



ACTION PLAN

2020-2025

Our vision is for the small (but amazing) community of Applecross to be sustainable, resilient and prosperous.

A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

FACAL BHON CHATHRAICH

As the Chair of the Applecross Community Company, I am delighted that we are publishing our Action Plan for 2020-2025.

It seems hard to believe, but the Community Company recently turned ten years old. At a time of great change within our organisation – as well as locally and nationally, this ten-year anniversary seemed like the ideal opportunity to look ahead to the future strategic direction of the company – and at what it can do to help sustain our amazing community.

Over the last two years, we carried out a detailed assessment of relevant legislation and funding opportunities that might impact the future of the community company, and we have worked closely with the Scottish Community Development Centre to undertake and analyse our community survey. This information, along with that from previous community consultations, was used to develop the themes that make up this Action Plan.

The many aspirations of the Applecross community far outstrip the capacity of the Community Company to deliver them, so we will look to work closely with other local organisations to deliver our shared objectives.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the board and all the volunteers who have worked so hard over the years to help keep the Community Company going. I would also like to thank all those who volunteer on other community organisations for helping make Applecross such a great place to live.



Owen Kilbride

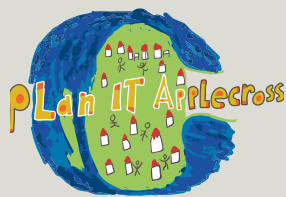
INTRODUCTION

RO-RÀDH

This Action Plan for Applecross Community Company (ACC) comes at a time of change in Applecross. There are challenges in the locality and beyond but there are also great opportunities for communities like ours to take more control of our future.

This Action Plan is based on recent consultation and engagement exercises in Applecross including:

- The Plan It Applecross project with Planning Aid Scotland in 2019



- The ACC community survey in 2018



- The Applecross Trust's 'Shared Vision' consultation in 2017/18



Links to these resources and others can be found on our website www.applecrosscommunitycompany.org

These exercises identified many ideas for community change, development and improvement. This document is our commitment to turn some of those ideas – the ones we are best placed to deliver, and those that we think will have the largest impact – into workable projects. To the greatest extent we can, **ACC** wants to support a diverse, thriving and prosperous community. We also want to contribute to what makes Applecross such a special place – its environment, culture, history and community. Most of all we want to ensure that Applecross is more resilient in the future.

The priority themes that ACC has identified for the next five years are:

THEME ONE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The provision of high-quality affordable housing suitable for a vibrant and thriving local community is our priority over the next five years. We believe this is essential for the long-term viability and sustainability of the Applecross community.

We will work to: acquire and develop land and buildings to help address the local affordable housing shortfall.

THEME TWO LOCAL ECONOMY

Good economic opportunities for employment and self-employment are essential for a viable and inclusive community.

We will work to: develop and enable economic and (small) business opportunities for residents that harness our local resources and capitalise on the skills of our community.

THEME THREE COMMUNITY & WELLBEING

Applecross has a beautiful environment and is an amazing place to live, work and play. Applecross Community Company recognises that ensuring this remains the case is vitally important.

We will work to: support and, where applicable, develop recreational and community services and facilities.

SETTING THE SCENE

MAR A THA CÙISEAN

Applecross

Applecross peninsula covers 26,000 Hectares in the North West Highlands of Scotland. It has 250¹ residents and is defined by its outstanding beauty, rich culture and strong community.

In common with many Highland communities we know that there are many challenges including: lack of affordable housing; a small and ageing population; high cost of living and lack of job diversity.

Housing supply and affordability, alongside the need for improved economic opportunities are key issues in Applecross. Addressing these issues will ensure our community is economically, culturally, environmentally and socially sustainable for the long term.

¹ Scotland's Census 2011.

The wider environment

Meanwhile the wider economic and political context is challenging for the Applecross peninsula and ACC. We are living through a period of repeated rounds of political uncertainty coupled with a long running austerity programme. This means that future funding for organisations like ACC may be constrained or more competitive and the commercial environment is more challenging. Communities are being asked to step in where the public and private sector is unable or unwilling to operate. ACC is acutely aware of this having taken on the ownership and management of the petrol station in 2008, local public toilets in 2011, and ongoing service provision of broadband.

However there are opportunities for ACC: the current Scottish political climate supports communities through recognising the need for community engagement and empowerment. Communities are encouraged to get actively involved in decisions which affect them. There is an increasing emphasis on communities owning land and buildings for community benefit.



SETTING THE SCENE

Bealach na Bà

About Applecross Community Company

ACC represents its (108) members², and the wider community of Applecross. ACC is a community development trust, a registered Scottish charity and a company limited by guarantee. It is governed by a volunteer board of directors who focus on the strategic oversight and overall operation of the company. ACC employs a Local Development Officer funded by Highlands and Islands Enterprise. This post is fully funded until March 2021.

ACC has a wholly owned trading arm, **Applecross Community Trading Limited (ACT)** that manages the broadband network and fuel station. ACC developed a hydro project called **Apple Juice (Applecross) Limited**. **Apple Juice** was set up as a separate organisation with surplus income going to ACC.



² ACC member list as of October 2019.

The basis for this plan

This plan is based on extensive consultation over several years including:

- **Plan it Applecross (2019)**
- **ACC community survey (2018)**
- **Applecross 'Shared Vision' (2017)**
- **The Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust: Community and Affordable Housing Needs Survey (2016)**
- **Highland Council Housing Needs & Demands Assessment Survey (2015).**

Links to these materials and others can be found on the ACC website.

www.applecrosscommunitycompany.org

Over the past two years, ACC have been developing a Strategic Plan for 2020-25. The **Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC)** have guided ACC throughout this process. ACC undertook a Community Survey in 2018, the results were then analysed by SCDC and this provided us with a strong data base to develop our plan. SCDC then led workshops using strategic analysis³ enabling the ACC board to work through community identified ideas and develop ACC's priority projects.

³ Strategic analysis including SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) and PEST (Political, Economic, Social & Technical). Refer to our Action Plan Supporting Documentation for more detailed information on the development of this plan.

INCLUSIVE ACCOUNTABLE APPROACHABLE

THEME ONE – AFFORDABLE HOUSING

CUSPAIR A H-AON – TAIGHEADAS AIG PRÌS REUSANTA

Surrounded by a stunning landscape steeped in history, Applecross is a tourist destination of global renown. It has a community established over centuries and we want to make sure this is a peopled landscape for centuries to come.

The current housing situation in Applecross is well documented⁴ as being a key area where change is required to ensure people can continue to live and work in the area. In particular, the high volume of second and holiday homes (currently at 34% compared with the Scottish national average of 2%⁵) is regularly noted as being a key contributing factor to the problem.

ACC do not have the resources to deal with such a complex issue alone. However we believe that we have a role to play in the provision of affordable housing by utilising the funding options available to us as a community organisation.

The evidence⁴ suggests that the availability of more affordable housing will encourage families, young people and essential employees to stay in the area.

What do we want to achieve?

To build a sustainable and vibrant community by providing good quality affordable housing that encourages our community to grow and prosper and to maintain public services.

What will we do?

We will work to acquire and develop land and buildings to help address the local affordable housing shortfall.

We will progress the affordable 'all access' housing project at Camusterrach.

Working with the Applecross Trust and Planning Aid Scotland we have identified several sites to take to feasibility study. Should feasibility study prove positive, we will seek to develop affordable housing options.

Community benefits

Improved housing options.

Sustaining a viable population able to maintain access to vital services such as schools and GP.

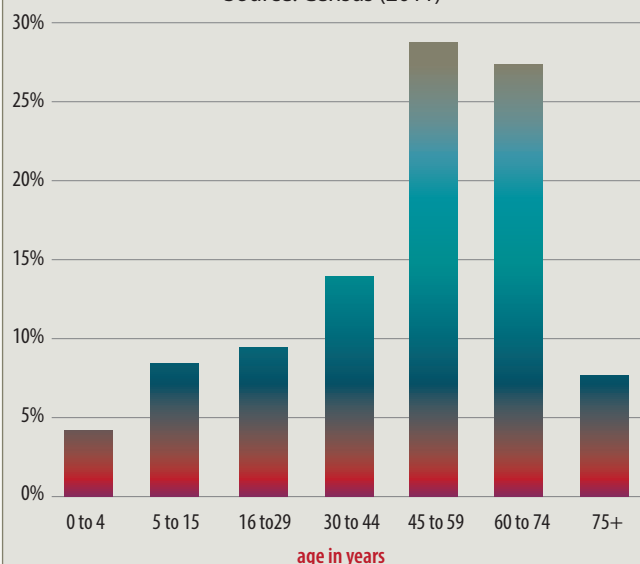
4 ACC community survey (2018); Highland Council Housing Needs & Demands Assessment Survey (2015); The Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust: Community and Affordable Housing Needs Survey 2016.
5 Highland Council 2011 Census Profile; Applecross.

THEME ONE



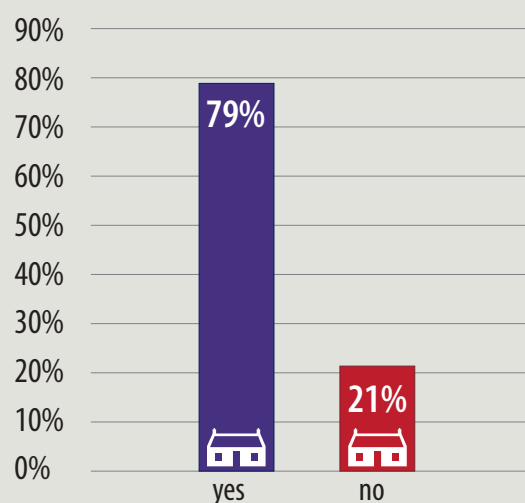
Applecross age distribution

Source: Census (2011)



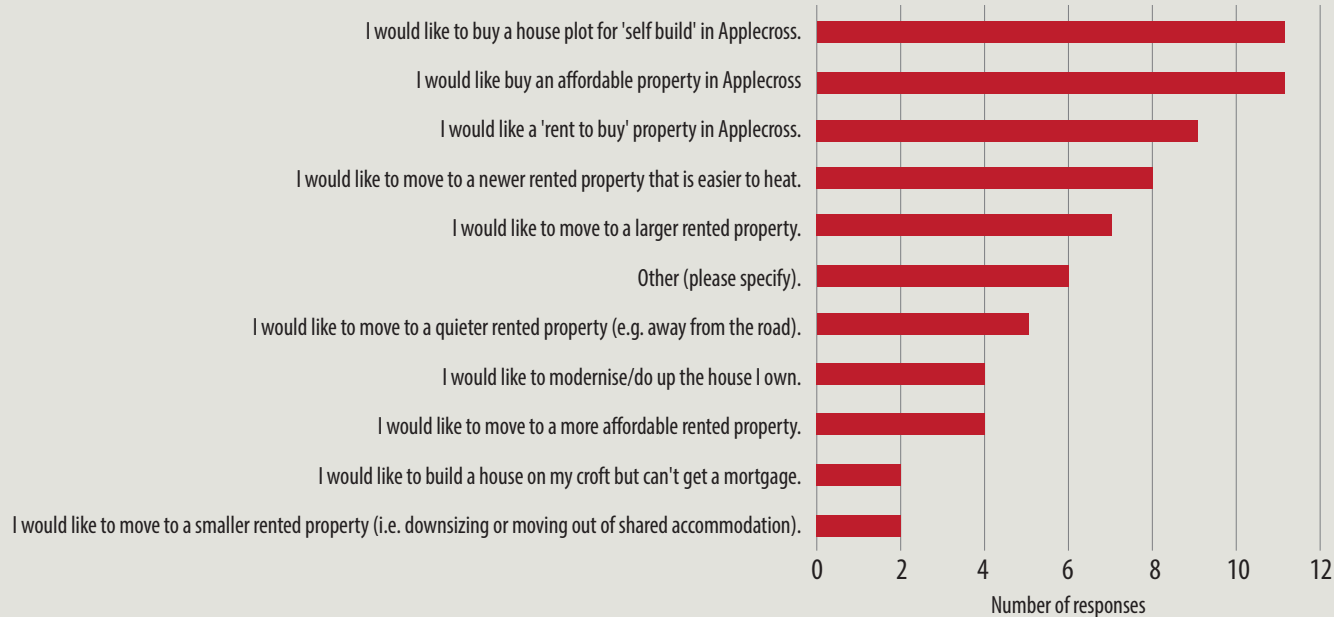
Does your accommodation suit your current housing needs? (sample size 133)

Source: ACC community survey results (2018)



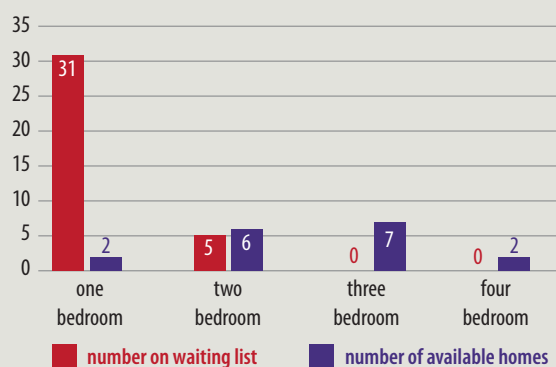
Which of the following statements best describes your situation? (sample size 29)

Source: ACC community survey results (2018)



Highland Housing Register (HHR) waiting list – Applecross

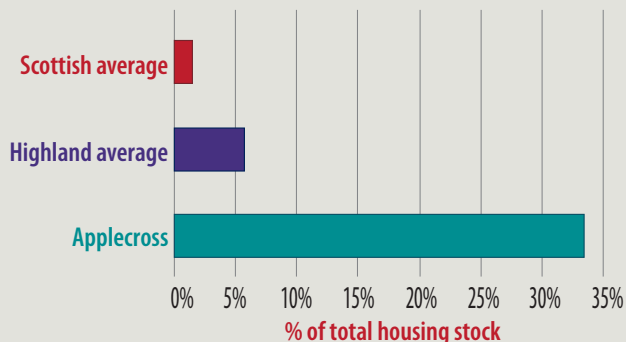
Source: Highland Housing Register (2019)



Two properties became available for re-let via the HHR from April 2018 to March 2019.

Second home ownership

Source: Census (2011)



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

THEME TWO – LOCAL ECONOMY

CUSPAIR A DHÀ – EACONAMAIDH NA SGÌRE

Applecross can present challenges for those seeking to make a living on the peninsula. However the community's skills and resilience make for a local economy defined by entrepreneurialism, hard work and passion.

From our recent consultation we know that many residents are looking for increased economic opportunities to help them remain in the local area and contribute to the local community. We also know that Applecross, along with many rural areas in the Highlands and Islands, has a relatively high cost of living and housing relative to wages. In addition, the area has a lack of employment diversity with the local economy heavily weighted towards tourism. Fuel poverty is an increasingly significant issue⁶.

To help address the current challenges we have identified the following opportunities:

- To increase income from tourism for community benefit
- The acquisition of land and buildings to develop workspaces which can be utilised by local residents for employment purposes.

A dual focus on housing and jobs – the two being intrinsically linked – will contribute to the long-term viability of our community.

Connectivity also has the potential to improve incomes and livelihoods – a solid and dependable internet connection is key to enabling local economic growth.

What do we want to achieve?

To support a prosperous, inclusive community able to use and develop its skills to build sustainable livelihoods.

What will we do?

We will develop and enable economic and small business opportunities for local residents by:

- Maintaining and improving existing **ACC** assets
- With **ACT**, exploring the future of Broadband
- Planning the development of workshop units and spaces to boost employment opportunities
- Investigating the viability of a visitor attraction/centre
- Exploring development of community income and other economic opportunities
- Investigating the options for future ACC office facilities
- Working with **Apple Juice**⁷ to investigate local energy use.

Community benefits

Continued provision of services.

More jobs of increased diversity and opportunity.

Increased income retained in the community from tourism.

Improved connectivity.

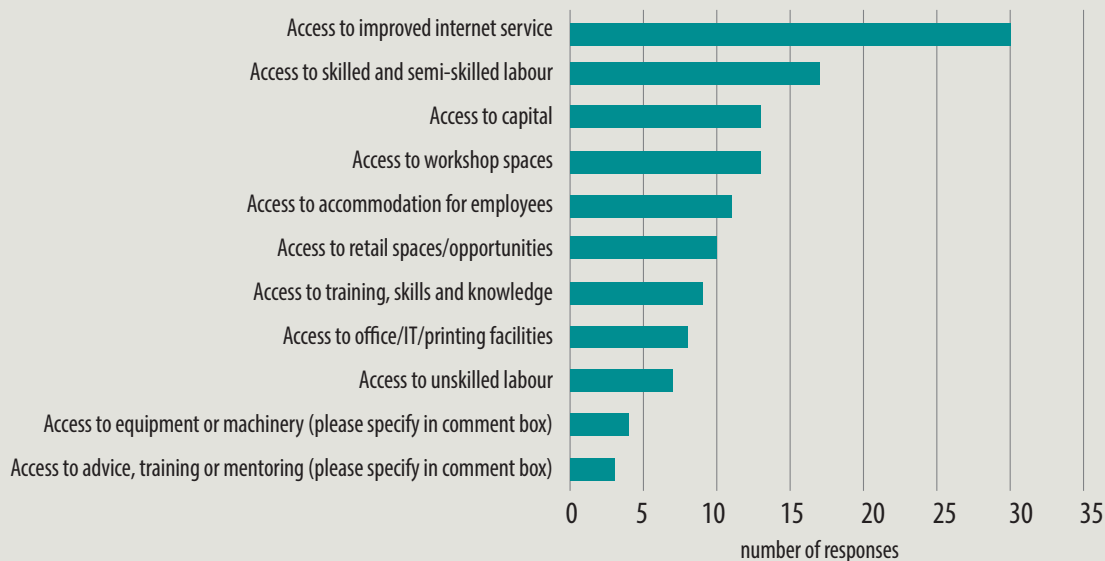
⁶ The Highland Council (2015) Housing Need and Demand Assessment; As Appraised by The Centre for Housing Market Analysis.

⁷ www.applecrosshydro.scot

THEME TWO

Which of the following might help you develop, improve or grow your business? (Sample size 44)

Source: ACC community survey results (2018)



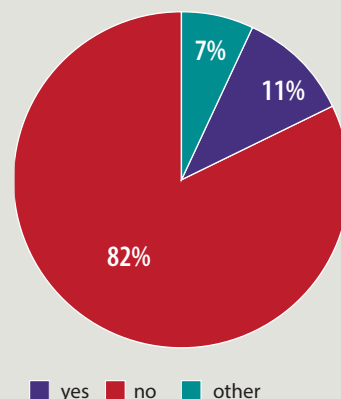
What might help you set up a new business? (Sample size 17)

Source: ACC community survey results (2018)



Are you interested in setting up your own business? (sample size 131)

Source: ACC community survey results (2018)

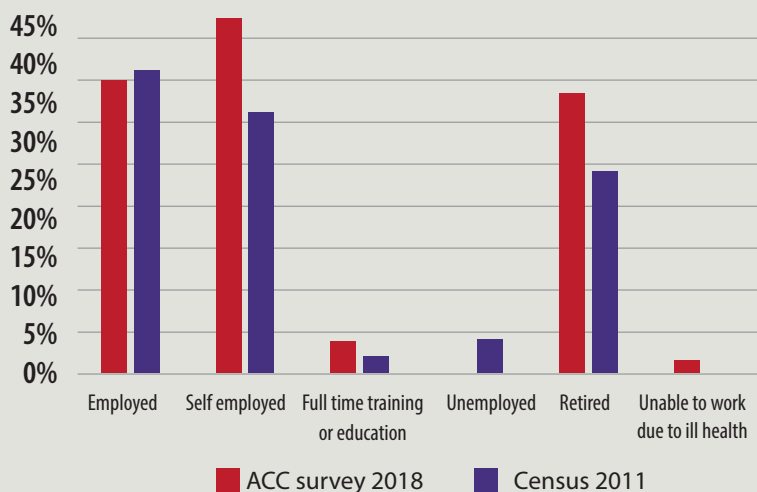


'Other' responses suggested that some were considering starting a business at some point in the medium to longer term. One respondent described other factors that might be important:

"depending on whether we have fast broadband, leisure facilities (swimming pool/gym would give something else to do/would allow kids to learn to swim without the long trip to Kyle) and affordable housing which would allow me to settle here comfortably."

Comparison Economic Activity – Scottish Census area statistics on rate of self-employment relative to Scottish average

Source: ACC community survey results (2018)



LOCAL ECONOMY

THEME THREE – COMMUNITY & WELLBEING

CUSPAIR A TRÌ – COIMHEARSNACHD & COR

Applecross is a beautiful and amazing place to live, work and play. ACC recognises that ensuring this remains the case is vitally important for the future of the area.

We are keen to support the existing amenities that make life here so enjoyable – and develop new opportunities to make our community better. Previous consultation^{8, 9, 10} has identified an extensive list of ideas.

ACC aims to take forward some of these projects, especially where they relate to land and asset management. We recognise that alternative community bodies are well suited to take forward some of the other initiatives. We are supportive of collaborative community-led projects to meet the needs of the community.

ACC recognise the impact of climate change on human life, biodiversity and ecosystems. Through this Action Plan, ACC will consider our wider environment and support our community and local government in making positive changes.

What do we want to achieve?

We want to make sure that Applecross remains a beautiful and amazing place to live, work and play. Furthermore we want to ensure everyone in the community is able to take advantage of our environment and has ample sporting, cultural, and social opportunities.

What will we do?

- Help facilitate the creation of community allotments that would provide social, educational, recreational opportunities and health benefits
- Encourage active travel in the community e.g. E-bikes
- Investigate the development of a community woodland that would have social, educational and environmental objectives
- Offer support, assistance and advice to other community organisations who wish to enhance the community life of Applecross.

Community benefits

New community amenities which all can enjoy.

A stronger community with more community-led activity.

8 ACC Community Survey 2018.

9 Plan it Applecross; Applecross Community Land Use Plan; Planning Aid Scotland; 2019.

10 Applecross 'Shared Vision' (2017).

THEME THREE



Community benefits

Respondents in the ACC 2018 survey identified the following as their top ten community benefits:

Source: ACC community survey results (2018)

1. Footpaths/walking trails
2. Improved children's play areas
3. Car parking
4. Improved public toilets
5. Gym/exercise equipment
6. Workshop space/industrial units
7. Community woodland
8. Sports field
9. Community run/owned visitor centre
10. Small swimming pool



COMMUNITY & WELLBEING

PRIORITY COMMUNITY PROJECTS – SUMMARY 2020-2025

GEÀRR-CHUNNTAS 2020-2025

PRIORITIES	AFFORDABLE HOUSING	LOCAL ECONOMY	COMMUNITY & WELLBEING
Our overall objective	To build a sustainable and vibrant community by providing good quality affordable housing.	To support a prosperous, inclusive community able to use and develop its skills to build sustainable livelihoods.	To ensure that Applecross is a beautiful and amazing place to live, work and play.
Projects	<p>Plan for the development of affordable housing as follows¹¹;</p> <p>Camusterrach Housing project (underway as of June 2019)</p> <p>Feasibility stage (as of September 2019) for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clachan Site • Front of Hydro Field • Smiddy Wood <p>Should feasibility study prove positive, we will seek to develop affordable housing options.</p>	<p>Maintain and improve existing ACC assets.</p> <p>With ACT, explore the future of Broadband.</p> <p>Plan the development of workshop units and spaces to boost employment opportunities.</p> <p>Investigate the viability of a visitor attraction/centre.</p> <p>Explore development of community income and other economic opportunities.</p> <p>Investigate the options for future ACC office facilities.</p> <p>Work with Apple Juice¹² to investigate local energy use.</p>	<p>Help facilitate the creation of community allotments that would provide social, educational, recreational opportunities and health benefits.</p> <p>Encourage active travel in the community e.g. E-bikes.</p> <p>Investigate the Development of a community woodland that would have multiple social, educational, environmental objectives.</p> <p>Offer support, assistance and advice to other community organisations who wish to enhance the community life of Applecross.</p>
How will we know we have achieved this?	A stable or growing population which is demographically balanced.	<p>An increase in number of new businesses/existing businesses grow and prosper.</p> <p>ACC and ACT are economically viable over the long term.</p> <p>Increase in local incomes.</p> <p>Increased tourist spend.</p>	<p>Increased satisfaction with community amenities and opportunities.</p> <p>A stable or growing population which is demographically balanced.</p> <p>Other community organisations successfully develop projects.</p>

¹¹ Plan it Applecross; Applecross Community Land Use Plan; Planning Aid Scotland; 2019

¹² www.applecrosshydro.scot

PRIORITY COMMUNITY PROJECTS – SUMMARY 2020-2025

DELIVERING OUR PLAN

A' LIBHRIGEADH AR PLANA

We have sketched out our Action Plan for the next five years. We have sought to identify the projects which will derive the greatest benefit to the community, which are realistically achievable and fit within ACC's vision and mission.

We will not be able to deliver all these projects alone. **ACC** will also work with our local strategic partners (the Applecross Trust and the Applecross Community Council) and other community bodies to implement our plan. **ACC** acknowledges the wide spectrum of work that the various Applecross organisations undertake within the Peninsula and extends its thanks to those that volunteer their time and resources.

Volunteers are at the core of **ACC**; we were established by volunteers and our sustainability has been thanks to volunteers at every level. **ACC** need volunteers to make our future projects a reality. Everyone has something to offer our community – please get in touch if you would like to get involved!

ACC will continue to welcome the support and advice of external funders and development agencies. Currently **ACC** is heavily dependant on grant funding but we recognise the need to develop additional revenue streams to ensure our future resilience. The continued funding of our Local Development Officer will allow us to progress our objectives.

It is our intention over the next five years to pursue the objectives outlined in this plan. As with any plan, aspects may not be realised – perhaps some elements will prove unfeasible and some may take longer than anticipated. New opportunities, priorities or issues may emerge unexpectedly. As an organisation responsive to community needs we may have to adjust our priorities and projects.

We will report back to the community on our activities and progress against this Action Plan including any changes and new developments.

We are aware that communication from us is hugely important. Therefore, we will keep you up to date by providing:

- formal feedback on how we are progressing this Action Plan at the AGM
- ongoing regular updates on projects and developments through newsletters, posters, and social media
- regular updates to our partners through the Applecross Forum.





APPLECROSS COMMUNITY COMPANY
COMPANAIDH COIMHEARSNACHD NA COMRAICH

Our thanks to Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Scottish Community Development Centre, and all the communities, organisations and individuals who have offered advice, support, funding and volunteer time to ACC.



Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean

scdc

scottish
community
development
centre

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Scottish Charity Number: SC042865



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