

Community Ownership of Land Assets in Portree

Business Plan for Portree & Braes Community Trust



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PART ONE: THE BUSINESS PLAN IN CONTEXT

1. Introduction

In December 2017 Portree & Braes Community Trust (PBCT) commissioned the current consultants to undertake an assessment of development options for several areas of land in Portree that Fearann Eilean Iarmain (FEI) has offered to sell to the Trust. These areas of land were included in FEI's purchase of 23,000 acres of land on the Sleat peninsula from MacDonald Estates in 1972. As such, they are incidental to the main FEI estate. However, the land areas are highly significant to the community of Portree and Braes, given that greenspace for amenity and recreation is at a premium in Skye's main settlement. The areas of land that FEI originally offered to sell to the Trust include:

- **Am Meall na h-Acairsaid** (known locally as 'the Lump'). The site includes a natural amphitheatre which is the location for the annual Skye Games, one of the highlights of the summer social calendar on the island. The Lump's elevated location provides a good walking route and an excellent viewing point overlooking Portree Bay. The amphitheatre is owned by the Skye Gathering who lease the land to the Isle of Skye Highland Games.
- **King George V Playing Field**, of which 2.91 ha (7.2 acres) are leased to Highland Council on a 99-year lease from Whitsun 1949 for use only as playing fields/recreation.
- **Bayfield Amenity Ground** (and Bayfield Boat House).
- **Pairc nan Laoch (Skye Camanachd Shinty Pitch)**. The site encompasses pitch and clubhouse facilities in Portree and is leased to Skye Camanachd.
- **Sulaisiadar Common Grazing**, adjacent to Pairc nan Laoch.

Following on from the original offer to sell Pairc nan Laoch to the Trust, FEI has subsequently gifted that land to Skye Camanachd. It is therefore not covered in this business plan.

The overarching aim for PBCT taking ownership of the land being offered for sale is to safeguard its use within the community for amenity and recreational purposes, both now and for future generations. As such, the objectives of the feasibility study were as follows:

- To review the potential to develop and use the land assets as well as identifying any potential liabilities to be considered;
- To identify social, economic and environmental benefits of the proposed land purchases;
- To assess the market for the proposed uses of the assets;
- To identify and consider the costs of running and managing the asset and opportunities to generate income from the assets;

- To review funding availability for the proposed project/acquisition and prepare a detailed funding strategy and delivery plan;
- To prepare a feasibility study and five-year business plan which incorporates initial revenue costs, capital costs to create the facilities, on-going revenue and maintenance costs for the project, and risk analysis;
- To provide an outline work plan for the development stage of the project.

2. Key Findings

The following key findings emerged from the feasibility study:

- There is a clear demand for greenspace for amenity and recreational use in Portree and Braes. Such space is particularly valued in Portree as a result of the relatively limited nature of existing provision. The limitations of existing provision are exacerbated by demographic change in Portree which has experienced considerable increase in population in recent decades and has a younger age profile than the wider Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross area as a whole.
- The *'Portree and Braes Community Conversations'* project identified lack of and under-use of community facilities, lack of maintenance and investment in such facilities and inadequate infrastructure as areas to be addressed to deliver wider community benefits. Findings from the community consultation undertaken for this feasibility study echo these concerns and indicate that development options for particular sites being offered by FEI for sale to PBCT can help in delivering community benefits.
- The Lump is viewed as an iconic location, both for Portree and Braes and for Skye as a whole, which provides economic and social benefits for the community, primarily in its capacity as a venue for open-air events. However, it is viewed by consultees as an under-utilised asset, the amenity value of which could be further enhanced via more structured maintenance and development. Such developments could include: increasing occasional events on the site; providing a permanent electricity supply; introducing small-scale catering facilities; improving access arrangements and associated physical infrastructure; and making improvements to the Tower.
- The King George V Playing Field is highly valued as an important greenspace to be maintained and protected so as to maximise its recreational use for the community. There are drainage issues which compromise the Playing Field's current capacity to be used to best effect for the community. Potential improvements to the field could include; defining a pitch area and improving pitch management, improving drainage and field surface; providing a hard-standing area for the annual agricultural show and other uses, creating a family-friendly park area.
- Bayfield is valued by the local community as both a greenspace to be retained and further developed in terms of its recreational and amenity benefits. The site also

offers potential for income generation under community ownership which can be used to help support other community initiatives as appropriate.

- Community ownership of Sulaisiadar Common Grazing provides potential opportunities for development in relation to woodland or a micro-hydro scheme. The crofters are understandably cautious about the former due to the small size of the common grazing and the latter is presently not viable due to falling fiscal incentives. This may change with future UK Government policies. However, community ownership of the site under PBCT can be pursued in order to safeguard opportunities for long-term development and any future benefits accruing to the Landlord on behalf of the Portree and Braes community.
- There are various development and/or management roles that PBCT may wish to undertake in relation to particular sites, including '*direct delivery*', '*partnership working*' and '*enabling*'. These roles will require careful consideration in terms of the Trust's development and management functions in relation to the King George V Playing Field and the Lump in particular.
- The main community benefits arising from PBCT's ownership of particular sites being offered for sale are likely to be social and environmental as a consequence of retaining existing greenspace and further enhancing its amenity value. The Bayfield site, in particular, offers opportunities for income generation (through, for example, provision of campervan hook-ups) which may be used to support other initiatives in which PBCT may engage to generate further community benefits.
- There are a variety of funding sources to which applications can be made to support purchase of the sites and their subsequent development and management as appropriate.

PART TWO: DEVELOPING THE LAND AREAS AS COMMUNITY ASSETS

3. Development Proposals

The sites currently being offered by FEI for sale - the Lump, King George V Playing Field, Bayfield, and Sulaisiadar common grazing - are divided into 4 separate parcels which are spread out through Portree over a distance of more than a mile. The sites principally have amenity and recreational uses with the exception of Sulaisiadar common grazing which is used for rough grazing of livestock. The latter site is also distinctive in that it is subject to crofting legislation which provides the shareholders in the grazing with specific rights of tenure which are not available to the wider community. The fragmented nature of the sites for sale, their small size and existing uses mean that there are challenges to be faced in delivering a financially viable project under community ownership that would not be present if the land was consolidated into a single block. Each site, together with related financial opportunities, income, cost and any liabilities, has to be assessed on an individual basis. In contrast, a single, larger parcel of land would offer more opportunities for crossover between initiatives with potential for costs being minimised by sharing them.

Despite these challenges, the sites collectively represent an important strategic asset for Portree and Braes. As noted in the feasibility study, community ownership and management of particular sites will lead to significant benefits for the community, helping to address limitations in existing greenspace provision and associated infrastructure. There are a number of potential opportunities available for developing the sites individually and developing links between them collectively to enhance their existing uses, while also generating sufficient revenue to cover operational costs. The following analysis covers the sites in a roughly east to west arc, starting with “the Lump” and finishing with the Sulaisiadar common grazing.

4. The Lump

Meall na h-Acairseid, otherwise known as “the Lump” is a promontory of land overlooking Portree Harbour with steep wooded banks dropping to the shore. Although only about 50m above sea level it provides excellent views and is a popular spot for visitors and locals for recreational use. It has a natural amphitheatre which hosts the Skye Highland Games annually in August and more recently, the Skye Live music festival in September. The amphitheatre was previously sold to the Skye Gathering who have leased it to Skye Highland Games.

In addition to the amphitheatre there is a tower on the highest point known as the Apothecary’s Tower with an internal steel staircase allowing the able-bodied to climb to the top and get excellent views. The Tower suffers from spray painted graffiti at ground level and it appears that some of the cornice stones have been deliberately broken away from the top and are lying on the ground below. There is a network of footpaths running through and around the site, including one which is on the slopes below the level of the arena and which has a relatively recent wooden handrail on its lower side.

PBCT proposes a number of ways in which the Lump could be developed to maximise benefit to the local community and visitors while also retaining its essential character. These proposals will be implemented subject to reaching a mutually beneficial tri-partite agreement between PBCT, Skye Gathering and Skye Highland Games. They include:

- a. **Increasing occasional events.** The existing use of the Lump for major events occurs in the mid to latter part of the tourist season. Minor events attracting smaller numbers of attendees (e.g. local one-off arts events) could take place at almost any time without causing damage to the ground that would require recovery time. Additional major events could potentially take place if at least 6 weeks were allowed between events to allow time for trampled grass to recover. A key consideration in developing a programme of occasional events is to ensure that the condition of the grass is not compromised for the Highland Games, for which a good quality surface is extremely important.

It is proposed to initially trial one major event early in the season to assess the level of management required and impact upon later season activities. Temporary protective matting will be used in high impact areas to minimise damage and enhance recovery times. Increased usage of the site will potentially allow for investment in the facilities there, which would enhance the delivery of events by all users. An additional event will yield a rental income from the event's promoters or could be run by PBCT as a fundraising as well as a community social event. A single major event could raise something in the order of £3000 which will then be used to cover insurance and basic maintenance costs.

- b. **Provide a permanent electricity supply.** The hum of generators is a common sound at occasional outdoor events. While people accept this, a permanent grid-connected supply will definitely improve the experience. It will remove the time and costs associated with generator hire and installation and also remove a potential safety and pollution risk from fuel handling activities. The provision of an electricity supply will also open up other development opportunities as discussed below.
- c. **Small-scale catering.** Outdoor recreational areas often have food and drink provision in the form of a small hut, cabin or ice-cream van. There is potential for this at the Lump but it will depend on public acceptance of the idea and PBCT are mindful of possible issues of displacement from other cafes etc in the village. No such concerns have been raised to date. If no such concerns are expressed following further consultation, PBCT will aim to offer a concession to a private operator who will pay a rent for the privilege.
- d. **Access Improvements.** Access to the Lump is currently reasonable but improvements could be made for people with mobility issues. Some parts of paths are muddy from long term leaf litter and are narrower and have steeper gradients than recommended for the less physically able. PBCT will seek to improve path quality in this very important location adjacent to the centre of the village. The supply of electricity on-site would also offer the opportunity to light the paths at night. Dark, wooded places tend to be unappealing. Lighting can make them more

appealing, visible and safe. Modern LED lights use much less electricity than older types and modern systems are far better designed to project light downwards and reduce light pollution. A well-designed system of well-maintained paths will make the Lump a popular recreational area in the evening as well as during the daytime. In the peak summer months from mid-May until early August there would be little need for the system but it could prove of real benefit to visitors in the shoulder months and to locals all year round (even if running costs determined a restricted lighting schedule).

- e. **Tower Improvements.** As noted above, the tower provides an excellent viewing platform but suffers from graffiti and vandalism. This tends to happen where there is a lack of a sense of community ownership (in the widest sense of the concept) and the location is not well frequented (particularly at night). Cutting back the undergrowth close to the tower, removing the existing graffiti and repairing the existing masonry damage will be positive steps. Sensitive lighting of the tower may also help to discourage further vandalism.

5. Financial Implications of Purchasing and Developing the Lump

Base Case Scenario

If PBCT were to purchase the outer part of the Lump with no agreement in place with Skye Gathering and Skye Camanachd there is a potential financial liability estimated at £3000/yr for tree management on the site, with no current sources of income.

Development Scenario

The value in taking on ownership of the FEI-owned Lump site is in the ability to generate additional revenue by holding additional events on the site as a whole. This will only be possible with the full co-operation the Skye Games, as the current tenant of the site and a partnership arrangement would need to be entered into to enable that to happen. As a conservative estimate, it is assumed that an additional £3,000 will be generated from one additional event per annum starting in Year 2, with a second significant event starting in Year 4 generating a similar sum. This will be a useful source of revenue to help cover future maintenance costs of the site. Upon taking ownership of the FEI-owned part of the Lump, the Trust will undertake capital works regarding access and to the Tower for which it will make grant applications to cover the majority of the costs.

Negotiations are currently taking place to establish how a tripartite agreement between the Skye Games, Skye Gathering and PBCT for the operation and maintenance of the site could be mutually beneficial. For the purposes of the financial projections it is assumed that the Trust will have an ongoing maintenance cost for the Lump of approximately £3,000 if a mutual agreement is reached between the three parties. It is further assumed that the aforementioned cost will be covered by contributions from the Skye Gathering and Skye Games. That will enable the Trust to use the income generated from any events held to be used for additional development purposes.

An estimate of £70,000 of capital costs have been included in the financial illustration to allow for work to the Tower, provision of an electricity supply and to improve access. Grant funding will be sought to cover this work in the first instance.

6. Bayfield

The site of an existing shed and two larger parcels of land are available for PBCT to purchase in Bayfield. The shed is currently under lease to a private individual and yields a rent of £500/yr. This will provide a modest but nevertheless useful income to PBCT. The Trust could either seek to re-let the building or re-use it for its own purposes, such as storage of tools and equipment in the event of the tenant relinquishing the lease at a future point.

The first of the larger parcels of land is the area between the existing public car park and the shore stretching from the boat laydown area in the east to the former Scottish Water plant in the west over a distance of about 100m. The valuation report estimates this area to be roughly 3975m² and notes that it could potentially be used to extend the parking area or to provide toilet facilities, while noting also that waste would need to be pumped back to the main sewer. PBCT have already carried out some work in this area by removing scrub that was encroaching on the view, grassing over the ground and installing a number of picnic tables, contributing to the improvement of greenspace in the area. Purchasing the site will enable PBCT to secure future community control over this valuable amenity asset.

This business plan outlines the potential for development of several campervan hook-ups on this ground as it is wide enough to accommodate vans. Although only electricity could be provided, such a service would be appreciated by campervan users looking to recharge batteries and use high energy items such as heaters and microwaves. The view from the grass would be better than that from the car park with more available space than if parked side by side in the parking spaces. The provision of pitches requiring access where there are existing parking spaces would lead to the loss of those spaces. However, there are no parking spaces at the entry point to the main car park and entry to the grassed area could be created using a dropped kerb.

There appears to be a high level of stone/rubble in the ground which can be seen through the grass so it may be able to support the weight of vehicles. If not, pitches could be created using terram geotextile and type 1 aggregate or alternatively cellular matting that can be laid flush with the surface. Campervan owners will pay £4-5/night extra for hook-up provision. Therefore, if the Highland Council were to charge for parking overnight in Bayfield an additional premium could be added to this. If they do not plan to charge, it will take much longer to recover costs with charges limited to £4-5/night.

Booking can be managed through the Freetobook¹ website which provides a booking service free of charge unless additional extras are requested. The basic service is adequate for camper provision and signage on site could allow for booking on arrival using a mobile

¹ <https://en.freetobook.com>

phone at quieter times of year. Very occasionally there can be problems with the electricity supply tripping (one of our team has experience of this occurring once in 2 years' operating a small site in Harris). An arrangement could be made for a local electrician to be on call to enable a quick resolution of problems.

Provision of campervan hook-ups will not completely rectify the problem of a lack of campsite provision in the area. However, such provision is being encouraged by Skye Connect, who are including a bid to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund on behalf of the Trust for such a project. Such a development will provide a modest level of service whilst also generating some income for PBCT. At the time of writing this business plan there is a possibility of developing pitches on the site of the former squash/tennis courts, an option which is supported by the Portree Parking Study and would have the potential to generate significantly more income. If that bid is successful it would make sense to prioritise that option. However, it would also open up the possibility of creating the additional hook-ups on the amenity ground, enabling users to also access water, toilet and shower facilities if these are included on the former squash court site.

The second area of land offered for sale in Bayfield is about 100m further west of the above site. It consists of a wooded area with a path running through it to the bridge over the river at Bridge Road where PBCT recently improved the set of steps up to road level. The valuation report estimated this area to be approximately 4050m². The report notes that the characteristics of the site limit its use to amenity functions. That is not necessarily a disadvantage given that a desire to safeguard existing greenspace for community benefit is an overarching aim of community ownership of sites offered for sale. PBCT favour using the area for some form of outdoor adventure facility for young children. This would be a good use of the space given the lack of a suitable facility elsewhere in the village and the desire to retain and enhance greenspace. The location is suitably well-defined and of a size to allow a little exploration within limits. Following purchase of the site PBCT aims to develop a project to deliver such a facility through its Youth Outdoors Facilities sub-group.

The site lies next to the old squash and tennis courts which as noted above has been mooted as a possibility for future campervan, toilet and shower provision. If this were to happen the availability of the amenity ground will provide added value to any development taking place adjacent to it.

7. Financial Implications of Purchasing and Developing Bayfield

Base case Scenario

The Bayfield boathouse site is included with the Bayfield ground and this is currently the only income generation in relation to this site.

Development Scenario

In anticipation of being able to take forward development on the Bayfield site (as noted above), the Trust have entered into a lease arrangement which has enabled them to perform a clean-up of the site and they have fundraised and installed picnic benches for the

enjoyment of locals and tourists alike. The site offers opportunities to undertake more work for recreational benefit which can also generate additional revenue for the Trust. There is known demand for campervan facilities on Skye and early indications are that capital funding may be available for such facilities in the short term.

A site allowing for up to 6 vans at a rate of £5 per van could generate around £3,088 in Year 3 and £4,118 thereafter. A capital cost of £25,000 has been provided to provide the initial 6 campervan hook-ups.

The development of the wooded area at Bayfield will be taken forward by the Youth Outdoor facilities subgroup of the Trust on the basis that they will first obtain grants and raise funds to create new facilities so that the project would be cost neutral to the Trust.

8. King George V Playing Field

The playing field extends to 2.91ha (7.20 acres) and is leased to Highland Council on a 99-year lease from Whitsunday 1949 at a rent of £10/annum. The field is currently managed by Highlife Highland who give a budget to Highland Council for maintenance services across all pitches. Therefore, it is not possible to identify a specific maintenance cost for the KGV. It is surrounded on 3 sides by a modern green security fence installed by Highland Council and on the north side by older security fencing that passes through the scrub/trees on the bank above the field.

The field was formerly used for both shinty and football matches until Skye Camanachd moved to their present home. The remnants of several sets of goalposts are clearly visible on the edges of the field, along with pieces of plastic and other rubbish in the shelter of the trees. The deteriorating drainage situation of the field has led to the cessation of organised football activities there with teams now playing instead on the all-weather pitch at the Portree High School.

The feasibility study report noted that historically the playing field has had problems with drainage due to the nature of the soil on site. Improvements including slit drains and regular spiking of the surface were made previously with the assistance of the Sports Turf Research Institute and considerable new drainage was installed as part of the new secondary school project. While significant expenditure has been made underground, less has been made on the playing surface. A combination of the departure of Skye Camanachd, the transition from Skye and Lochalsh District Council to Highland Council, and budgetary cuts linked to austerity mean that the field is no longer spiked and the maintenance regime is limited to grass cutting approximately every 2 weeks from May to September. It is possible that the surface layer has become puddled, impeding the drainage of water from the surface to the drains below. There has also been some settlement of the surface over the lines of the new drains, resulting in an uneven surface.

The field still hosts the annual Skye Agricultural Show. It has also hosted Skye Live on one occasion but is unlikely to do so again, following damage to the ground during and after the event.

The leased area includes a children's play park adjacent to the sports field. The equipment is reasonably modern although the park is showing signs of wear and tear. Participants at the community consultation event were of the opinion that the existing play park was unsuitable for young children in terms of the equipment available and also because it was allegedly a location for anti-social behaviour. Consultees were also critical of the lack of a suitable park where families and others could picnic in good weather.

Potential improvements to the King George V playing field that PBCT will seek to deliver include the following:

1. **Define pitch and improve pitch management.** One consultee pointed out that, given the size of the field, the marked area of a pitch has been moveable with the result that the field is part pitch and part amenity area at any given time. If the pitch was clearly defined a higher level of maintenance regime could potentially be applied to it with a lower level regime elsewhere.
2. **Improve drainage and surface.** It is recognised locally that this is a fundamental issue that needs to be addressed if the field is to be suitable for sports club activities again. The range of views expressed among consultees on the exact nature of the problem highlights the need for a careful approach to seeking to remedy the situation. In the first instance trialling surface spiking will be a positive step. If this does not improve the situation consideration could then be given to more complex and expensive drainage solutions. Destoning and the importation of additional soil was considered at the time of the school project but was not implemented. This may be an option for future consideration.
3. **Provide a hard standing** for agricultural show and other use. This will provide a defined area for access and livestock pens and will minimise the impact of activities on neighbouring grassed areas.
4. **Create a family-friendly park area.** Using part of the site for this purpose will be possible without preventing continued use for football as the grassed area is significantly larger than a single pitch. The area adjacent to the former swimming pool may be a good location for this as it is close to the entry to the park and the Portree English-medium Nursery building. A scattered planting of trees and shrubs with some benches and tables could create a very family-friendly location.

The last suggestion in particular will require considerable thought, discussion and consultation with the local community to ensure that the field is developed in a way which truly benefits the community. The need for interested parties to agree on just how big an area is still required for sporting activities will be fundamental to this. [

The KGV is a strategic asset at the heart of the village alongside other strategic assets such as the community centre and former swimming pool site. The discussion above and the strong interest in the site evidenced during the consultation process demonstrate its importance to the local community and the wide range of stakeholders with an interest in

its future. Furthermore, the presence (and current closure of) the community centre and the old swimming pool site highlight both challenges and opportunities for the community. In these circumstances it is clear that the best option would be to carry out a more detailed study and consultation process into this immediate area to develop an agreed community plan for its future development. As owner of KGV, PBCT will seek to play an important role in convening a working group of local and public sector interests to take forward a community-led process to make all of these assets work better for the local community.

Future Management of KGV

The purchase of the playing field will not, of itself, result in an immediate change of management of the area, due to it being leased to Highland Council until 2048. Therefore, future management and development of the KGV will need to be agreed with Highland Council prior to purchase.

PBCT has ruled out maintaining the current lease arrangement under community ownership because it would give community ownership, but not control, of the site. It is also not in favour of taking over total control of the site because it is unclear whether and for how long Highland Council may provide financial support for grounds maintenance. PBCT will therefore seek to renegotiate the lease to a smaller defined area for maintaining the football pitch. This will release the remaining land for the community to develop for community recreation as outlined above.

9. Financial implications of Purchasing and Developing KGV Playing Field

Base Case Scenario

Within the base case there are 2 scenarios considered in relation to the KG5. As noted earlier, the KG5 is currently leased to the Highland Council for £10 per annum with the Council bearing the maintenance costs. The financial projections for the business plan include the existing leasing arrangement as 'KG5 HC lease' as well as a second scenario where the lease with the Council is cancelled, 'KG5 No lease'. Under the 'no lease' option, the Trust would need to meet the maintenance costs which are estimated to be around £3,000 to keep the pitch in good order.

The second scenario creates a significant cost for the Trust to cover.

Development Scenario

In the first instance the development of the site would seek to address the drainage problems on the site, creating a hardstanding for the Agricultural Show and developing a family-friendly park area on the periphery of the site. These initiatives could cost in the region of £70,000 to £270,000 depending on the associated specifications. Consequently, grant applications of significant financial scale would be required to enable this work to proceed.

10. Sulaisiadar Common Grazing

The common grazing lies on the western side of Portree. A narrow strip of land runs from immediately behind the new Portree Gaelic School up to the eastern edge of Pairc nan Laoch where it opens out above the northern edge of the shinty pitch following the Lon na h-Atha burn as its western boundary. The remnants of a former steel fence indicate the southern boundary of the common grazing about 800m up the hill. The OS 1:25000 mapping identifies the neighbouring landowner as the Forestry Commission. The valuation report estimates the area to be 23.83ha (58.88 acres).

Community Ownership & Crofting Tenure

Land that is in crofting tenure is effectively in day to day control of the crofting tenants and not the landlord. The tenants enjoy secure tenure over their crofts and common grazing and are free to go about their livestock rearing activities without hindrance.

Under community ownership the rights of individual crofters and grazing committees are exactly the same as under private ownership. No rights to secure tenancies and freedom to carry out livestock rearing activities are lost. The benefits that can arise from community ownership are several-fold:

- Administrative procedures carried out locally can be more efficient than those from a remote landlord or landlord's agent and it can be easier to identify the correct person to approach;
- Community landlords and crofting tenants can sit down together to work in areas of mutual interest that will benefit both the crofting and wider community interests (see examples below);
- The financial benefits of any development remain in the community rather than being spent elsewhere by a remote landowner.

The feasibility study identified the potential for a small area of community woodland on the common grazing. However, the crofters with an interest in the common grazing are reluctant to release land at this time because of their desire to graze livestock across the whole area of the limited grazing. PBCT will therefore not pursue this.

The study also carried out an initial consideration of the potential for a micro-hydro scheme on the grazing. It concluded that this was not viable due to declining rates of Feed-In Tariff. PBCT will keep a watching brief on changes in technology and changes in support systems offered by the UK Govt in the coming years. PBCT will further examine the potential for a micro-hydro scheme if these become more favourable and if there is appetite from the grazing shareholders to take such a scheme forward.

As Portree continues to develop it is possible that the current crofters, or a future generation of crofters, will favour non-agricultural developments on part of the common grazing. If so, PBCT will be in a position to work with them to bring developments that maximise the benefit to the local community in social and economic terms.

Although immediate development potential is limited PBCT will seek to take ownership of the land so as to safeguard any future opportunities arising from a change in support levels for renewables, to shape any future development potential, and to maximise social and economic benefit for the Portree and Braes community. In such circumstances PBCT will reassure shareholders that their crofting rights are secure and that developments will only happen with their agreement.

11. Financial Implications of Purchasing and Developing Sulaisiadar Common Grazing Base Case Scenario

There is not currently any income to the Trust from the common grazing. In the base case scenario, we have assumed that there are no costs related to the common grazing. However, there could be limited administration and officer time costs that the Trust would bear in relation to acting as landlord of the site.

Development Options

The main development option considered for the common grazing has been the installation of a micro hydro scheme on the burn that borders the site. As this may only become viable with a change in support regime from the UK Government no contribution from this source is modelled in the 5 year summary.

12. Linking Sites

A significant proportion of visitors are happy to explore an area on foot, especially if they are guided along routes which are well signposted. The 3 sites in the centre of the village are particularly well-suited to promoting a circular walk or walks which would enable and encourage visits to the different amenity areas.

The stylised map of Portree by J. Maizlish Mole is appealing, quirky and easily available in tear-off form. It is an excellent map. However, many people struggle with map reading and also in identifying the best route to take when faced by a choice of paths and streets. A waymarked circular route going from the Lump, along Bayfield Road by the new picnic tables through the woodland, across Bridge Road, up Manse Lane to the KGV and back via Wentworth Street would provide a good circuit. It would both show visitors part of the village that they might otherwise miss and maximise opportunities for use and promotion of community-owned land.

At present the lack of signposting makes it difficult for a visitor to explore if they do not have a map to hand. Examples where discrete signage is lacking are at the junction of Manse Road and Bridge Road and leading from Bayfield car park to Bayfield Road. New signage indicating a route would be beneficial. It may even be possible for those of an artistic bent to develop signage that would complement the local map. PBCT will therefore develop a project to improve access across its sites.

People could be further encouraged to visit these locations by adding in additional attractions such as public art which provide extra interest. An item of art at each site could be developed as a community project which would draw on local history and build identity with community ownership. The Uist Sculpture Trail⁷ is a successful example of art being placed in locations that people would not normally visit in order to attract them there. Atlas Arts have considerable experience of delivering successful arts projects and have expressed a willingness to work with PBCT to deliver future projects.

13. Financial Overview of Developments

Tables 1 and 2 below provide an illustrative financial position in the following situations:

1. Base case scenario where the Trust takes on the sites and operates those as they are currently run without any development
2. Illustrates some of the potential development opportunities which could be taken forward in the early stages of community ownership

Table 3 provides an illustrative five year summary of the financial position of the assets under community ownership.

⁷ <http://www.isle-of-north-uist.co.uk/what-to-do/uist-sculpture-trail/>

TABLE 1: BASE CASE SCENARIO

Income and expenditure of FEI land including the centre of the Lump currently owned by the Skye Gathering									
2 Scenarios considered with the KG5 site being leased to Highland Council and without the lease being in place									
				Scenario 1	Scenario 2		Scenario 1a	Scenario 2	Scenario 1b
	Notes	The Lump	Bayfield	KG5	KG5	Sulishader	Total	Total	Total
				HC lease	No HC lease		HC lease	No HC lease	Excl. Lump
Rental	1	-		10			10	-	10
Bayfield boathouse			500				500	500	500
		-	500	10	-	-	510	500	510
Insurance	2	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
Maintenance	3	3,000			3,000		3,000	6,000	-
		3,000	-	-	3,000	-	3,000	6,000	-
Net income/(expenditure)		(3,000)	500	10	(3,000)	-	(2,490)	(5,500)	510

1 The rental income has been confirmed by Fearann Eilein Iarmain, the existing landowner.

2 PBCT's existing insurance provider has confirmed that the purchase of the parcels of land would not add any additional insurance premium to the Trust's existing policy unless the use of the ground is expected to change.

3 Maintenance costs have not been verified and are based on estimates of the current work undertaken.

TABLE 2: DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO

				Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
	<i>Notes</i>	The Lump	Bayfield	KG5	KG5	Total	Total
				HC lease	No HC lease	HC lease	No lease
One event		3,000				3,000	3,000
Catering concession		1,500				1,500	1,500
Campervan hookups			4,118			4,118	4,118
Rental	1			10		10	-
Grasscutting service	2			3,000		3,000	-
Bayfield boathouse			500			500	500
Management agreement	3	3,000				3,000	3,000
		7,500	4,618	3,010	-	15,128	12,118
Insurance	4		250			250	250
Maintenance	5	3,000		3,000	3,000	6,000	6,000
Electricity			500			500	500
Supervisor	6		1,000			1,000	1,000
		3,000	1,750	3,000	3,000	7,750	7,750
Net income/(expenditure)		4,500	2,868	10	(3,000)	7,378	4,368
CAPITAL COSTS							
Access improvements		25,000				25,000	25,000
Electricity provision		25,000				25,000	25,000
Tower improvements		20,000				20,000	20,000
Campervan hookups			25,000			25,000	25,000
Drainage					200,000	-	200,000
Hard standing					20,000	-	20,000
Park					50,000	-	50,000
Hydro scheme						-	-
		70,000	25,000	-	270,000	95,000	365,000
1	The rental income has been confirmed by Fearann Eilein Iarmain, the existing landowner.						
2	It is anticipated that the Trust could arrange for the pitch grasscutting to be undertaken in a cost effective manner that would allow for a better service to be delivered for the current estimated cost to the Highland Council. This income source would cover the related costs.						
3	The Trust is in the process of drawing up a tripartite agreement with the Skye Gathering and the Skye Games for the management and operation of the Lump which will provide a contribution towards the operating costs of the site.						
4	PBCT's existing insurance provider has confirmed that the purchase of the parcels of land would not add any additional insurance premium to the Trust's existing policy unless the use of the ground is expected to change. £250 estimate for campervan hookup insurance included however to cover this new activity.						
5	Maintenance costs have not been verified and are based on estimates of the current work undertaken.						
6	A provision has been added to allow for some supervisory costs of the camp site.						

TABLE 3: FIVE YEAR SUMMARY

	<i>Notes</i>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Events at the Lump			3,000	3,000	6,000	6,000
Catering concession			1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Campervan hookups				3,088	4,118	4,118
KGV Rental						
Grasscutting service	2	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Bayfield boathouse						
Development grant	7	11,960	12,319			
Lump management agreement	3	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
		18,470	23,329	14,098	18,128	18,128
Insurance	4		-	250	258	265
Maintenance	5	6,000	6,180	6,365	6,556	6,753
Electricity			-	500	515	530
Supervisor	6		-	1,000	1,030	1,061
Development officer	7	11,960	12,319			
		17,960	18,499	8,115	8,359	8,610
Net income/(expenditure)		510	4,830	5,983	9,769	9,518
1 The rental income has been confirmed by Fearann Eilein Iarmain, the existing landowner.						
2 It is anticipated that the Trust could arrange for the pitch grasscutting to be undertaken in a cost effective manner that would allow for a better service to be delivered for the current estimated cost to the Highland Council. This income source would cover the related costs.						
3 The Trust is in the process of drawing up a tripartite agreement with the Skye Gathering and the Skye Games for the management and operation of the Lump which will provide a contribution towards the operating costs of the site.						
4 PBCT's existing insurance provider has confirmed that the purchase of the parcels of land would not add any additional insurance premium to the Trust's existing policy unless the use of the ground is expected to change. £250 estimate for campervan hookup insurance included however to cover this new activity.						
5 Maintenance costs have not been verified and are based on estimates of the current work undertaken.						
6 A provision has been added to allow for some supervisory costs of the camp site.						
7 It is assumed that a development officer will be employer for 2 days a week for a period of 2 years to enable the Trust to get its initial projects up and running.						

PART THREE: RISK ASSESSMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDING STRATEGIES

14. Risk Assessment of Community Ownership of the Land Assets

Table 4 below provides an assessment of risk factors associated with community ownership of the land assets including the likelihood of such risks occurring, a description of their impacts and recommended actions to mitigate these impacts.

Table 4: Risk Factors and Mitigation				
Risk Factor	Likelihood	Scale of Impact	Description of Impact	Mitigation
FEI refuses to sell one or more of the land areas to PBCT	Low	Medium/High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to proceed with community buyouts of land areas as planned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate further discussions with owner to facilitate sale. Focus on land areas FEI willing to sell to PBCT
Unable to secure capital funding from SLF to complete purchases	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to proceed with community buyouts of land areas as planned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider alternative funding sources. May have to revise initial development proposals. May have to reduce number of land areas PBCT is seeking to purchase.
Lack of community support for development options	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces credibility of PBCT Urras as asset manager on behalf of community. Prevents development options from being implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively engage and communicate with local community on options and related activities. Engage with partner organisations to foster support.
Unable to secure funding for development proposals.	Medium	Medium/High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to proceed with development options as outlined in Business Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise proposals and resubmit to funders.
Erosion of support from partner organisations	Low/Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to deliver identified benefits. Loss of local credibility and support will impact on fundraising and other activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work closely and ensure benefits accrue to all parties.

Table 4: Risk Factors and Mitigation				
Risk Factor	Likelihood	Scale of Impact	Description of Impact	Mitigation
Lack of skills/ capacity to deliver	Low/Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to manage land assets and development initiatives. • Loss of credibility in community • Inability to access development funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring • Recruitment of new directors. • Training for Directors & Others • Use of Working Groups to draw in wider talent pool • Use contracts to buy in expertise from existing Community Landlord Organisations
Volunteer fatigue means reduced ability to deliver.	Medium/High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to achieve development initiatives to deliver wider community benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to secure higher numbers of volunteers via Working Groups to spread workload.

15. Development Workplan

The feasibility study has shown that community ownership of the FEI land will bring significant community benefits, particularly in the area of safeguarding greenspace and improving amenity provision in Portree. In an undeveloped condition these assets will either generate little revenue or potentially bring an additional cost burden to PBCT. Therefore, purchase and development will need to be carefully managed to ensure that these assets reach their potential for community use, whilst also safeguarding the financial position of PBCT. To this end PBCT will implement a development workplan incorporating the following elements:

- Negotiate a tri-partite agreement on future access to and management of the Lump with Skye Gathering and Skye Highland Games prior to purchase.
- Agree a future management and support regime with Highland Council for the KGV playing field prior to purchase.
- Prioritise the consideration and development of campervan pitch provision at Bayfield in conjunction with other opportunities there.
- Develop a heritage access project to improve access to and amenity provision at the Lump, Bayfield and KGV.
- Develop an outdoor adventure area at Bayfield through the Youth Outdoor Facilities sub-group.

- Convene a working group of community and public sector organisations to develop a comprehensive community-led plan for the maximisation of the neighbouring assets of the KGV, community centre, former swimming pool and associated sites.

In order to deliver this workplan it is assumed that a Development Officer will be employed 2 days per week for 2 years to develop and raise funding for the key projects identified. It is assumed that once these projects are implemented PBCT's existing Development Manager will assume responsibility for overall oversight and management of continuing commitments.

16. Funding Strategy

The availability of grant funds from the public sector for community-led development projects has become more challenging in recent years due to austerity reducing capital available for disbursement. The prospect of Brexit also means that European funds will no longer be available. However, there are a number of different funding sources which may assist with the community purchase and development of specific sites. PBCT's funding strategy for purchase of the identified land will focus on an application to the Scottish Land Fund. Subsequent funding applications for development of particular sites will be guided by decisions arising from the development workplan discussed above in terms of which funders for approach for particular developments. An indicative list of funding sources includes the following:

- Scottish Land Fund.** The fund has £10m/yr for community purchases of land and other assets. It can give up to 95% grant on capital and revenue costs. PBCT has already received funding from this source for the current study and will apply for Stage 2 funding to cover the purchase price and associated legal costs. If PBCT secures a discount on the sale price of the property this will be credited as a community contribution and SLF could fund 100% of remaining costs. Revenue funding will be sought for a part-time Development Officer post through to March 2021.
- Sports Scotland.** Grants of up to £1,000,000 at an intervention rate of up to 50% are available from its Sports Facilities Fund.⁸ Amongst other items the guidance for this fund states that Sports Scotland want to support: New, upgraded or extended sports facilities; inclusive changing facilities; and facilities that provide or improve access for outdoor sport and adventure activities. A project to improve the KGV playing field and increase participation would be relevant to these aims. Projects are classed as small (£20k-£250k) or larger (with a value of £250k+) with a one stage on-line application for small projects and a 2-stage online application for larger projects.

⁸ <https://sportscotland.org.uk/funding/sport-facilities-fund/>

- c. **Heritage Lottery Fund.** There are 2 streams to this fund that would potentially be attractive to PBCT- Sharing Heritage and Our Heritage⁹. The Sharing Heritage strand provides grants from £3000 to £10,000 in value and Our Heritage for those greater than £10,000 and up to £1000,000. PBCT could potentially apply to either stream for a project to improve the condition of the Apothecary's Tower or perhaps solely to Our Heritage for a broader project to include access, lighting and interpretation improvements to the Lump and possibly further including measures to link the different sites as outlined above.
- d. **Awards 4 All.** This small lottery fund¹⁰ has a simple application process for a broad range of community projects with 100% funding available up to £10,000. This could be a suitable fund to apply to for creating a family-friendly park area or a children's adventure area for example.
- e. **Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund.** The Scottish Government established this fund¹¹, administered by VisitScotland, to assist areas where infrastructure is struggling to cope with tourism pressures which is clearly the case in Portree. PBCT will seek to source funds from this source with the assistance of Skye Connect and Highland Council.
- f. **Highland Council.** Ward discretionary funds¹² are available to support community projects. While many awards can be modest they can play an important role in finalising a funding package. In the Year 2018-19 a budget £16,000 is available in each ward.

17. Conclusions

The feasibility study report indicates that there is clear local demand to safeguard and develop greenspace and associated amenity and recreational facilities to meet community needs in Portree and Braes. This business plan is designed to enable Portree and Braes Community Trust to contribute to meeting that expressed demand through community ownership of land being offered to it for purchase by Fearann Eilean Iarmain. In so doing, the business plan recognises that PBCT has potentially distinctive roles to play in terms of developing and managing particular sites through '*direct delivery*', '*partnership*' or '*enabling*', as detailed in the feasibility study report.

As recommended in the feasibility study report, several development proposals contained in this business plan are predicated on community ownership of the land at Bayfield which offers scope for greenspace and other amenity improvement, alongside income generation potential through provision of campervan hook-ups which can be used to support further

⁹ <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes>

¹⁰ <https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-scotland>

¹¹ <https://www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/funding/rural-tourism-infrastructure-fund>

¹² https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/196482/ward_discretionary_fund/category/155/grants_for_community_groups

initiatives delivering community benefits. A subsequent community buyout of the former squash and tennis court land could potentially add further scope for developing the amenity value of the overall Bayfield site.

Development options for the Lump are predicated on Skye Gathering either agreeing to transfer the ownership of the arena area to PBCT or a satisfactory 3-way agreement is reached between PBCT, Skye Gathering & Skye Highland Games being achieved. Similarly, development options regarding the KGV playing field are predicated on the PBCT having detailed discussions with Highland Council to agree on future funding for the management of the site prior to a community purchase so that PBCT is clear on what opportunities and responsibilities it will have. There are potential further opportunities arising from the former swimming pool site and wider community benefits to be achieved had through working with other stakeholders to formulate and agree a community plan for the area. PBCT will convene a working group and a more detailed community consultation process to achieve this, as part of the Trust's overall development workplan for the land assets under community ownership.

Community ownership of Sulaisiadar Common Grazing under PBCT is being pursued in order to safeguard opportunities for long-term development and any future benefits accruing to the Landlord on behalf of the Portree and Braes community on the basis outlined in the feasibility study report.