

Highland Council Asset Transfer Request Approach

Asset Transfer Request Form

Section 1: Information about the community transfer body (CTB) making the request

1.1 Name of the CTB making the asset transfer request

Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland

1.2 CTB address. This should be the registered address, if you have one.

Postal address:

1, Atholl Crescent

PERTH

Postcode: PH1 5NG

1.3 Contact details. Please provide the name and contact address to which correspondence in relation to this asset transfer request should be sent.

Contact name: Dougie Baird

Lower floor,
1 Atholl Crescent
Perth

Postcode: PH1 5NG

Email: dougie@outdooraccesstrustforscotland.org.uk

Telephone: 

We agree that correspondence in relation to this asset transfer request may be sent by email to the email address given above. *(Please tick to indicate agreement)*

You can ask the relevant authority to stop sending correspondence by email, or change the email address, by telling them at any time, as long as 5 working days' notice is given.

1.4 Please mark an "X" in the relevant box to confirm the type of CTB and its official number, if it has one.

x	Company, and its company number is	Charity No. SC028028, Company No. SC186301
	Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), and its charity number is ..	
	Community Benefit Society (BenCom), and its registered number is	
	Unincorporated organisation (no number)	

Please attach a copy of the CTB's constitution, articles of association or registered rules.

1.5 Has the organisation been individually designated as a community transfer body by the Scottish Ministers?

No

Yes

Please give the title and date of the designation order:

1.6 Does the organisation fall within a class of bodies which has been designated as community transfer bodies by the Scottish Ministers?

No

Yes

If yes what class of bodies does it fall within?

Section 2: Information about the asset requested

2.1 Please identify the asset - land or building(s) - which this asset transfer request relates.

You should provide a street address or grid reference and any name by which the land or building is known. If you have identified the land on the relevant authority's register of land, please enter the details listed there.

It may be helpful to provide one or more maps or drawings to show the boundaries of the land requested. If you are requesting part of a piece of land, you must attach a map and full description of the boundaries of the area to which your request relates. If you are requesting part of a building, please make clear what area you require. a drawing may be helpful.

The Stac Pollaidh car park is located on the single track road between the A835 and Achiltibuie, at the foot of Stac Pollaidh, an iconic hill in the Coigach area.

The council owned car park is on a very small piece of land not much more than 600 square meters. In order for us to develop a new larger car park able to cope with the demand at Stac Pollaidh we require HC to rent the existing car park to OATS, and in parallel agree a lease with the neighbouring landowner for the other land to enable us to develop a much larger car park, a public toilet and new access, including an all abilities route to a view point to enable a more diverse range of visitor to enjoy the attraction.

As part of the longer term planning we wish to rebuild and repair substantial sections of the Stac Pollaih upland hill path, and ensure effective maintenance.

2.2 Please provide the UPRN (Unique Property Reference Number), if known.

This should be given in the relevant authority's register of land

UPRN:

Section 3: Type of request, payment and conditions

3.1 Please tick what type of request is being made:

for ownership (under section 79(2)(a)) - go to section 3A

for lease (under section 79(2)(b)(i)) - go to section 3B

for other rights (section 79(2)(b)(ii)) - go to section 3C

3A - Request for ownership

What price are you prepared to pay for the asset requested? :

Proposed price: £

Please attach a note setting out any other terms and conditions you wish to apply to the request.

3B - Request for lease

What is the length of lease you are requesting?

25 years

How much rent are you prepared to pay? Please make clear whether this is per year or per month.

Proposed rent: £ 1 per year

Please attach a note setting out any other terms and conditions you wish to be included in the lease, or to apply to the request in any other way.

3C - Request for other rights

What are the rights you are requesting?

right to develop the site for further car parking, toilets, improved access and providing other visitor services.

Do you propose to make any payment for these rights?

Yes

No

If yes, how much are you prepared to pay? Please make clear what period this would cover, for example per week, per month, per day?

Proposed payment: £ per

Please attach a note setting out any other terms and conditions you wish to apply to the request.

Section 4: Community Proposal

- 4.1 Please set out the reasons for making the request and how the land or building will be used.

This should explain the objectives of your project, why there is a need for it, any development or changes you plan to make to the land or building, and any activities that will take place there.

Stac Pollaidh is one of the most iconic mountains in the Northwest Highlands of Scotland. The peak is a rocky crest of Torridonian sandstone, with many pinnacles and steep gullies. In terms of geomorphology the ridge was exposed to weathering as a nunatak above the ice sheet during the last Ice Age, while the ice sheet carved and scoured the smooth sides of the mountain. Due to its relatively low height of just over 2000 feet, fine views and ease of access from the road it has become a very popular peak visitor attraction.

The rapid rise in visitor numbers to the area over the last few years has had significant impacts on the everyday lives of residents. This impact is not always compensated for by the benefits that tourism brings. The road infrastructure and visitor facilities at Stac Pollaidh have been stretched to breaking point, severely disrupting access to homes and businesses in the area, causing damage to roads and paths, and resulting in a poor visitor experience which reflects badly on Coigach and Assynt in general.

The rapid growth in popularity of the Stac Pollaidh means that the number of visitors and vehicles visiting the site has overwhelmed the existing parking provision on an almost daily basis throughout the high tourist season. This has led to visitors parking both on the verges nearby and in any available passing places. Due to a lack of public toilet facilities at the site, there has been a rise in the number of people using the surrounding land as a toilet.

Highland Council has responsibility for the management of the road network (apart from trunk roads), but it does not have a statutory obligation to provide parking at any given site. Highland Council own the current (very small) car park and Polly Estate own the land around it that would be required for a bigger and better tourist facility on location.

After consultation with a range of community groups, Polly Estate and Highland Council the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland has been invited to seek tenancy of the HC owned parking facilities as a community asset, and in parallel agree a similar lease with Polly Estate for the additional adjacent land required for an expansion of the facility and find the funding necessary to improve them.

Benefits of the proposal

4.2 Please set out the benefits to the community that you consider will arise if the request is agreed to. This should include:- economic, regeneration, health, social wellbeing, environmental benefits; or how this will tackle inequalities.

This section should explain how the project will benefit your community, and others. Please refer to the guidance on how the relevant authority will consider the benefits of a request.

The prime objective of the Stac Pollaidh project is to provide a far better tourist facility at Stac Pollaidh that will prevent blocking of the roads and fouling of the environment.

In so doing the community will not be disrupted by roadside parking at the facility during the tourist season, nor by litter and human waste problems around the site.

This will in turn provide a better experience for tourists giving more reasons to stay in the area a bit longer, providing economic opportunities to tourism orientated businesses in the area.

The facility will also provide employment locally in looking after and managing the facility.

The project aims to tackle the ongoing problems with parking and lack of facilities at this popular tourist destination by:

- 1. Obtaining long term tenancy agreements for the existing car park and surrounding land to allow for future expansion;*
- 2. Raising capital funding in the region of £1m for a new car park, toilets and major refurbishment of the Stac Pollaidh hill path;*
- 3. Providing safe parking for a minimum of 65 vehicles, reducing fly parking on verges and in passing places, thereby improving access for local residents, local businesses and the emergency services;*
- 4. Installing environmentally friendly toilets for visitors;*
- 5. Installing suitable signage and interpretation boards;*
- 6. Identifying and creating suitable viewing points;*
- 7. Generating an ongoing income for maintenance of the car park, toilets and hill path, and other access related projects.*

In so doing the project will provide the following outcomes

The project will deliver the following outcomes and benefits:

- 1. Creating local employment opportunities*
- 2. Further access projects funded by car park revenue*
- 3. Protecting the surrounding area as far as possible by providing managed facilities*
- 4. Creating volunteering opportunities*
- 5. Demonstrating an innovative partnership model that can be used elsewhere in the Highlands*
- 6. Reductions in the level of traffic congestion caused by poor parking*
- 7. Improving the lives of local residents by improving access for them*
- 8. Reductions in the amount of damage to both verges and road edges*
- 9. Reducing the environmental damage caused by vehicles and tourists*
- 10. Improving the "Visitor Experience" for tourists*
- 11. Eradication of the human waste left at the site by visitors*

Restrictions on use of the land

4.3 If there are any restrictions on the use or development of the land, please explain how your project will comply with these.

Restrictions might include, amongst others, environmental designations such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSI), heritage designations such as listed building status, controls on contaminated land or planning restrictions.

The site is Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation. NatureScot will be consulted in an ongoing dialogue to help develop the site so that the environment and habitat is not further degraded, and that once completed the surrounding habitats will be able to regenerate without being damaged and fouled.

Negative consequences

4.4 What negative consequences (if any) may occur if your request is agreed to? How would you propose to minimise these?

You should consider any potential negative consequences for the local economy, environment, or any group of people, and explain how you could reduce these.

We really cant think of any negative consequences of developing a bigger car park and providing ,much needed public toilets for visitors, nor for improving access around the site including an all abilities trail.

Capacity to deliver

4.5 Please show how your organisation will be able to manage the project and achieve your objectives.

This could include the skills and experience of members of the organisation, any track record of previous projects, whether you intend to use professional advisers, etc.

The Outdoors Access Trust is a Company Limited by Guarantee and with Charitable Status. Scotland's path network presents significant public benefits in terms of economy, environment, health and wellbeing and as such delivers on national priorities. OATS is committed to supporting its growth and resilience. We do this in 3 ways:

- Outdoor Access for Public Benefit: to further develop an effective outdoor access network and associated visitor facilities for public benefit and that fits with national priorities, especially in popular but remote and/or fragile rural areas*
- Collaboration with others: to collaborate with others in building a longer lasting outdoor access network that best suits Scotland's sustainable economy, environment and public health*
- Promoting skills and experience: to help people gain skills, nationally recognised qualifications and experience so that they are better placed to take up outdoor access related employment and volunteering opportunities*

The Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland has had good experience working in partnership on a similar scheme at the Fairy Pools on Skye, and this has not only resulted in a marked uplift in car parking availability (30 to 140 spaces), and the construction of a substantial off-grid toilet facility to cope with the 180k plus visitors the site gets per year, but is already generating funds to help refund initial OATS capital investment and will soon be able to help with other access projects. It is also now employing staff.

We have drawn together a steering group to help develop the project with representation from 3 local groups including the Community Council, the local tourism association and the community development company. The group also has representation from Highland Council and the neighbouring landowner. The project and approach taken has been agreed after consultation and evaluation of the various options available and all have agreed that this is the best course of action to develop the project.

Section 5: Level and nature of support

5.1 Please provide details of the level and nature of support for the request, from your community and, if relevant, from others.

This could include information on the proportion of your community who are involved with the request, how you have engaged with your community beyond the members of your organisation and what their response has been. You should also show how you have engaged with any other communities that may be affected by your proposals.

The Coigach Community Council fully support the scheme and have sent a letter of support for the scheme to be attached to this application.

Visit Coigach (formerly the Achiltibuie Tourist Association) have also sent a letter of support for the scheme.

Locals intend to provide photographs and video of the problems experienced locally during busy times, with the road impassable for delivery lorries etc at peak times.

We have engaged with these groups in the development of the project, and will continue to consult with them throughout the development of it via a Project Steering Group created to help communicate the project with all directly affected stakeholders including community, Highland Council and the neighbouring landowner.

Section 6: Funding

6.1 Please outline how you propose to fund the price or rent you are prepared to pay for the asset, and your proposed use of the asset.

You should show your calculations of the costs associated with the transfer of the land or building and your future use of it, including any redevelopment, ongoing maintenance and the costs of your activities. All proposed income and investment should be identified, including volunteering and donations. If you intend to apply for grants or loans you should demonstrate that your proposals are eligible for the relevant scheme, according to the guidance available for applicants.

The development of the scheme will require a development fund to help pay for it. OATS would see the package for professional costs incurred to be met by the following

OATS own resources £2.5k

HC Ward fund £2.5k

RTIF Development Fund £5k

Providing a development fund of £10k to help develop the project.

The construction of the Facility is likely to cost in the region of £600k, and OATS would hope to meet this through RTIF grant of £420k, with £180k to be provided by OATS through working capital, fundraising and where necessary loans to be recovered from income generated through the scheme once complete.

Checklist of accompanying documents

To check that nothing is missed, please list any documents which you are submitting to accompany this form.

Section 1 - you must attach your organisation's constitution, articles of association or registered rules

Title of document attached:

Section 2 - any maps, drawings or description of the land requested

Documents attached:

Section 3 - note of any terms and conditions that are to apply to the request

Documents attached:

Section 4 - about your proposals, their benefits, any restrictions on the asset or potential negative consequences, and your organisation's capacity to deliver.

Documents attached:

Section 5 - evidence of community support

Documents attached:

Section 6 - funding

Documents attached

Search "Privacy Notices" on the Highland Council website to read our Privacy Statement in regards to Asset Transfer Request forms.