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Community Land Week 2023

For the first time ever, Community Land Week spanned just over a fortnight and included the very popular Halloween weekend. Running from 13 – 29 October, it gave plenty of opportunity for over 40 participating communities to come together, share their visions for the future, get creative, and celebrate all they have achieved.

We saw a record total of over 60 stand-alone events being organised. There were woodland walks and community planning sessions, there were ceilidhs and exhibitions and tree planting days. And of course, there were harvest festivals and Halloween events that connected, inspired and celebrated communities.

Community Land Scotland staff attended around 25 events in person, connecting with members and hearing about the concerns and success of each community. In the run-up to the festival, Community Land Scotland delivered remote training on the design platform Canva, which was taken up by five members who then went on to use the platform in their own event promotion. Furthermore, Community Land Scotland distributed 30 bursaries to communities. This allowed groups to provide refreshments, invest in equipment, or pay for additional staff time.

Funding for Community Land Week was provided by the Scottish Government.



Culbokie Community Trust



An event-full fortnight

Participating communities organised a wide range of events. In total 41 communities participated, organising 65 stand-alone events. Nine groups programmed events especially for Community Land Week and ten groups used Community Land Week as a theme for an event or session they had already planned.

For the first time, Community Land Week became Community Land Weeks, stretching for a full 16 days. The decision to extend into two weeks came from feedback from previous years, when community groups had expressed the need for greater flexibility in scheduling. As applications to participate came through, it was clear that the decision to extend had indeed made greater participation possible: the events were split evenly across both weeks.

Week	Dates	Participating Groups	Unique Events
1	13 - 19 October	18	32
2	20 - 29 October	27	33

Furthermore, the extension of the festival made it possible for groups to be flexible, particularly when Storm Babet caused havoc with outdoor events. While Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust and Applecross Community Trust were forced to cancel due to weather, Evanton Community Woodland was able to postpone their event into the second week.

Several groups create their own extended celebrations, using Community Land Week to host week-long festivals of their own. Abriachan Forest Trust celebrated *Abriachan's Very Very Long 25 Year Weekend*, with twelve events stretching over nine days, the community-ownership groups of Knoydart hosted six events including a weeklong exhibition, and Port Bannatyne Development Trust hosted four nights of music. Bridgend Farmhouse and Beatroute Arts both mainstreamed Community Land Week, including it in their existing programming for the duration.



Abriachan Forest Trust



Preparing for Community Land Week

This was the 5th Community Land Week, and a number of organisations had previously participated. The majority of participants first learned about Community Land Week through the Community Land Scotland Newsletter or by being directly approached by staff. One group found out about Community Land Week via the Scotland Grant Database.

At the earliest stages, groups were offered the opportunity to work with Community land Scotland Staff to develop their event idea through an online workshop. This was well received, especially by groups who had not previously participated before.

While the initial application process allowed groups to propose rough ideas of what their events would entail, they were required to submit details of their events, including location, dates and a text with some details through an online form by the beginning of September. Groups were also asked to submit public liability insurance certificates and a few photos. Overall, groups found this process straight forward, though for some the deadline was quite far ahead of the event, making it difficult to submit details in advance.

The groups who were awarded a bursary were asked to fill in a bursary claim form. Bursaries were paid in advance so that groups were not out-of-pocket for expenses. Overall, the bursary application process was also seen as simple, easy and not too time-consuming which was especially appreciated by groups without staff.

What went well

- Communication was prompt, friendly and detailed.
- Number and size of bursaries was just right with no more than 2 groups being on the waiting list.
- Application process for the bursaries was unbureaucratic which allowed time-pressed, volunteer only groups to apply.

What can we improve on

- Once groups submitted an expression of interest, they could not track their form or event. Some groups would have preferred more communication to that effect.
- Some groups felt that the deadline for submitting event details was too early.



Easter Breich Community Woodland



Promoting Community Land Week

Community Land Week is an opportunity to raise the profile of Community Ownership, and to tie each individual community's progress into a larger movement by celebrating their success. To assist communities in promoting their events, Community Land Scotland provided each group with an asset pack of one poster and two social media posts.

Building on the experience of Community Land Week 2022, templates were made available through the online design platform Canva. To enable broad accessibility, groups were offered training on using Canva, which was taken up by six groups across a few online sessions.

From the groups' feedback it became clear that roughly a third of the groups used the provided material as it was, a third modified the provided material somewhat and another third used their own marketing material. The templates provided were viewed as a good starting point, but groups sought to substantially customise promotional materials for their own needs. In a few cases, groups made their own materials to meet their own earlier deadlines.

Community Land Scotland also prepared a comprehensive social media and press campaign which resulted in increased visibility for many groups. To assist with the design and implementation of the promotional campaign, an additional part-time staff member was hired.



Web listings

The Community Land Scotland website hosted a listing for every event during Community Land Week with custom made title cards for each listing. Communities took ownership of their website listings with several communities emailing updates to the listing and making corrections. The website also included a map which showed the geographical spread of events.



Social Media

Throughout Community Land Week, we used social media to amplify and advertise the events hosted by communities, but also to discuss broader issues surrounding Community Ownership.

Overall, there were seven “Spotlight” posts, highlighting events that were grouped into themes, including urban community ownership, the Scottish Land Fund recipients, environmental benefits of community ownership, and the 100 year anniversary of community ownership. Eight posts announced events, grouped by the date range they were taking place in. Seven posts featured photos of events as they happened.

Facebook and Instagram were used for more curated posts and LinkedIn was used only for the Spotlight posts. The intention of this delineation of posts across platforms was to cater for each platform’s respective audience. In addition to these curated posts, Community Land Scotland staff tweeted live from events.

Community Land Week on Social Media Platforms: 6 - 30 October

Throughout the second week of Community Land Week post impressions and engagement figures began to increase at a steady pace. The narrative of Community Land Week began to gather an audience during that time.



New Followers
107



Total Impressions
26,741



Most Impressions on a Single Post
5,652

In the second half of Community Land Week, there was an increase in organisations using the hashtag #CommunityLandWeek and tagging Community Land Scotland in their own posts.

What worked well

- The fortnight of frequent posts built momentum and led to groups sharing and re-sharing content.
- Participants appreciated the added visibility.

What could be improved

- Participants with greater social media experience might be approached to collaborate on one or two “Spotlight” posts and might be given specific assets to do so.
- All participants could be given a rough social media schedule to tie into as and when appropriate.



Newspapers

Newspapers published information on Community Land Week mainly in the first week. National papers focussed on the centenary of the Stornoway Buyout and growth of urban community ownership. Several local papers also ran stories that specifically highlighted the events put on by community groups in their areas. [The Press and Journal](#) specifically highlighted the difference in ownership in the Western Isles compared to the rest of Scotland – a theme also picked up by the Stornoway Gazette. Overall, the newspaper reports helped to tie in Community Land Scotland as a country-wide event.

Celebrating with our Communities

Across the entire Community Land Week fortnight, Community Land Scotland Staff attended around 25 events in person – ranging from ceilidhs and pub quizzes to tree planting days. The geographic spread of events necessitated significant travel efforts, some of which were interrupted by storm Babet sadly. Many of the groups who had staff attend expressed their gratitude and joy at the visit afterwards in their feedback.

Of course, it wasn't just Community Land Scotland Staff who attended Community Land Week events. Overall, about 2,000 people attended a Community Land Week event. 11 groups reported that their event was attended by new people for the first time. Vice versa, 7 groups said that their event was attended solely by regular attendees. Across the whole event, 245 volunteers were involved in organising, setting up and guiding attendants through their activities – with an average of 7 people helping out per event! It is safe to say that this is our biggest Community Land Week to date.



Attendees
2,000



Volunteers
245



North Edinburgh Arts



Feedback from groups

- We got great press publicity. Both Strathearn Herald and The Courier took our article including the bits you supplied and reprinted the whole thing with alterations to make it more friendly and interesting. Your help there was much appreciated. ~ Comrie Community Woodland
- It was so lovely to see new faces from other areas in Mull attend this event. Everyone who we spoke to were delighted to have something different on to entertain their children. I really hope we can do more things like this in the future. ~ South West Mull and Iona Development
- We had a tremendous time at our event which acted as an effective way to celebrate what we are doing locally as a community. In the future, it would be good to add to this by giving even more of an explanation of how community ownership has/could positively add to the initiatives and projects we were celebrating, and I'm keen to think about how we might continue developing this engagement on a local level. ~ Stow Community Trust
- Community Land Week gave us a chance to do something different this time around which enabled us to bring in new community members that might not usually come to our events and we had a fantastic evening with music, song and poetry! ~ The Langholm Initiative
- Community Land Week is a good motivator and platform to promote and celebrate our community's achievements outwith the usual day to day challenges that community ownership brings. ~ Knoydart Forest Trust
- The only difficult part was your event information deadlines which were quite early. As a small team with lots going on, we weren't able to finalise the event details as early as Community Land Scotland would've liked. We appreciated your understanding about that. Congrats on a successful Community Land Week! ~ Midsteple Quarter
- Our event was really well received in the community. Our event provided an opportunity for people who had not been to The Medan Centre to come and visit us and find out more. It was a good community engagement opportunity. ~ Udney Community Trust
- It is both meaningful and strengthening to celebrate as part of a wider movement. I feel this allows our members to feel connected too, and part of something beyond the borders of our very rural location. Thank you for your support. ~ Friends of Glenan Wood
- Its great to have Community Land week to be able to celebrate community land ownership! ~ Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn



The GalGael Trust



Participating Organisations

A' the Airts, Dumfries & Galloway
Abriachan Forest Trust, Highland
Annan Harbour Action Group, Dumfries & Galloway
Applecross Community Company, Highland
Beatroute Arts, Glasgow City
Borve & Annishadder Township, Highland
Bridgend Farmhouse, Edinburgh
Carsphairn Community Woodland, Dumfries & Galloway
Castle Loch Lochmaben Community Trust, Dumfries & Galloway
Closeburn Youth Club, Dumfries & Galloway
Coigach Community Development Company, Highland
Comrie Community Woodland, part of Comrie Development Trust, Perth & Kinross
Culbokie Community Trust, Highland
Easter Breich Wood Community Group, West Lothian
Evanton Community Wood, Highland
Fittie Community Development Trust, Aberdeen
Friends of Glenan Wood, Argyll & Bute
The GalGael Trust, Glasgow City
Gallan Head Community Trust, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar
The Inverclyde Shed, Inverclyde
Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust, Argyll & Bute
Kettins Community Hub, Perth & Kinross
Knoydart Forest Trust, Wood Knoydart, Knoydart Foundation, Knoydart Trading, Knoydart Renewables,
The Old Forge & Knoydart Community Hall, Highland
Langholm Initiative , Dumfries & Galloway
Midsteeple Quarter, Dumfries & Galloway
North Edinburgh Arts , Edinburgh
North Harris Trust, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar
The Pairc Trust, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar
Port Bannatyne Development Trust, Argyll & Bute
South West Mull and Iona Development, Argyll & Bute
Spireview Housing Association, Glasgow City
Staffin Community Trust, Highland
Stòras Uibhist, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar
The Stornoway Trust, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar
Stow Community Trust, Scottish Borders
Udny Community Trust, Aberdeenshire
Urras Oighreachd Chàrlabhaigh (Carloway Estate Trust), Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar
Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (Galson Estate Trust), Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar
WATIF, South Lanarkshire

www.communitylandscotland.org.uk
Email: info@communitylandscotland.org.uk

Community Land Scotland | Fearann Coimhearsnachd na h-alba
is a charity registered in Scotland SC041864 Company Number 385572.
Registered address: c/o Ainsley, Smith & Co | 21 Argyll Square | Oban | PA34 4AT