



To contact the Community Company, call 01320 366800
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Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting for the Community Company was held on the 15th November. Those that attended were updated on the financial position, following the annual audit of the accounts. Both the Chair and Chief Officer gave an update on activities & projects that have been either undertaken in the past year or are being planned for the coming one.

On display were reports on many of the grants that have been awarded. For many this helped them understand who in the community is benefitting from the funds. Attendees were delighted at the range of things that have happened and excited by the future plans.

Part of the purpose of the AGM is to appoint Directors and these were confirmed as:

Felix Paterson, Elizabeth MacEachen, Lorn MacKay, Lynne West, Chris Nelson, Michael Alvey Anderson, Fiona MacCormick. Catriona Watson and Patrick Ungless along with Helen Clay as the Community Council representative on the Board. There had been some late interest in becoming a director and up to 3 more people may be co-opted onto the Board before the next AGM.

If you would like to become a member, allowing you to vote at the AGM, please either go to our website www.communitycompany.co.uk or contact us on 01320 366800 for an application form.

Grants awarded

Since the last issue of Ness News, the following grants have been awarded:

- Fort Augustus and Area Gaelic Group - £707 for Gaelic lessons
- John MacKay - £956 for the after-school soccer club
- 3 Student grants - £600 each to help with their studies
- 42 Cost of Living Grants – a total of £16,250

There are several more group applications that are currently going through the assessment process.

You can apply for a grant at any time and it will be assessed at the first possible opportunity. The forms have all been simplified this year but do get in touch if you need any help.



Kilchuimen Academy Minibus

We are delighted to tell you that we now have 5 local people who have passed their test to drive the Kilchuimen Academy minibus. If any local community group would like to hire it the cost is £25 per full day plus fuel. You will need to have a qualified driver who has been authorised by Highland Council. Bookings for the bus can be made directly with the school. If you need to find a volunteer driver a list can be provided by contacting the Community Company.

Apprenticeships – another way to learn!

Are you leaving school in June and feel that more formal education is not the right option for you? The Community Company can support apprenticeships for those living within the Community Council area. So, for those of you who may want to take up a trade, but want to learn on the job, do get in touch to see if we can help. We have supported electricians, pharmacy assistants, stalkers, joiners, care workers, mechanics and agricultural workers, to name just a few.

So, if you want to follow a different career path, working with a local tradesman, give us a call and see if we can support you in reaching your goal.

George MacEachen did just that and he is now loving his work on a local farm, where he is learning all the skills he needs from tractor driving to caring for cattle.



Miles Jones on the other hand wanted to be a joiner and has been working with local firm SN Joinery. He can now proudly say he was involved in helping to build the new houses at Caledonian Court.



[Motorhome Waste Disposal Point](#)

Many of you will be aware of the issue of motorhomes dumping their waste in inappropriate places. Some of this is down to a lack of legitimate places to dispose of that waste. With that in mind the Community Company applied for and was granted funding by the Rural Transport Infrastructure Fund and Highland Council to install one in Fort Augustus. The project came in within budget which meant that the Community Company did not need to use any of its own funds for the facility.

This has now been installed in the car park at the top of Bunoich Brae. The Highland Council will shortly be providing signage for it from the A82.

[Breaking news - Girvans Hardware Store](#)



After many years of serving the community with its hardware needs, Girvans is up for sale! The owners wanted to try and maintain the facility for local use, so approached the Community Company about purchasing it.

We are delighted to tell you that we are in the process of going through the legalities, both to purchase the hardware store and associated buildings and to ensure that we will not be contravening our charitable aims.

We are hopeful that if all goes well the purchase will be finalised in January 2023. The intention is to retain the premises, at least in part, as a hardware store selling all the things that the community purchases most regularly. However, as the bike business is not part of the sale there will be some additional space that we will be looking to use for other community benefit.

[Convent Land Plans](#)

Some of you will be aware that we've been carrying out work on the old convent land. The caretakers have created a community composting site and made a start on clearing some of the overgrowth of rhododendrons. There are more plans for the area though, including a community garden, improving access paths, outdoor play area and sympathetically designed workshop space. All this needs careful planning and input from you the community. So, to make this happen we've applied to an external funder for 3 years funding to employ a Development Officer to focus on the convent land and bring people's ideas for the land to fruition. If all goes well we hope to have someone in post by next spring.

Community Caretakers

With winter approaching the team are currently working on the completion of several practical projects with a deadline of early December. Some of these projects have included the construction of a new entrance path to Auchterawe cemetery, construction and installation of new rustic benches (various locations), community composting management, community firewood distribution and preparing our raised beds and tubs to ensure continuous floral displays come next spring and onwards.



Let's not forget our 'Bread and Butter' core villages maintenance work, which should definitely not be overshadowed by our more grandiose projects. This includes daily waste management, dealing with leaf fall / debris and clearing roadside blocked drains to name a few; all of which are essential works to keep a village functioning and looking fantastic.

Our community composting project has proved extremely popular since the start of Spring 2022, which has really shown the need for such a service to be within our location. The team has worked hard to make this happen by dealing with the compostable debris in various ways, including chipping, turning, shovelling, dragging, sorting etc.



For this service to continue we will require further input from our users for next year; we would really appreciate it if our users could help out by disposing of their waste in the correct bays. To help with this, the community company will invest in better signage and interpretation, so that the vegetation waste will be put to its best use as and when you visit.

Looking ahead, we will be preparing for Christmas and managing our shorter days with essential works. For the team, this will include erecting Xmas trees and organising salt / grit for the roads and pavements (to ensure Santa can land safely when he arrives!)

**Happy Christmas everyone from all at
Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Community Company.**