

Glenfarg Community Centre

Business Plan

Executive Summary

There is a growing problem of social isolation in Glenfarg. The population is ageing (in line with the population generally), and the bus services have been reduced making it more difficult for those without their own transport to shop or to enjoy services and events available in the nearest towns of Perth or Kinross (ten or more miles away). Indeed the poor frequency of bus services means that it is difficult to have a drink or a meal without using private transport as there is nowhere to eat or drink locally. The problem of social isolation is not only experienced by older people but also by young people who generally do not have access to private transport. There is no youth club in the village and there are no organised activities at all for the age group 14 ½ to 18.

Three and a half years ago the last remaining hotel in Glenfarg village closed. As a hotel, it had many facilities which, besides accommodation, included dining and meeting rooms, function room and bars. The hotel was a landmark and well patronised by the village. Prior to its closure it was poorly managed and was eventually closed. A planning application for conversion to flats was approved despite strong local opposition, and the hotel building now remains empty and derelict.

The problem of social isolation is exacerbated by the closure of the hotel (in a village in which there was once four hotels). Since the closure, the community has been actively investigating what can be done to meet the growing problem of social isolation among many sections of the community. The Village Hall provides the only accessible meeting rooms in the village. However, the hall provides only space for hire for organised activities. It is not open except when hired out for such activities.

The proposed Glenfarg Community Centre <https://www.glenfargcommunitycentre.com> will be a development of the existing Village Hall. This hall was once the village Primary school, and the schoolmaster lived in the adjoining schoolhouse. The property shares a party wall with the village hall and the garden ground is contiguous with the hall car park and garden. The house has now been acquired by the Village Hall Committee with help from the Scottish Land Fund and RWE Innogy (the local wind farm). The acquisition and conversion of the former schoolhouse will offer space for a variety of community services. Among the possibilities are a breakfast club and after school care, a youth club, old folks club, a café/bistro, and shared/managed office workspace. There is also the opportunity to improve car parking for the Hall and the Centre, and to utilise the garden ground by integrating it with the hall gardens. This would create a “village square” in the centre of Glenfarg where a variety of different events could be held such as fetes, entertainment, barbeques, sales and so on. This square will be enhanced once the former garage forecourt (which lies to the east on Main Street adjoining the Schoolhouse garden) is developed as a licensed premises by the Glenfarg Community Company <https://www.glenfargvillageinn.co.uk/>. This development will be complementary to the proposed Glenfarg Centre, and will be able to support some of the social activities held in the hall and in the gardens (in much the same way as the Glenfarg Hotel once did).

<https://www.glenfarg.org>

<https://www.glenfargcommunitycentre.com>

<https://glenfargvillageinn.co.uk>

Business Details

Address: Glenfarg Village Hall, c/o Cedric Wilkins, Woodlands, Church Brae, Glenfarg, Perthshire PH2 9NL. Telephone 01577 830300 M 07768661160. <http://www.glenfarg.org.uk>. Organisational structure: Charitable Association SC 027474 Board membership of eleven members. Arngask Hall is a newly established SCIO (SC 048505). The Village Hall assets will be transferred to this SCIO once reorganisation of the charity is complete.

Background

In 2013 the Glenfarg Conversation took place. This was a public consultation about the priorities for the village and it included a survey of residents. Eighty people took part in the survey and the highest two priorities listed in the results were “Enhancing community life e.g. activities, events and spirit”, and “Activities/services for older people”. The survey together with the “Glenfarg Profile” (which was written at the same time) are available on the village website <https://www.glenfarg.org>

Three and a half years ago the last remaining hotel in Glenfarg village closed. The Glenfarg Hotel was once renowned for its music - attracting musicians from far afield. As a hotel, it had many facilities which, besides accommodation, included dining and meeting rooms, function room and bars. The hotel was a landmark and well patronised by the village. Prior to its closure it was poorly managed and was eventually closed. A planning application for conversion to flats was approved despite strong local opposition, and the hotel building now remains empty and derelict.

There is now a growing problem of social isolation in Glenfarg. The population is ageing (in line with the population generally, and the bus services have been reduced making it more difficult for those without their own transport to shop or to enjoy services and events available in the nearest towns of Perth or Kinross (each being ten or more miles away). Indeed the poor frequency of bus services means that it is difficult to have a drink or a meal without using private transport as there is nowhere to eat or drink locally. The problem of social isolation is not only experienced by older people but also by young people who generally do not have access to private transport. There is no youth club in the village and there are very few organised activities for this age group.

The problem of social isolation is exacerbated by the closure of the last remaining hotel (in a village in which there was once four hotels). There is nowhere informally to meet, eat or drink in the village. Since the closure of the Glenfarg Hotel, the community has been actively investigating what can be done to meet the growing problem of social isolation among many sections of the community. The Glenfarg Community Company is developing plans for a traditional pub. This will serve as a social meeting place. The village hall management committee has examined a range of options for the development of the hall. Among the options considered was the purchase of the Schoolhouse. However, whilst this was the favoured option it could not be taken further while the house was occupied. During 2018 negotiations took place with the house owners, who were very supportive of the concept of community

ownership. An application was made to the Scottish Land Fund for resources to complete the acquisition and, together with resources from the RWE Innogy Wind Farm, the funding was put in place to secure the house for the community of Glenfarg. The purchase was completed in April 2019.

The Glenfarg Community Centre

In order to alleviate the problem of social isolation especially amongst older people, the village hall committee and volunteers have been running a community coffee lounge in the hall meeting room for the year or so. This has been a successful venture not only for local residents but also for their friends from outwith the village. However, the hall premises are not ideal for this purpose, and tables and chairs etc. need to be cleared after each use ready for the next hall hire. The idea for a community café/bistro is an extension of the community coffee lounge concept.

The proposed Glenfarg Community Centre will be a development of the existing Village Hall. This hall, which was built in 1891, was once the village Primary school and the schoolmaster lived in the adjoining schoolhouse. When the school was relocated to new premises the hall was gifted to the community under a Deed of Trust, whilst the school house was sold to the resident schoolmaster and his family. The family lived in the house for nearly sixty years. The property shares a party wall with the village hall and the garden ground is contiguous with the hall car park and garden. The accommodation comprises on the ground floor a lounge, dining room, kitchen, WC with shower, and sitting room. Upstairs there are four bedrooms – one single and three double; and a further full bathroom. There are attractive garden grounds to the side and rear of the building with substantial mature trees. There is a large shed to the rear of the house. The garden is bounded by a hedge to the south, a wall to the east and north (alongside the garage buildings) and Greenbank Road to the west. There is no vehicle access to the property. The entire site extends to approximately one third of an acre.

Glenfarg Village Hall has purchased and now plans to develop the former Schoolhouse which adjoins the hall. The acquisition and conversion of the former schoolhouse will offer space for a variety of community services. Among the possibilities are a breakfast club and after school care, a youth club, old folks club, a café and shared/managed office workspace. There is also the opportunity to improve car parking for the Hall and the Centre and to utilise the garden ground by integrating it with the hall gardens. This would create a “village square” in the centre of Glenfarg where a variety of different events could be held such as fetes, entertainment, barbeques, sales and so on. This square will be enhanced once the former garage forecourt (which lies to the east on Main Street adjoining the Schoolhouse garden) is developed as a licensed premises by the Glenfarg Community Company. This development will be complementary to the proposed Glenfarg Community Centre, and will be able to support some of the social activities held in the hall and in the gardens (in much the same way as the Glenfarg Hotel once did).

The Market and Business Environment

A public meeting has been held to discuss the plans for the Glenfarg Community Centre as well (as the plans for licensed premises). Some thirty five local residents attended the meeting held on June 27th, and there was strong support for both proposals. The plans have been aired in the community

Newsletter, and on social media and the Glenfarg Grapevine (an e-newsletter). An initial indication from the community survey (involving 140 respondents) is that there is strong support for a community centre and particularly a community café which attracted the support of 87% of respondents so far. Second in importance has been the idea of a youth club (with 77% support); and thirdly, children's clubs for breakfast and after school, and clubs for older people (72% each). The breakfast and after school clubs have received the strong endorsement of the Headteacher of Arngask Primary School.

The local market for lunch time eating venues is good. There are a number of attractive places that have been established over recent years that offer coffee, lunches and afternoon teas. These include Loch Leven's Larder, Heaven Scent, Dobbies, The Court House, The Boat House, Findatie, RSPB at Loch Leven, Cashmere at Loch Leven and so on. There are also a growing number of farm shops with cafes: for example, Pillars of Hercules, Lochend Farm Shop, and Jamesfield. There is an opportunity for Glenfarg to position an establishment (perhaps called "The Schoolhouse") in this lucrative market. Tapping into the car-borne coffee/lunch time market would help underpin the community café concept. The market for evening meals is probably equally attractive. There is nowhere to eat in the village. The restaurant at the Glenfarg Hotel was very popular amongst local people whilst it offered good food. Local people now struggle with infrequent bus services that are poorly connected to any eating establishment. For those without a car, eating out is practically very difficult. Moreover, people who stay at the local bed and breakfast establishments often are looking for somewhere local to eat without the need to drive. The opportunity is undoubtedly there to create a popular evening bistro to tap into this market opportunity. Primarily for locals and visitors, it could also attract people from the surrounding area.

In addition to the hall facilities, the Community Centre will comprise (in the schoolhouse building) a community café open for morning coffee, lunch and afternoon tea. It may also offer food on three evenings per week depending on what other provision is made in the village in the future. Besides the café, the Schoolhouse will offer much needed additional storage space for the hall, and the rooms will be available to a variety of clubs. These needs will be defined following further community consultation.

The development of the centre will proceed in three phases. The first phase will comprise the building work to convert the house. It will commence on acquisition of the schoolhouse and is expected to take one year to complete. It will involve raising the necessary funding to convert the property and to support the initial staff costs of running the centre in phase two. Likely sources of funding will include: The Gannochy Trust, The Robertson Trust, RWE Innogy (via Foundation Scotland) the local authority, and other Trusts including the Thomson Trust, the Esme Fairbairn Trust and the Matthew Trust. Planning and building consent will be sought at the outset for all phases of the project. Initial discussions with Council planning officials suggest that there will be support for the change of use of the schoolhouse to a community centre.

The first phase will involve carrying out any essential repairs, and the conversion of the downstairs of the schoolhouse into a cafe and lounge with toilets and a kitchen to meet Food and Safety Agency standards. This will include re-wiring and re-decoration, but there will be a minimum of alterations to the floor plan. The downstairs will be made accessible. Increased storage space will be provided as part of Phase One. Provision will be made for increased off street car parking and vehicular access to the schoolhouse property. The fence and hedge dividing the garden ground from the hall garden will be partially removed.

Towards the end of the first phase, staff and volunteers will be recruited to manage and run the café, and breakfast and after school clubs, and a (part-time) centre manager will be appointed. Funding assistance will be sought for part of the staffing costs for the first two years of operations (the Second Phase) to enable the centre to get up and running successfully. It is proposed to recruit a Centre Manager and a Volunteer Coordinator, both working part-time twenty hours per week. The aim will be to open the café within one year after the date of acquisition of the schoolhouse. Once Building Control warrants are obtained for the change of use it should be possible to utilise the ground floor rooms for meetings, clubs, coffee lounge and lunches and it may also be possible to commence running of the breakfast club, after school club and youth club. The upstairs rooms could provide valuable storage space in the short term. Glenfarg has an active corps of retired people who have undertaken community benefit work on many occasions and have the skills to carry out some of the basic modifications and decoration work necessary to get these activities started. The public consultation identified an opportunity to display (perhaps for sale) the work of local artists. This could build on the very successful presentations of art that have been held in the village hall in recent years. This art work would help create an attractive ambience in the Schoolhouse – an important element in building a successful café/bistro.

The standard of food provision will be of good quality and good value. Not only will the centre provide for local residents but also visitors and tradesmen working locally. The coffee lounge that has been running in the hall is based on high quality tea and coffee with home-made cakes. This has proved popular. Also popular in the past has been regular home-made soup lunches offered in the hall. The high standard of catering will be maintained in the centre but there will be a far wider selection and choice. The Cafe will open on weekdays for morning coffee at 10.00. Lunches will be served from 12.00 till 14.30. There will be table seating for 20 people and lounge seating with low coffee tables for a further 12 people. According to demand, seated tables may be made available in the lounge. There will be a variety of hot and cold drinks available and a wide range of home baking. Take-away food and drinks will be available. It is envisaged that local residents will be able to supply much of the produce (especially the soups and the home baking). Freshly baked bread will be a particular attraction (the survey responses featured a bakery among the desirable outcomes). Afternoon teas will be available until 16.00.

A Breakfast Club will operate from 7.45 until 9.15 (when the Primary school opens). It will offer light breakfast to the children of primary school age. (Secondary school children get the school bus at 8.15). The breakfast menu will include cereal, fruit and toast with a hot or cold drink. Children will be escorted to the school for the start of the school day. The after-school club will operate on the similar basis. Children will be collected from the Primary school at 15.15 and given an afternoon snack. The after school club will be open until 18.00. The main hall premises will be available for these clubs as well as the rooms in the schoolhouse when the café is closed. Separate funding support will be identified to support the breakfast and after school clubs.

During Phase Two, plans will be prepared for the Third Phase. Feedback from the community will be sought on the second phase of operation and to refine initial plans.

In Phase Three, plans will be implemented for the use of the upstairs part of the schoolhouse. This will include provision of storage space and club rooms. The upstairs rooms could also be used to accommodate 'hot desks' for use by people in the village, break-out rooms for courses, training, and education which could be hosted within the village.

The survey responses have included a number of additional, interesting suggestions for other uses including a gym, craft room, and games room. Further possibilities will undoubtedly arise - and these will be investigated and pursued depending on the strength of support within the community and the suitability of the premises to accommodate the activities. Separate funding support will be identified to support the youth and older people's clubs and training and education activities.

In Phase Three there will be a youth club open at least one evening per week. The youth club will have available a pool table, table tennis, music, and computer games. Simple refreshments will be available for sale. There will also be a club for older people. The club concept will be developed in collaboration with other groups in the community. It will draw on support for similar clubs in the local authority area (e.g. speakers, entertainment, courses, exercise activities, music, games and so on).

Depending on what other facilities exist in the village in due course, it may be appropriate to open the bistro in the evening, initially on three days per week: Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The opening hours would be 5.30 till 9.00. The menu would be designed to meet the following standards:

- healthy eating choices
- fresh local produce,
- home baking
- three courses with beverages
- waiter service
- comfortable and friendly setting
- good value and competitive pricing

The average spend during the morning will be £2.50 for coffee, for lunch will be £4.50 and for afternoon tea will be £2.50. In the evening opening average spend will be £15.

Legal and Organisational Requirements

The whole development (including the village hall) will be owned by the Glenfarg community through a new incorporated charitable organisation (or SCIO). This organisation would replace the existing charitable Trust which currently owns and manages the village hall. The new, two-tier SCIO has already been established with over 140 members, but the charity reorganisation scheme has yet to be completed and the assets of the existing charity transferred. The extension to the hall will complement the existing hall by offering additional flexible space and services which will meet the changing needs of the community. The whole complex will be managed as a centre. There will be activities in the Schoolhouse which will also use the hall facilities and vice versa. Opening an access directly from the house into the hall will facilitate this.

At this stage it is not possible to be definitive about how the SCIO will manage the centre as this will be for the new organisation to decide. However, it is possible that a trading subsidiary of the SCIO will be established to operate the café and clubs. Such a subsidiary can employ staff, and conduct operations in a commercial manner. It would mandate any surplus from its operations back to the charitable parent company. This flexibility is offered by the SCIO structure and could allow the best management arrangements given the nature of the proposed trading activities.

It is anticipated that the Centre accounts will be integrated, with the current hall accounts being brought together with those for the Schoolhouse.

Management Structure and Team

A detailed Business Plan will guide the project development and implementation. The Board of Trustees will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on the progress of the project and operational and financial performance. Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be agreed and monthly reports prepared for review by the Board. This will be a key responsibility of the Centre Manager. The Business Plan will be reviewed annually and a forward plan prepared for the year ahead specifying operational targets. Financial reporting will be conducted on a monthly basis whilst the Manager will develop weekly sales targets together with a marketing plan.

The success of the project will be assessed in a variety of ways. The KPIs will be a key measure. These will not be static but will be reviewed annually and updated to reflect input from the management and customers. Customers will be asked informally for their reaction to the services quality and provision. A more formal questionnaire will be conducted in advance of provision of services and after the first year of operation. This will provide comparators and an indication of whether or not the service is well targeted and delivered. Complaints will be reported to management and appropriate action taken. (Training both of staff and volunteers will be a vital part of the Centre activities, and specialist input will be sought where possible to enhance training quality). Longer term success will be measured against the change in community activities that takes place over time, and the level of community involvement. The AGM of the SCIO will provide one of the platforms for measuring project success in the longer term. Community consultation will take place as part of the AGM and this will also provide a mechanism for enhancing community engagement through membership of the SCIO.

The Village of Glenfarg is very resourceful. In the past decade there have been a number of substantial projects that have gone ahead with the support of local residents. In many cases these projects have attracted significant external funding support as well as support from fund raising activities within the village itself. Some examples are:

- the creation of the Hall Garden in 2015,
- upgrading of the Village Hall itself in 2008
- the work to build the Tennis Club Hut in 2015
- the footpath at the Avenue under the Sustrans cycle to school initiative in 2015
- the Village Green – an arboretum given to the village by former residents (which adjoins the hall garden)

- the annual work of Glenfarg and Duncricvie in Bloom (of prize winning standard)
- the annual Glenfarg Fete which raises money for local causes

The Hall committee has experience in running other projects as well as managing the hall facilities. The Coffee Lounge was established a year ago with assistance from the Lochelbank Wind Farm fund and the support of around 20 volunteers. The Hall committee has also run fund raising events. The Hall Committee has formed a Development Sub Committee to drive the Schoolhouse project forward. Reporting to the Board of Trustees, this sub-committee will have the responsibility for delivering the Glenfarg Community Centre. In due course, once the facilities are in place, a Management Sub Committee will have the responsibility for running the Community Centre. The merit of establishing a trading subsidiary will be kept under review.

Marketing

The different activities taking place in the Glenfarg Centre will require different marketing strategies. These are dealt with separately.

Clubs for children of Primary school age. The Head teacher has been very supportive of establishing such clubs and has offered staff support. The Parent Teacher Association will be the first point of contact to develop the detail of how the Clubs might be organised. It will be necessary to recruit and train volunteers along the lines of the existing Mother and Baby Group which takes place in the village hall once per week. The role of the Volunteer coordinator will be critical to the successful development of links to the school parents, staff and children. This individual would need relevant qualifications and experience for the role of child minding. The volunteers supporting the clubs would not necessarily need to be qualified as they would be involved for less than two hours per day. With the right supervision, there would be an opportunity to provide work placement training for those engaged in taking a child minding qualification.

Youth Club. This activity has received very strong support in the consultation. The Club would require committed leadership and would need to find a time slot that minimises any competition with other youth activities that are popular in the community. Equipment will be sought as donations (e.g. basketball hoop, table football, pool table, computer terminals, computer games, ping pong tables, darts board, card and board games etc.) The hall as well as the Schoolhouse could be used for the club activities – and where possible these would be held out of doors. The club will be promoted by social media primarily and this would be a role that members of the club themselves would take on. Recruitment to the club would be chiefly word of mouth but the volunteer coordinator would be needed to ensure sufficient adult supervision at all times.

The café/bistro. This will be promoted in as many media as possible including the local press especially through feature articles, the church and its associated churches, the Glenfarg Newsletter and the Grapevine e-news letter, the community Facebook page and other social media, posters, by attracting events (such as cycling) to use the venue as a stop-over, by promoting the work of local artists that will be on display, by making special offers (e.g. for families or pensioners), themed menus, musical nights, gourmet nights, games nights, barbeques or party nights. There could also be hire, with or without catering, for events arranged privately - such as weddings or private parties. A programme of such promotions will be prepared which will encourage

people not only to visit the café/bistro but also to return and to bring others along to share the experience. A good programme of promotional events will keep the experience fresh and encourage return business.

Risk Analysis

	Risk	Mitigation
Governance	Not enough members on Board of Trustees	Identify and recruit new members Co-opt members
	Need for right skills on Board of Trustees	Conduct skills analysis and recruit to fill gaps Co-option to Sub-Committees
	Lack of ordinary members of Charity	Local publicity about activities, aims, need for community support etc. Encourage existing members to recruit new members. Use Centre events to recruit members from attendees. Encourage nominations from local organisations.
Staff	Staff not performing adequately	Monitor, support and train through Personnel sub-committee
	Number of volunteers fall short of requirement	Investigate reasons. Advertise need for support, devise new volunteering opportunities, find new ways of recruiting new volunteers e.g. social networks or through local organisations.
Costs increase	Building Condition worse than expected	Conduct detailed investigation and obtain estimates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roofer work • Timber specialist • Engineer • Electrical renewal • Plumbing and heating renewal
	Capital costs increase	Utilise contingency Identify and obtain new funding support Recruit volunteer expertise for suitable tasks
	Operating costs increase	Put in place procedures for cost control and monitor Keep overall operations under regular review Reduce staff hours and recruit new volunteers to replace time
Revenue falls short of expected	Community use is lower than expected	Investigate reasons for lack of use and take remedial action. E.g. Advertise, use social media to promote, create new events and services, make changes to timetables, level of service provision etc.

	Funding support less than needed	Identify other funding sources Hold Centre fund raising events Reduce or re-profile expenditure Recruit voluntary skills to carry out work. Hold work days e.g. for garden improvements or painting and decorating
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