



Applecross Community Company is assessing the feasibility of community ownership of Camusterrach Church.

This open-day is an opportunity for community members to provide feedback on the options for developing the Church that we are considering.



Background to the project

In October 2019, local Minister Anita Stutter informed the community, at the Applecross Forum, that the Church of Scotland Church in Camusterrach was going to be put up for sale. She also said that the Trustees of the Church would like the building to continue to benefit the community and that any potential sale that would result in this would be looked upon favourably. Those present at the Forum meeting asked ACC to investigate the potential for community use of the building.

In early 2022 ACC secured funding from the Scottish Land Fund to undertake a feasibility study into community ownership of Camusterrach Church. This is being undertaken by Duncan MacPherson, Faye MacLeod and Rural Design. The team are assessing the feasibility of various options for using the building that were identified in ACC's 2018 community survey and the Plan-it Applecross community consultation.



Menu of options and ideas under consideration	Benefits
ACC office ACC currently rents a very small room from the Applecross Trust at Hartfield house for office use.	Having a permanent operational base contributes to the sustainability of ACC and the benefits it delivers to the community.
AppleNet base & servers ACC employs two part-time technicians to service and strengthen the peninsula's internet.	Space is required for desks, IT parts and dedicated server to strengthen the sustainability of our community internet services, enabling connectivity as well as remote learning and working.
Flexible workshop space Multi-use space for workshops with storage of relevant equipment, e.g. weaving, pottery, woodwork etc.	Contribute to preservation of local skills and knowledge. Contribute to well-being and the local economy
Community office space With improved internet, and an increase in remote working and learning, there may be a need for desk space outside residents' homes. ACC could provide desks, phones, internet, access to computers/ internet etc but also printers, photocopy machine, reception etc.	Enable remote learning and working, thus diversifying the economy Enable residents to start-up local businesses.
Community library 'Beyond books' Although we have a mobile library visiting Applecross, we do not have space for residents to borrow items that one only needs temporarily. Examples include, tools, toys, games, sports & outdoor equipment etc. DVDs, CDs and books could also be available, including materials in Gaelic.	Sharing of items provides equal access at low cost, reduce carbon footprint. Contributes to the preservation of skills and knowledge. Contributes to childhood development, adult learning and well-being.
Music practice & instrument storage space We have very gifted residents in the community, who not only need a space to practice but also to safely store their instruments.	Cultural preservation Learning and sharing Promote well-being
One-bedroom flat It could be possible to also create a one or two one-bedroom flats	These flats could be made available to residents on a long lease, or rented to tourists for short lets in order to bring in revenue to finance other community projects.



Applecross Community Company will be using the following criteria to decide whether or not to go ahead with purchasing Camusterrach Church:

- That the Church building can be put to uses which provide a benefit to the local community
- That the building is dedicated to needs that are not already provided by other venues or buildings within our community (e.g. the community hall)
- That space is also available for an office for the Applecross Community Company and as a base for AppleNet
- That the building is used in a way which generates enough income to cover its own long-term costs
- That the services provided are aimed at local residents rather than tourists
- That there is broad community support for the project



ACC is considering a staged approach to acquiring, using and developing Camusterrach Church.

Phases 1 involves undertaking a feasibility study for community ownership of the building, raising funds, acquiring the Church, undertaking essential repair works and beginning to use the building.

Phase 2 involves renovating the building more substantially to enable a range of different community benefit activities to take place.



Office space and hot desking

The number of people working from home in Applecross is increasing. However working from home doesn't suit everyone and their home situation, all of the time, and there is no office rental space on the peninsula.

The Camusterrach Church could provide an opportunity for residents and local businesses to either rent a room for their exclusive use as an office, or for hot-desk areas, where people could rent a workspace as and when they need it. In addition to the desk space itself, other facilities could be also available such as photocopiers, scanners, printers, high-speed broadband and just a space to have a cuppa and socialise. This use could enable remote working and learning, thereby contributing to the local economy and business development.

Applecross Community Company also needs an office that is big enough to meet its expanding needs. Whilst AppleNet needs a secure location to base its server, IT equipment and desks for its staff.



Workshop and studio space

The community survey undertaken by ACC in 2018 demonstrated considerable demand for workshop and studio space.

Part of the Camusterrach Church building could be dedicated to space for workshops and or studios (woodwork, pottery, weaving etc), as well as space for storage of tools and equipment.

This use could help to preserve local skills and knowledge, as well as strengthen the local economy and well-being.



Library of Things

A “Library of Things” lends tools, crofting or gardening equipment, games, toys and other items to its members and a number of these projects have been established across the UK.

The items that tend to work best as those that people need but can't afford, only use occasionally, or don't have space to store themselves.

Having such items available to borrow saves on unnecessary purchasing and reduces our carbon footprint.

Some community libraries of things have also expanded to organise trainings and skills-share sessions on using specific equipment, which can help to build and strengthen community bonds.



Music rehearsal and storage space

Our strong musical tradition has become even more significant since the high-school children started spending so much time with the musicians at Plockton's School of Excellence. However, places for individual practice and band rehearsal can be hard to find.

The Church building could provide a dedicated music space for rehearsals as well as equipment storage. This use could help preserve our community's musical culture and heritage as well as contribute to overall wellbeing.



One-bedroom flat(s)

The feasibility study team have hi-lighted the possibility to develop one or more 1 bed flats within the church building. These could be let on a long-term basis to a local resident or could be let to tourists in order to finance the maintenance of the building and other community benefit projects.

There is a well-documented demand for one bed houses in Applecross. On the other hand, there is also a need to consider the long-term financial security of the Community Company and a holiday let could allow ACC to invest in future community benefit projects.

