

Hello everyone, and welcome to our latest update.

We've got a lot of exciting news to share with you, from a new name for our organisation to the launch of our community's very first Community Action Plan.

New Name, Same Community Spirit

You may have noticed a change! At our last AGM, our members voted to change our name from Glengarry Community Woodlands to ***Glengarry Community Development Trust***.

This new name better reflects the role that we have grown to take on in the community. While we'll probably always be known locally as "the woodlands," we are increasingly involved in strategic discussions with developers and funders. The new name will allow developers to understand our role in the community better, and work with us as they do in other communities.

The name became official this summer, but we're still waiting for a few things to change (such as our Facebook account!).



A New Business Plan & New Staff

We send our thanks to everyone in the community for your patience regarding our project timelines. Getting our unique, self-funding business model right has taken time. It has proven successful and is held in high regard across Scotland, with community groups using our projects as a blueprint for their own work. As we enter the next phase of being a Development Trust, we are committed to delivering more projects for our community.

To achieve this and to build on our momentum, we recognise that we will need to expand our staff team.

To guide this expansion, we're working on a new Business Plan which will help set our strategic direction for the coming years. We are aware of the need to grow and develop in a sustainable way. One of the challenges we face is the nature of our projects which are often quite stop-start, making it hard to create permanent staff positions.

However, with guidance and support from others in the sector, we're now ready to take this step.



Over the winter, we will be recruiting for new staff to join the team, covering areas such as managing the organisation's finances, additional development staff, and positions to help run Glengarry Forest Cabins. We are keen to ensure these permanent, flexible employment opportunities are open to our community. If you are looking for a fair employer and a friendly team (with an office wood burner!), please keep an eye out in the new year for available roles here.

The increase in staff will be supported by an expansion of the office space at the old forestry depot, where the organisation has been based since it was formed in 2015.



Welcoming New Faces to Our Board

Delivering the projects our community wants is our top priority, and that requires the right leadership to guide our growth. While a larger staff team will be part of our future, we have been fortunate to expand our board of directors recently. We are delighted to welcome our new additions to the Board;



Dion 'Di' Alexander

Di's Glengarry journey began in the 1970s. He and his family settled at Tornacarry in 1983, with all four children attending Invergarry village school. Whilst living in the glen, Di began his housing career, setting up Lochaber Housing Association and The Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust. Now in his 80s, Di is still actively involved in affordable housing and community development. He remains deeply attached to Glengarry and is happy to do whatever he can to support the community.



Ben Thompson

Ben is a Lochaber native, having grown up in Glen Nevis. He represented our community as an independent Highland councillor from 2014 to 2021 and helped with many local issues, including the primary school redevelopment and liaison with SSE over Coire Glas. Ben now works for Inspiring Scotland (an organisation that has supported us in the past) and brings much professional and personal experience, including directorship of other community trusts like the Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust.

Ben said: "GCDT has developed tremendously over the past ten years and will be a key factor in ensuring the sustainability and success of the Glengarry community."



John Henshall

John trained initially with HMRC before moving to private practice. He became an equity Partner in the world's largest business consulting firm in 2001 and remained there, becoming the lead Technical Partner until retirement in 2022. In his career he has been consulted by the largest international companies and by Governments, and he authored a world best-selling technical work, used by Universities, advisors and Governments throughout the world.

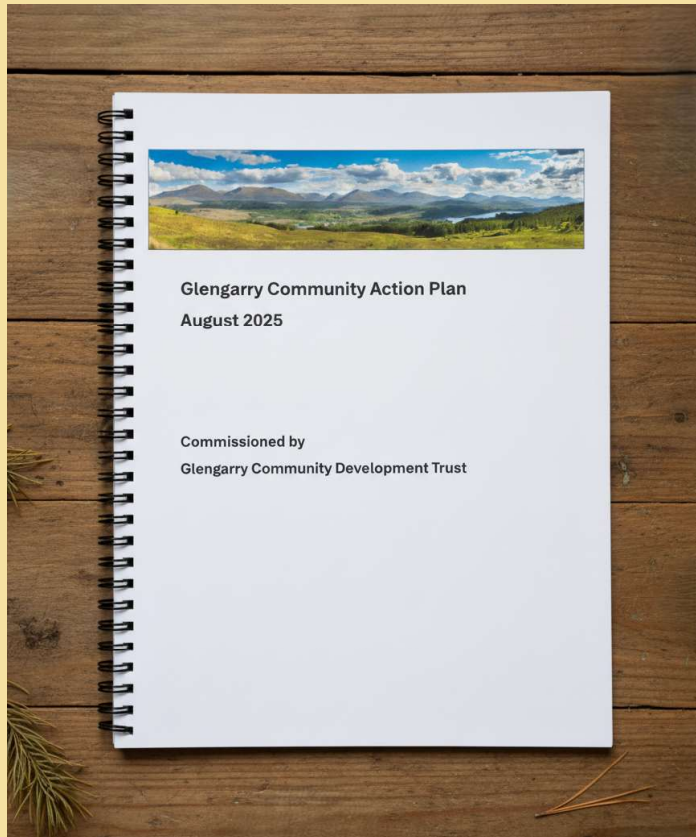
John lives with his wife in the Glen at Ardochy House. He is Treasurer for the Glengarry Kirk and he checks & signs-off the accounts for the Community Council. He joined us as a Director because of a passionate desire to see improvements for all residents of the Glen, particularly in housing for local people.

The new board members will work with our existing board to ensure that our organisation is strong and can meet the challenges that our community faces.



Glengarry's First Ever Community Action Plan is Ready!

We are very pleased to announce that the first **Community Action Plan (CAP)** for Glengarry is complete and will be launched at our upcoming AGM. It will also be available on our website.



This plan marks the end of a long period of consultation exercises which everyone in Glengarry was invited to take part in. It has been entirely shaped by our community, pooling our wishes and needs into one coherent set of priorities.

It highlights the priorities and aspirations of everyone who took part, as well as identifying the challenges that we all face living in Glengarry. It covers housing, infrastructure, our local economy and employment, services, and more. The plan will be a guide for our work in the coming years.

"By setting out a shared vision and a set of agreed actions, the CAP empowers local organisations and residents to work together more effectively, attract additional support and hold decision-makers accountable."

The Community Action Plan was recently endorsed by our MSP, Kate Forbes.

"It's inspiring to see Glengarry continuing to shape their own future with such vision and determination. The Community Action Plan shows what can be achieved when local people take the lead - from their ambitious plans to tackle the housing shortage, to protecting the area's natural and cultural heritage."

Glengarry is a brilliant example of a community working together to make their locality a sustainable and thriving place for the future generations. I wholeheartedly commend their bold plans, and wish them all the best for the years to come."

- Kate Forbes





Many of the issues the plan identified are not unique to Glengarry, but by clearly identifying them in this way, we have something to help guide the development of our community over the next 5-10 years. The actions in the plan are ambitious; some may happen quickly, while others will take many years of hard work and collaboration, but our community now has a roadmap to making that happen.

One of the strengths it does identify is that of community spirit. Thank you to everyone who contributed. Your voices continue to shape Glengarry's future.

Glengarry Housing Needs Survey

Running alongside the Community Action Plan, the **Housing Needs Survey** was another piece of consultancy that we commissioned this year. It was funded by SSER following discussions with the Coire Glas team about legacy projects.



Most people in Glengarry are aware of the severe lack of housing in the area, and the impact this has on local businesses, the primary school, and the delivery of essential services. The Housing Needs Survey aims to give specific insight into exactly what kind of housing is needed to build for our future and it specifically asked residents and non-residents about their priorities.

Some of the key findings include:

- 9 respondents are looking to move to Glengarry (4 looking to rent and 3 wanting to purchase).
- 4 of the households looking to relocate to the area have 1 or more children under 16. Given the ageing population in the area coupled with population projections, it is vital for the primary school roll that families with children remain in / move to the area.
- The survey also revealed 8 "potential home leavers" who wish to set up households within the next 5 years. These are young people who are nearly ready to leave home and want to stay in Glengarry.



For Glengarry Community Development Trust, a key priority for identifying future projects will be the ability to deliver housing that is accessible to people with average incomes. Our new housing projects must therefore be affordable and managed in a way that meets the needs of this demographic.



The survey will help us to plan for new housing in Glengarry and highlights the need for a range of homes of different sizes. It isn't just about staff accommodation, or large family homes, we also need small apartments for younger people, and likewise for older people who want to down-size.



The Old Hatchery & The River Garry

We have been working our hardest to make sure that our community gets as much as it can from the developers that are in Glengarry.

For example, we are in negotiations about the former hatchery site in the middle of Invergarry which we hope will be transferred to the community. Discussions with SSER have been very positive and are ongoing. The area of land here would be a suitable site for smaller-scale housing or flats which our community desperately needs. The addition of this site to other land within community ownership would ensure that developments there would only happen after the community has had its say, and in collaboration with all concerned.

We've also been talking to SSER about other significant local assets, which include the River Garry (from the Garry Dam to just above the estuary). In recent years, management of the river has not delivered as much for the whole community as it could have, and we hope there may be scope to change that.



An Update on Community Land Projects: Ardochy & Greenfield

As our long-term efforts at Ardochy near a new milestone, we're also exploring a rare opportunity at Greenfield; two challenging but exciting projects.

Ardochy: Woodland Crofts and Affordable Community Homes

This has been a long and challenging journey, but meaningful progress is being made.

The original application faced objections from SEPA, primarily related to flood risk and drainage. SEPA and the Flood Risk Management Team at the Highland Council had concerns about the lack of clarity on the extent of localised flood risk, historic watercourses, and water levels on Loch Garry. The Highland Council issued a Regulation 24 letter requesting specific information that would take several months to compile. As a result the planning officer advised that a formal withdrawal and resubmission would be the cleanest route forward, especially considering the significant changes needed to the site layout, removal of future plots, and infrastructure.

The delays were caused by a complex and iterative process of technical revisions, consultations, and environmental assessments, including:



- **Flood Risk Assessment:** Engineers revised the flood modeling and layout multiple times to meet SEPA's requirements and objections. This included updated visibility splays, drainage impact assessments, and compensatory tree planting proposals. SEPA raised further objections to the flood risk on the water channel to the west of the site with concerns about the potential increase in risk to the MOWI compound and existing road.
- **Peat Survey:** A detailed peat survey was conducted to avoid development on sensitive areas, leading to significant layout changes.
- **Biodiversity and Habitat Surveys:** Consultants confirmed no major issues but required additional documentation for species and habitat impact. There was a delay in receiving the Biodiversity Nett Gain data.
- **Forestry and Woodland Policy Compliance:** The business plan to be updated to address woodland removal concerns under the new NPF4 policies. The Council required clearer justification for woodland loss and compensatory planting, as well as justification for including crofts with associated houses and affordable houses.
- **Business Plan:** A business plan was required to justify the need for houses and crofts.
- Seasonal and staffing delays, including holidays and coordination across agencies (e.g., SEPA, Highland Council, consultants), also added to the timeline.

Nevertheless, the project is an important one for long term sustainability as it allows for much needed housing which will be managed specifically to meet local needs. We remain fully committed to working with people who live near to the site to ensure the project doesn't adversely affect or disrupt any services.

Greenfield: A Once-in-a-Generation Opportunity

During the Ardoch application, we were notified by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) of an opportunity to potentially acquire the buildings at Greenfield. While the timing may not be ideal, it is a unique and valuable opportunity to acquire a land asset on behalf of the local community.

With the knowledge and experience gained from the Ardoch project, we are approaching this with "eyes open" to what may be expected from statutory bodies. Key challenges include flooding and access. In September, we submitted a robust pre-application planning enquiry to the Highland Council. This is an essential step to establish viability, and we await a response. The Greenfield pre-application presents a multi-stage project, starting on a small scale with the end goal of creating a small, sustainable rural community at Greenfield once more.

While we await feedback, we have hosted a visit to the site with key FLS staff in October. The Community Asset Transfer Team and local planners visited to discuss options for community management. Despite the heavy rain battering down on us, it was a very positive meeting and we look forward to sharing options with the community in the new year.





Our AGM and a Note on Membership

Most people reading this will be aware that we called an AGM in the autumn and then postponed it. There were two reasons for this:

- Membership Applications: We received an unusually high number of applications for membership, all submitted on the same day and within two hours. Furthermore, the applications all appeared to come from a small number of home addresses. We felt it was important we ensured our membership application process was clear and robust, and have been working on this with support from our solicitors and other experts.
- The Community Action Plan: We were keen to finalise the CAP as it is a significant piece of work. There were slight delays, but we now have a Plan that really delivers on the community's ambition. We want to formally launch this at the AGM and hope as many people as possible, especially those who contributed, can come along

We are always keen to expand our membership!

Membership has gone from roughly 90 members in 2015 to around 65 today. We appreciate the support of all members for our work. We welcome further public representation from the community, please get in touch for more information.

To become an Ordinary Member (with full voting rights) you must:

- Be 18 years old or older.
- Be ordinarily resident in one of our postcodes (PH34 4EA, PH34 4EB, PH35 4HA, PH35 4HB, PH35 4HD, PH35 4HG, PH35 4HH, PH35 4HJ, PH35 4HL, PH35 4HP, PH35 4HR, PH35 4HS). This means it's your main home.
- Be entitled to vote at a local government election here.
- Support the purposes and activities of the Trust.
- (We also have Associate Membership for those who support our aims but live elsewhere, and provisions for younger members.)

We are very happy to chat to anyone interested in becoming a Member. Please get in touch via email at: woodlands@glengarry.org.uk

We will be re-scheduling the AGM very shortly and will inform all members as soon as we have a date confirmed.





A Fond Farewell and a Fresh Look at Events

As we come towards the end of 2025, we want to let our community know that our Community Woodland Officer, Bruce, has moved on from his role. Over the past three years, Bruce has played a key part in our work and wider community life.

We're incredibly grateful for his dedication, and he'll be greatly missed. We wish him all the very best.



Looking ahead, we've decided to pause our community events programme for the time being. This short break will give us space to reflect, plan, and ensure that future events are relevant, inclusive, and meaningful for everyone in Glengarry.

In the new year, we'll be inviting the community to help shape what comes next. We're looking forward to hearing your ideas and building something together that truly reflects local interests and energy.

Thank you for your continued support,

**The Glengarry Community
Development Trust Team**

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