

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Granttown Initiative (GI) is a company limited by guarantee, established in 2013 and running a diverse range of events and projects for the benefit of the local community.
- GI is looking to acquire the toilet block at Burnfield in Granttown on Spey from the Highland Council (THC), on behalf of the community that the company has been set up to provide benefit for and to.
- The Burnfield toilets were closed by THC in 2018 following an internal review in which it was concluded that due to the cost of a collapsed external drain, the financial burden was too great and provision in the town would instead be confined to the public toilets at SW High Street.
- The SW High Street public toilets that are currently open in Granttown and run by THC are located at the south-west of the town. This is half a mile from The Square - the main commercial and civic amenity space, where visitors gravitate and people gather for community events such as Motorman, Thunder in the Glens, Farmers Markets, Strathspey in May, Fiddlers of Strathspey festival, Xmas Lights/Torchlight procession and Hogmanay. These events regularly attract large crowds of well over 1500 people.
- On acquisition, the toilets at Burnfield would be run by the community on a not for profit basis, with any surplus retained for ongoing maintenance and improvement costs.
- GI is looking to acquire the Burnfield toilet block from the Highland Council for a nominal value of £1 as it is considered as having no commercial value.
- A plan to completely refurbish the current Ladies, Gents and Disabled toilets to an improved standard has been costed by the GI board, together with local trade companies. A target amount of £16,500 has been set, which will include the repairs to the external drain.
- A plan to manage and run the toilets has been costed by the GI board, together with local suppliers. The service to the public will be provided on a donation basis with other sources of income identified from events and business contributions.
- GI intend to have the toilets open every day of the year, apart from 25 December, on a 7am to 11pm basis.
- Two part-time local jobs will be created for the running and maintenance of the facility.
- In order for Granttown to reach its full potential and achieve its aspirations to create a vibrant, thriving and attractive town - for visitors and residents alike – a central, easily accessible, well managed and cared for toilet facility is essential.

GRANTOWN INITIATIVE

Business Details

Grantown Initiative
The Town House
The Square
Grantown on Spey
PH26 3HF

- Company Limited by Guarantee, Registered in Scotland No SC453662. Incorporated in 2013.
- The board has submitted an application to OSCR for award of charitable status and are currently awaiting the outcome.
- The company is managed by a Board which at present comprises 8 Directors.

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Background to the company

Grantown Initiative (GI) is a community company which is owned and controlled by its members (currently 300+) who are drawn from the settlements of Grantown on Spey, Dulnain Bridge and Cromdale. The GI was formed in 2013 following a robust community-led action planning process (Our Community ... A Way Forward), which produced the formation of a community company as its top priority, in order to take forward a wide variety of projects and manage assets on behalf of the town and surrounding area.

GI is a not-for-profit community development company, which exists to benefit the residents and businesses of Grantown on Spey and surrounding area.

The Objects as stated in its constitution are as follows:

The company has been formed to benefit the communities of Grantown-on-Spey, Dulnain Bridge, Cromdale and Advie which comprise of all the postcode units within postcode sector PH26 3 ("the Community") with the following objects:

- i. The advancement of citizenship or community development (including rural or urban regeneration)*
- ii. The advancement of environmental protection or improvement.*

But such that the company shall do so following principles of sustainable development.

The company and its activities are managed through a Board of Directors, together with various sub committees which each run major events in the town such as Hogmanay, Christmas Festivities and Thunder in the Glens (Grantown) and also include the Grantown Business Association, GrantownOnline website and Dulaig Park Restoration.

Management Structure/Capacity

The GI currently has 8 Directors and a membership of 148 Ordinary Members and 170 Grantown Business Association Members. The board meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every month (currently virtually) to receive full updates on the strategic overview, financial status, project activities and event planning. All minutes of these meetings are available and published online, as are the minutes of the annual AGM which is held in May.

In addition, the board has applied for charitable status from OSCR and is awaiting the status award which is imminent at the time of writing this plan.

The company currently has no external professional advisers to the board as the directors' skill set includes considerable knowledge and track record of governance, financial management, project management, community engagement, communications and business experience. One of the GI directors is the retired chief executive of the Cairngorms National Park Authority and another is the chief officer of the Third Sector Interface for Badenoch and Strathspey. Another four run their own businesses in training, hospitality and communications.

The board has a strong working relationship with THC local elected members and Ward Manager (Ward 20) and also the senior management team and officers in the Cairngorms National Park Authority. GI is also a member of the Grantown Forum, which brings together all of the voluntary organisations in the town on a regular basis, to support partnership working and improve communications to resolve issues on a wide variety of matters affecting the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of the community.

The company has numerous projects which are functioning successfully under its control, some of which are managed directly by the Board and others that are overseen by various sub-committees. The latter are each governed by bespoke Terms of Reference that have been drawn up and agreed with the GI Board.

Current projects/events under GI management include:

- i. The (renowned) annual Grantown on Spey Hogmanay Street Party
- ii. Thunder in the Glens event in Grantown Square and High Street
- iii. Successful application to THC's Town Centre Fund for £39k refurbishment of the town square including replacement of six 200-year-old dead/dying trees
- iv. Help Fund for the relief of those in the community experiencing financial hardship
- v. Fundraising for the two Playpark areas (Mossie and Dulaig) in the town
- vi. Covid-19 volunteer helpline and delivery of community support (shopping rotas and remote payment process via iZettle contract, food table, prescription delivery)
- vii. Website contract for www.grantownonline.com and management of several social media sites
- viii. Focussed business engagement and support through Grantown Business Association sub-committee, representing over 170 members
- ix. Maintenance agreement for Grantown curling pond in Grant Park
- x. Lease agreement with Seafeld Estate for land on which is sited the GI-owned container for community storage of equipment for major community-run events in the town eg Motormania, Thunder in the Glens, Hogmanay, Twinning, Christmas Torchlight parade

- xi. Sustainable Strathspey which is working on green initiatives for the town, its residents and businesses, to support the climate challenge agenda.

We very much hope to add the ownership, running and maintenance of Burnfield toilets to this list, as requested by the majority of members of the company.

In terms of revenue for the company, we are active in our local fund raising and applying for specific grants for specific projects, as outlined above.

THE PROJECT – BURNFIELD TOILETS

Addressing the Need

As outlined in the previous section, the majority of members of GI – both residents and business owners - have signalled compellingly through discussion, consultation and community surveys over the last 18 months, that there is a need and desire to have the Burnfield toilets re-opened to the public. The main justifications for doing so is:

- In order for Grantown to reach its full potential and achieve its aspirations to create a vibrant, thriving and attractive town - for visitors and residents alike – a central, easily accessible, well managed and cared for toilet facility is essential.
- All of the community-led events that take place in the town, utilise the space in The Square. Many of these occasions attract large numbers of people into that space, often exceeding 1500 in number. Events regularly have to budget for provision of chemical toilets being placed in the square for the duration of the activity, which is costly, unsightly and unpleasant for residents living nearby. These events have all confirmed they would be willing to help subsidise the cost of running the toilets through a fee per event day.
- There is an expectation, particularly from visitors to the town, that a town the size of Grantown, with Public Realm space the size of the Square, will have a public toilet close by, which will add to their positive experience of a welcoming place.
- Burnfield is also the main car park for the town, used by buses, lorries and coaches on a daily basis, as well as many other vehicles. Toilet facilities to easily service this number of customers would therefore seem to be an obvious solution.

Community Benefit

By acquiring the toilets at Burnfield in the heart of Grantown, the community will benefit in the following ways:

- Appeal and reputation of the town will be enhanced.
- Adds to community pride and cohesion, as the message being sent out is that the community is active, well-coordinated with its third sector organisations, welcoming to visitors, mindful of business needs and responsible in its civic duties.
- Heightened positive reputation of the community company to respond to community and members' needs, take on long-term projects and be a respected and reliable employer.
- Provision of at least two long-term jobs in the community

- Ability to welcome an increasing number of visitors into the town centre (Square and High Street) in the future, which will occur through planned projects (internal and external to the company) such as the Town Trail, opening of the new whisky distillery at Craggan and The Rails to Grantown project.

The Business

On acquisition, the toilets will be run by the community on a not for profit basis, with any surplus reinvested for ongoing maintenance and improvement costs.

Please refer to Appendix D for GI's researched calculations for annual running costs which outline the case for the sustainability of the service provision, once the asset is transferred into community ownership. As is stated there, it is estimated that the business will generate a small profit annually. This will allow for reserves to be accrued, to cover any planned or unplanned expenditure over time.

Marketing

The provision of a (re-opened) central toilet facility at Burnfield will be promoted to residents, businesses and visitors to Grantown through:

- Posts on the numerous community social media outlets, both for Grantown and also surrounding settlements
- Physical signposting in the town
- Public service information on the GrantownOnline website
- Town Trail map and leaflets
- Awareness raising activity for local businesses and the Cairngorms Business Partnership
- Word of Mouth
- Bulletin to all GI membership
- Bulletin to all key third and public sector organisations operating in Grantown

Finance

The financial aspects of the project have been broken down into four separate parts:

1. Acquisition from THC

The GI board has been made aware that there is no commercial worth to THC from this building, but the value of the community benefit is high, hence the nominal amount of £1 is being offered.

Legal fees for GI to acquire the asset will be covered by an agreed award, already confirmed by Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

2. Refurbishment of the building

The building although fairly sound on the outside, requires considerable, almost total refurbishment inside to bring it up to an improved standard that GI and the community would wish to offer to the public. The structural survey report from Gunn MacPhee shows via pictures that the space inside the toilets is very tired and unwelcoming, as well as exhibiting standing water and evidence of damp and black mould.

GI intend to completely strip out and replace all of the existing sanitary ware and tiling, to provide a refreshed and welcoming facility, that includes some vandal-proofing measures as well as enabling the facility to run in as carbon-neutral way as possible. It also intends to

repair the external collapsed drain, just outside the Ladies unit. All of this work has been costed out with a local trading company and the sourcing of funds through grants and donations has been identified.

3. Running of the toilets

The facility's annual running costs have been researched and are shown on the accompanying Excel spreadsheet Appendix D.

As referred to already, this outlines the case for the sustainability of the service provision, once the asset is transferred into community ownership. It is estimated that the business will generate a small profit annually and this will allow for reserves to be accrued, to cover any planned or unplanned expenditure over time.

It will be noted that the intention is not to impose an entry charge to the toilets, but rather to request donations on exit via some secure system.

4. Ongoing Maintenance

The building is compact and fairly straightforward in its function, but on acquisition the GI board will establish a structural maintenance schedule to incorporate regular or incidental tasks that will need to be carried out on a systematic basis. As provided, any surplus will be used to set aside reserves, that can be built up and designated specifically against the maintenance schedule on a rolling basis.

Risk Analysis

The GI Board already has comprehensive insurance cover in place to protect the company, directors, projects and events activity against identified risks for each.

With regard to the acquisition of this particular asset, the directors have identified the following risks, which will be mitigated through an update to the existing GI Risk Assessment and Management Plan.

Nature of risk	Implications for business	How risk will be minimised
1. Low income/Rising costs	Sustainability is eroded so eating into GI's main reserves and potential inability of company to fund other work.	GI Treasurer to keep up to date account of ongoing financial status of toilets and inform board so that action can be taken in good time to rectify the situation
	Possible collapse of company	Financing of toilet project is ring-fenced in the company accounts, so that it becomes clear if the project is failing. In this event, action can be taken to limit the risk of the failing project on the GI's other work
2. Vandalism	Poor experience of users	Ensure any damage is reported quickly via an efficient reporting system. Ensure repairs are carried out soonest through establishing and maintaining good relations with local traders

		Employ good communication channels, so users have confidence in GI's capacity to deal with any incidences
	Temporary closure of (part) building for repairs	Utilise anti-vandal materials and limit opportunities where possible
3. Unplanned expenditure	Monies not available for timely spend	Build up reserves
4. GI capacity to run/maintain	Reputational risk, may create risk for other projects that GI manages	Regular standing item on agenda of monthly board meetings to evaluate capacity and act on any recommended requirements or necessary changes in procedure
5. Failure to attract cleaning/maintenance staff	Toilets are not cleaned regularly or to agreed standard, so gain poor reputation or need to be temporarily closed	Offer attractive rates of pay
		Agree line management structure of staff within board and put needed support in place
	Volunteers need to be used for cleaning	Revert to contract cleaning and adjust income/expenditure lines

Appendices

This business plan for Burnfield Toilets, together with the accompanying THC Asset Transfer Request Application Form, should be read in conjunction with the following documents appended to the plan:

- A.** Grantown Initiative Articles of Association
- B.** Letters of Support from key organisations in the town for the acquisition
- C.** Structural survey report commissioned by GI and carried out by Gunn MacPhee, Chartered Surveyors, Inverness in February 2020
- D.** Annual Running Costs (Excel spreadsheet) updated September 2020

On behalf of Grantown Initiative Board
September 2020