- development that supports a fragile rural or island community; or*
- restoration of peatland habitats.*

The case under the first bullet point would appear to be solid given that the problem being tackled is huge, involves reducing risks on public roads and prior studies have shown that there is no alternative site. That said, further design stages will require to take Policy 5 into full account and seek to minimise peat disturbance through good design and construction processes.

#### *NatureScot*

A NatureScot officer from the Fort William office advised that NatureScot would not take an interest in small scale peat operations outside of designated areas and would leave those issues to be dealt with through the planning process. Species of note in the SSI designation include chequered skipper butterfly, beetles and reptiles. She noted that chequered skippers are unlikely to be in the proposed development area but that the ground is good habitat for reptiles, so adders are likely. When they hibernate they

put down material like carpet tiles and hibernate underneath. Knowledgeable people can therefore know how to find them and can also look for skin sheds etc. If hibernating adders are found these can easily be moved prior to construction.

## Other Planning Issues

The Pre-Application Advice provided by THC is comprehensive and highlights the need for GCF to conduct a number of studies prior to submitting a planning application.

These are:

- A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)
- Drainage Impact Assessment (DIA)
- Transport Statement
- Protected Species Survey
- Tree Survey

Specific species can require surveying at specific times of the year. GCF will therefore engage an ecologist at the earliest opportunity to consider when surveys will need to be carried out. NatureScot will be happy to review a survey report prior to planning submission to ensure that it is in the correct form.

## 11. Funding Opportunities

GCF will need to draw together a complete funding package that will cover the capital costs of the provision of a mobility hub incorporating the necessary parking, building provision and associated infrastructure. Further funding will be required to deliver the active travel route to Glenfinnan and to support community and educational activities in the Callop woodland.

The following are a number of key funders to which GCF could apply:

1. **Scottish Land Fund.** The fund has £8m/yr for community purchases of land and other assets. It can give up to 95% grant on capital and revenue costs, although with restricted funds at the current time grant rates in the region of 70% or less are becoming more common. GCF can apply for Stage 2 funding towards the purchase price and associated legal costs. If GCF is able to secure a discount on the sale price of the property to be purchased from FLS this can be credited as a community contribution.
2. **Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund<sup>21</sup>.** This fund has been running for some years now and is administered through local authorities with large capital awards being made for some projects. It favours projects with strong community input and community-led projects have been successful in securing funding in recent years. In 2025-26 six of the fourteen awards were for sums in excess of £1m with the largest award being for £2.14m. Stage 1 applications which submit outline details of a project generally need to be submitted by May/June of each year and if successful a detailed Stage 2 application is submitted in September-November, with construction works to be delivered in the following financial year.
3. **Highland Council Capital Discretionary Fund.** This fund offers grants of between £10,000 and £250,000 to community projects. The funding covers capital costs only and there is an expectation that it will be combined with other funds.
4. **Highland Coastal Communities Fund.** Highland Council administers this funding which comes through the Scottish Government distributing 50% of annual profits generated by the Crown Estate. In 2021/22 the allocation for Lochaber was £562,032<sup>22</sup> from a total available of £3,260,091 across Highland region. The average award level was £34,758 and of the 94 projects funded across the Highland Council area 42 were for “Community Facilities/Infrastructure”. Grant awards for individual projects are expected to be in the range of £5-100,000. The Highland allocation for 2025-26 had risen to

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/policies/regeneration/capital-investment/>

<sup>22</sup> [Highland Coastal Communities Fund | Highland Coastal Communities Fund 2021/22 Review](#)

£3,886,450. Projects must be within 5km of the coast to be eligible. Callop is within 5km of the western shore of Loch Eil.

5. **Highlands & Islands Enterprise.** HIE's resources have been reduced in recent years but the organisation is still able to contribute significantly to community-led projects. HIE would most likely play a smaller role in funding and make any contribution once an overall funding package becomes clearer, following contributions from principal funders.
6. **Private Grant-making Trusts.** There are a number of private trusts that support community and natural heritage projects. Their support levels will be lower than the main funders but could be crucial in completing a package of funding. Key trusts to which GCF could apply include:
  - a. Garfield Weston Foundation
  - b. Hugh Fraser Foundation
  - c. Esmee Fairbairn Foundation

## 12. Project Development Strategy

The benefits arising from community ownership will only occur in full once all elements of the project are completed and operational. Specifically, this will not be at the point of purchase of the land but once all the developments that GCF wishes to be carried out are completed.

The following set of actions outline a process for GCF during project development and delivery:

1. **Negotiation.** GCF will negotiate with FLS with a view to purchasing all the land that is necessary to deliver sustainable transport solutions for the Glenfinnan community. It will also negotiate with Fassfern estate to buy necessary land between the old road and the realigned A830.
2. **Apply for Scottish Land Fund funding for site purchase.** Application to approval may take 3 -4 months.
3. **Tender for design process.** A brief will be prepared and tendered for a design team to develop a detailed and final design scheme, to prepare documents for tendering the construction phase and to oversee construction. Studies to be included as part of this process are:
  - A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)
  - Drainage Impact Assessment (DIA)
  - Transport Statement
  - Protected Species Survey
  - Tree Survey
4. **Planning Permission.** The proposals will require planning permission for a significant development out with the existing settlement. GCF will continue to engage with planners and make a timely application for planning permission for the mobility hub and associated facilities.
5. **Exercise option to purchase the site.** The purchase process could take 2-6 months depending upon the speed of the acting solicitors and any issues affecting the title.
6. **Develop a funding package for redevelopment.** Applications will be made to a range of funders (See Section 11) following the completion of Step 4. Funding will be sought for the design process, followed by construction.
7. **Tender for proposed works.** Tendering will occur following the completion of a funding package using the Public Contracts Scotland portal to maximise the number of tender returns.
8. **Carry out proposed works.** Selected contractor to redevelop the property.

## 13. Risk Analysis

| Table 1: Risk Factors and Mitigation                    |               |                 |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Risk Factor                                             | Likelihood    | Scale of Impact | Description of Impact                                                                                                                   | Mitigation                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b><i>Present through to purchase</i></b>               |               |                 |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| FLS unwilling to sell                                   | Low           | High            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase unable to proceed</li> </ul>                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain good relationships with FLS</li> </ul>                                                                                                                  |
| Unable to agree a sale price                            | Low           | Medium to High  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delay to purchase</li> </ul>                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open negotiations with FLS</li> <li>Agree a joint valuation at SLF Stage 2</li> </ul>                                                                            |
| Fassfern unwilling to sell land for junction            | Low           | High            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inability to create compliant junction</li> <li>Inability to gain planning permission</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued engagement with Fassfern at all stages of plan development</li> </ul>                                                                                  |
| Application for SLF Stage 2 Funding refused             | Medium        | High            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to fund purchase much reduced.</li> </ul>                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore Crowdfunding and philanthropic options.</li> </ul>                                                                                                       |
| Inability to match-fund SLF award to close funding gap  | Low           | Medium to High  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to raise purchase price.</li> <li>Inability to purchase assets</li> </ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negotiate a valuation discount with FLS</li> <li>Develop and promote Crowdfunding appeal.</li> <li>Fund from reserves</li> </ul>                                 |
| <b><i>For Callop Mobility Hub</i></b>                   |               |                 |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Planning permission for change of use of site refused   | Medium        | High            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inability to redevelop for proposed uses.</li> </ul>                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to engage with planning authority and modify proposals if necessary.</li> </ul>                                                                         |
| Failure to agree joint solution for Glenfinnan with NTS | Low to Medium | Medium          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less than optimal solution to parking issues in Glenfinnan</li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue constructive engagement with NTS</li> <li>Negotiate with best outcome for community in mind</li> <li>Adjust proposals for Callop if required</li> </ul> |

| Table 1: Risk Factors and Mitigation                                                |             |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Risk Factor                                                                         | Likelihood  | Scale of Impact | Description of Impact                                                                                                                                                              | Mitigation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Unable to secure a funding package                                                  | Medium      | High            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project could not proceed in its current form.</li> <li>Delay to project delivery</li> </ul>                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply to a broad range of funders.</li> <li>Engage fully with each funding body.</li> <li>Identify alternative funders if one or more decline funding.</li> <li>Amend project plans to meet funding criteria if this does not compromise project goals.</li> <li>Carry out project in stages if funding limitations necessitate</li> <li>Employ a fundraiser to meet funding targets</li> </ul> |
| Tenders come in over budget                                                         | Medium/High | High            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delay to awarding build contract</li> </ul>                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all costs are as accurate at possible when budget prepared by QS.</li> <li>Maximise number of tenders by directly approaching local contractors and advertising on Public Contracts Scotland</li> <li>Retender if specific factors suggest better responses may occur.</li> <li>Carry out value engineering exercise and retender</li> </ul>                                             |
| Unexpected additional works arising from ground conditions or condition of building | Medium      | Medium          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased total project cost.</li> <li>Delays to completion</li> </ul>                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximise certainty of works required through prior surveys.</li> <li>Ensure bills of quantities accurately reflect drawings</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Operational:</b>                                                                 |             |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Additional capacity is not sufficient to meet demand                                | Medium      | High            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued problem of unsafe parking practices</li> <li>Risk of injury to pedestrians on road</li> <li>Slowing of traffic on A830</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure quality data collection of vehicle numbers and modelling of predicted usage prior to finalising design.</li> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

| Table 1: Risk Factors and Mitigation                                           |               |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Risk Factor                                                                    | Likelihood    | Scale of Impact | Description of Impact                                                                                                                                                                    | Mitigation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Parking on A830 persists                                                       | Low to Medium | High            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued problem of unsafe parking practices</li> <li>Risk of injury to pedestrians on road</li> <li>Slowing of traffic on A830</li> </ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise prior awareness of mobility hub through communications strategy and high-quality on-site signage</li> <li>Site run efficiently to give confidence of speedy transfers</li> <li>Close of casual parking opportunities between hub and Glenfinnan</li> <li>Continued presence of traffic warden</li> </ul> |
| Insufficient transfer bus capacity                                             | Low to Medium | High            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long queues develop</li> <li>Visitors become impatient/angry with staff</li> <li>Individuals decide to walk/run along road to viaduct</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage early arrival</li> <li>Encourage use of active travel options</li> <li>Plan for maximum demand</li> <li>Have additional rapidly deployable bus capacity agreed with transport provider</li> <li>Monitor use closely and adjust bus provision as necessary</li> </ul>                                 |
| Inability to secure staff                                                      | Medium        | High            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor management within parking facility</li> <li>Slower turnaround times</li> <li>Inefficient use of space</li> <li>Disappointed users</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advertise widely and early each season</li> <li>Offer good remuneration and employment packages</li> <li>Provide quality training opportunities</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                     |
| Poor experience of staffing                                                    | Low to Medium | Medium to High  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negative reviews on social media</li> <li>Reputational damage</li> </ul>                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide quality customer service training to all staff</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>For Callop Woodland:</b>                                                    |               |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Inability to access large areas of the site (possible SAC or SSI restrictions) | Medium        | Medium          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to riparian woodland restricted / opportunities for floodplain planting limited</li> </ul>                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare work programme for constructing short/linked sections of path/boardwalk</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Windblown trees across paths/road                                              | Medium        | Medium          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trees blown over, restricting vehicular access along forest haul road or blocking footpath</li> </ul>                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timber Growing Insurance</li> <li>Routine inspections</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Pest or disease in forest or young trees                                       | Medium        | Medium / High   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High mortality amongst</li> </ul>                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timber Growing Insurance</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

| Table 1: Risk Factors and Mitigation                                    |            |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Risk Factor                                                             | Likelihood | Scale of Impact | Description of Impact                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Mitigation                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Member of the public injured by falling tree limbs/tree                 | Low        | High            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member of the public walking along paths hit by falling tree limb</li> </ul>                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Liability Insurance, annual inspection of old, diseased trees adjacent to access</li> </ul>                                                                                             |
| Lack of numbers for training, volunteering and apprenticeship programme | Low        | Medium          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inability to run courses, woodland activities, guided walks due to lack of numbers</li> </ul>                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise profile of woodland management aspect of project, recruiting suitably experienced and skilled Seasonal Ranger</li> </ul>                                                                 |
| <b>General:</b>                                                         |            |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Erosion of support from partner organisations                           | Low        | High            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inability to deliver identified benefits.</li> <li>Loss of local credibility and support.</li> </ul>                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work closely and ensure benefits accrue to all parties.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                 |
| Lack of skills/ capacity to deliver                                     | Low        | High            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inability to successfully manage mobility hub, transfer service and woodland resource.</li> <li>Loss of credibility in community</li> <li>Inability to access development funding</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentoring</li> <li>Recruitment of new directors with relevant skills.</li> <li>Training for Directors &amp; Others</li> <li>Use contracts to buy in technical expertise as required</li> </ul> |
| Volunteer fatigue means reduced ability to deliver.                     | Medium     | High            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inability to maintain site and service.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aim to secure higher numbers of volunteers via Working Groups to spread workload.</li> <li>Recruitment of staff for key activities to reduce overall volunteer workload.</li> </ul>            |