FEARANN COIMHEARSNACHD NA H-ALBA | COMMUNITY LAND SCOTLAND







ABOUT COMMUNITY LAND SCOTLAND

We are the national representative body for community landowners — a growing movement of people taking control of land, buildings and assets to shape their own futures.

We bring together over 150 member organisations from across Scotland.

Together, we work to ensure community ownership plays a central role in creating a fairer, more sustainable Scotland.

STARTING YOUR COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP JOURNEY



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COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP GUIDES

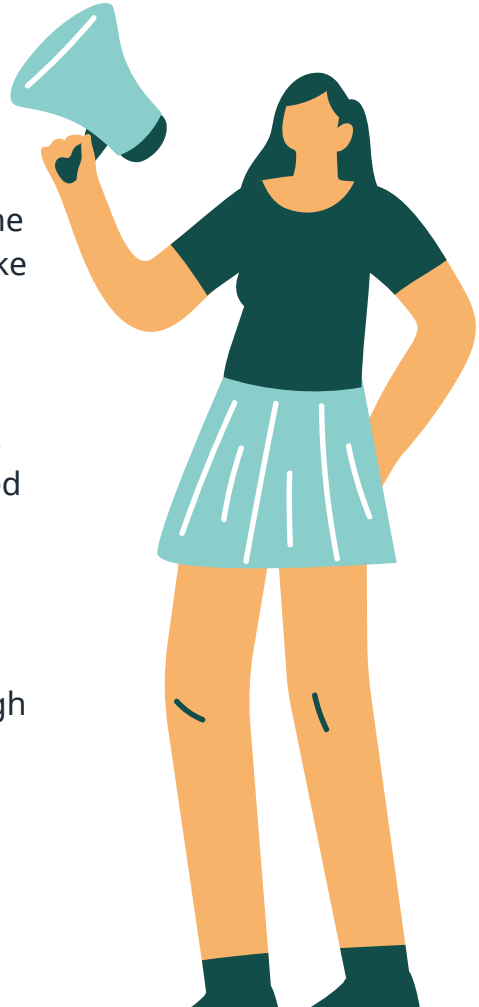


START YOUR COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP JOURNEY TODAY!

INTRODUCTION

If you are new to community ownership, knowing where to start can feel overwhelming. The good news is that others just like you have been on this journey and have succeeded.

While every community story is different, there are some shared steps that most successful projects follow. This guide will help you understand the community ownership journey from your very first idea through to community ownership and beyond.



COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP: STEPPING STONES OF SUCCESS

These are:

START HERE



1

Identify the Opportunity

Learn About Your Options

2





3

Build Strong Foundations



4

Talk to Your Community

5

Develop Your Plan



6

Build Consensus



7

Complete the Purchase





8

Deliver Projects for Your Community



1 Step 1
Identify the Opportunity

What is the opportunity?

A building at risk of being closed or abandoned? Empty, abandoned or neglected land? An underused ***asset*** that could create local benefits? An important space that the community wants to protect?

Why does it matter?

What problem could it solve? What opportunities could it create? Who would benefit?

Who owns it?

The ownership of the land or building can affect which route your community will take to buy, lease or manage it.

i **What do you mean by an *asset* ?**

An asset is anything of value that can benefit the community, such as land, buildings, a village hall, a woodland, a pontoon, fishing rights or other local facilities.



2 Step 2
Learn About Your Options

There are several different routes into community ownership. The best route will depend on who currently owns the asset, whether they are willing to sell, and what your community hopes to achieve.

- **Negotiated sales** – The private owner is willing to discuss selling with the community. This is the most common route that communities take when buying privately-owned land or buildings. You will negotiate a price, raise the funds, and complete the purchase.

- **Community Asset Transfer** – This is when your community takes on land or a building owned by a public organisation, such as a council, Forestry and Land Scotland, the NHS or another public body.

- **Community Right to Buy** – This is a legal right that can allow your community to say that you are interested in buying the land or building. This right gives you the first chance to buy them if they come up for sale.

- **Ownerless Property Transfer Scheme** – Some land or buildings do not have an owner anymore. If this applies to the land or building that your community is interested in, you can use this scheme. It is managed by the King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer.



3 Step 3

Build Strong Foundations

Building strong foundations means setting up your project in a fair and open way. It is not just about creating an organisation – it's about making sure local people can take part, make decisions together and help decide what happens to the land or building.

You may need to set up a new community organisation or strengthen one that already exists. Local people can become members, vote for the board, and have a say in how the land or building is used and looked after.



4 Step 4

Talk to Your Community

Community ownership is about your community taking control – and this starts early! Before you set up a new community group or speak to funders, talk to people in your community. This will help you find out what they think the land should be used for.

Start conversations early and listen as much as you talk. Gather ideas for what the land could be used for. Actively listen for concerns in the community. Build evidence that there is local interest.



5 Step 5
Develop Your Plan

You'll need to check if your plan can work in practice. This means asking whether your ideas are realistic, affordable and – most importantly – likely to last in the long term.

Communities do this in all sorts of ways. You can:

- **Carry out a feasibility study to determine the best ideas**
- **Carry out any technical work you may need (surveys or mapping)**
- **Write a business plan**
- **Get a valuation on the land or building**
- **Visit other community landowners to learn from what they have done**

There may be funding available to help with all of this – and other community landowners are willing to share what they've learned along the way.



6 Step 6
Build Consensus

Once you have developed your plan, it is time share it with your community again. Show them what you've learned. Explain the opportunities you've found and highlight the risks. Listen to their feedback and refine your plans.

You'll want to gather evidence of their support. You can do this through community meetings, survey, ballots where required, and other engagement activities.

Keep people informed about decisions and plans along the way!



Step 7

Complete the Purchase

Once your plans are in place, it's time to complete the buyout.

At this stage, you will negotiate with the owner to agree a final purchase price.

You will finalise funding for the purchase. Many community landowners are supported by the Scottish Land Fund. However, communities often bring together funding from a range of sources. These might include other foundations, Local Authority funding, community benefit funds, private donations, community shares or crowdfunding.

Once your funding is all in place, solicitors will help you and the owner through the legal processes and transfer ownership to your community.



Step 8

Deliver Projects for Your Community

You are now a community landowner! This is not the end, but the beginning. With ownership secured, you can focus on delivering the benefits your community wants to see. This might include improving local services, developing housing, creating jobs, restoring buildings, managing land for nature, or making new opportunities for local people.

Continue to involve the community as you go – you are in this for the long run, and you will need local people to stay involved and help keep the project going.



SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR YOUR BUYOUT

Every community ownership story starts with a conversation about what could be possible. At the school gate, around kitchen tables and in village halls, communities create shared visions of what would make life in their place better.

With those shared visions, local support and help from third sectors organisations and other community landowners, communities across Scotland are creating lasting change.

Every journey is different, but you don't have to go it alone. Support is available at every stage to help turn local ambition into lasting community benefit.

Guiding you through the process:
Community Land Scotland
Development Trusts Association Scotland
Community Ownership Support Services

Funding
The Scottish Land Fund
Democratic Finance

Project specific support:
South of Scotland Community Housing
Community Energy Scotland
Community Woodlands Association

Learn from other communities:
Scottish Community Alliance
Scottish Rural Action

FIND OUT MORE & ACCESS SUPPORT
Scan the QR code or visit:

www.communitylandscotland.org.uk