

Highland Council Asset Transfer Request Approach Asset Transfer Request Form

This is an asset transfer request made under Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

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

1.1 Name of the CTB making the asset transfer request

Thurso Community Development Trust

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

Postal address:

TCDT Office
Thurso Youth Club
Millbank Road
Thurso

Postcode: KW14 8PS

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: Joan Lawrie

Postal address:

TCDT Office
Thurso Youth Club
Millbank Road
Thurso

Postcode: KW14 8PS

Email: joan@thursocdt.co.uk

Telephone: XXXXXXXXXX

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.

	Company, and its company number is	
	Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), and its charity number isSC049082	X
	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:

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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 X

If yes what class of bodies does it fall within?

Registered Scottish Charitable Incorporated Association

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.

Thurso Greenhouse Complex
Business Unit Ref HC 03512
Category Community Asset
Function Greenhouses
Easting 311700
Northing 968500
Address Thurso Greenhouse Complex, Bank Place, Thurso, KW14 8AN

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: No UPRN listed on the Asset transfer Map
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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?

15 years

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

Proposed rent: £ 1 per annum

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?

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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
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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.

Project Title: Socially Growing Greenhouses

Background

Thurso Community Development Trust has in two years established a recognised track record in the delivery of community growing and climate action projects. The Trust is still in its infancy, but its activities reflect a forward thinking and ambitious organisation who have quickly become a community anchor for Thurso and are recognised as a leading third sector organisation in Caithness and Highland. The Trust is now seeking to move in a direction away from sustained dependency on grant income and create social enterprises which have been identified from consultation to address identified community needs and which generate revenue which benefits the community.

Proposed Project & Activities

In mid-2020 as we entered the end of the first lockdown phase and were looking towards projects and activities to strengthen our organisation and provide recovery activities for Thurso we became aware that the Thurso Greenhouses Complex was no longer in use by Highland Council. The facility has had little to no investment in latter years yet with capital investment for repairs would be a significant opportunity for the Thurso community and Thurso Community Development Trust to realise aspirations in creating enterprises which assist the town in contributing to net zero carbon emissions by 2045 and addressing the need for holistic youth training facilities in the town.

Our proposed project is therefore to invest in the capital infrastructure of the Thurso Greenhouses Complex and make them operational again to be thriving Greenhouses which produce quality organic locally produced food. The food would produce an income through sales to the community and to local hotels and cafes. Promoting localism and resilience in our food chain.

In operating as a social enterprise there is the further benefit of providing youth training and employment opportunities. Consultation has found that Thurso has a number of young people who feel alienated from mainstream employment and education and require holistic and supported training and employment opportunities which give life, vocational and enterprise skills.

In tandem with the Greenhouses facility we are also developing the linked social enterprise (both operations will work in tandem with each other) of a Zero Waste Refill Shop and mini-hub in Thurso Town Centre. This facility will be in Thurso

precinct, 100m away from the Greenhouses and provide a site for our staff to be based and a shop where produce from the Greenhouses can be sold to the public along with workshop and training space in climate and land based activities. The Business Plan attached to the proposal outlines these further.

Socially Growing will create:

Extensive refurbished Greenhouses and a thriving social enterprise

Youth Training opportunities

An events space for growing and climate based skills to be developed in the wider community

Volunteering opportunities

Local food production and promotion to reduce our carbon emissions

Reinvestment of profits for community benefit

Objectives of Project

BUSINESS OBJECTIVES:

- To make a long-term sustainable organisation achieving an annual surplus for investment in the community, its people and environment.
- To offer the opportunity of purchasing locally grown organic food and plants to our community and communities further afield
- To return a surplus per annum of circa £40,000 from the 'Socially Growing Hub & Greenhouses'
- To offer event and workshop spaces which are self-sustaining and offer training and support to similar enterprises to grow economic resilience and diversity.
- To improve and support our tourism industry and promote town centre regeneration.

SOCIAL OBJECTIVES:

- To provide opportunity to those aged 16 – 26 years in the community for training in growing, horticulture, land and climate based social enterprise to empower them towards new Start Ups or further employment opportunities.
- To empower the local community through the membership owning and managing assets and facilities and ensuring an open and fair structure that reflects community ownership.
- To provide access to events, activities, training, education, informative and provide fun to the local community.
- To build community connections, resilience and cohesion.

ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES:

- To mitigate against the current Global Climate and Ecological Emergency by supporting the Thurso and wider Caithness Community to reduce carbon emissions through supply of locally grown food and zero plastic good and produce.
- To continue to adopt environmentally friendly practices and minimise any negative impact on the environment.
- To educate the community on climate – both mitigation and adaptation.
- To encourage an increase in the community taking up climate action behaviours.

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.

Economic & Regeneration

The Trust intends to commence operations of a social enterprise, “Socially Growing” within the Greenhouses facility. The social enterprise will produce revenue for community benefit. Taking an enterprising approach will decrease the Trust’s dependence on grant funding and create wider community benefits by profits being reinvested back into the community. In addition to produce that we grow ourselves we will be providing an outlet for other small growers to come together in a co-operative movement in the supply of vegetable boxes which will create further economic benefits within the area. The training which will mainly be delivered from the facility will be for young people to gain holistic life skills and training in land and climate based skills with a particular emphasis on them gaining experience in running enterprises creating a more resilient and diversified economy with entrepreneurial skills developed in young people. The site while tucked away in Thurso Town Centre presents an opportunity for regeneration within an area which is often overlooked. Further economic and regeneration benefits will be available from visitors being able to tour working greenhouses and the community occupying the site and developing it for use as a thriving growing area. It is keenly felt that with little investment having been made in the facility in recent years that if the community does not have ownership of it the facility will be left to decay further and that taking it into community ownership for community benefit will encourage further regeneration in that area of the town. The Trust has also secured funding via Town Centre Regeneration Funding for Market stands and it is intended that the area of Olrig Street Gardens is used on an adhoc permissions basis to further regeneration in a prime location in the town thus encouraging additional footfall to the town centre and an impetus towards localism.

Environmental Benefits

The vision of the Highland Council Draft Food Growing Strategy is that, ““By 2025 Highland communities are resilient, empowered and supported to grown their own food.” The Greenhouses facility will enable the community to become more resilient through locally grown food reducing the need for supply chains from further away and reducing the carbon emissions of the community. Not only will locally grown food which has been produced to permaculture principles of no fertilizers be available but food will not be wrapped in plastic nor any other consumables. Training offered will be predominantly to young people but training events will take place for members of the community assisting them to grow their own. A core part of the holistic training for young people will be working with the local community to improve greenspaces on project work with the community. This will enable environmental benefits to reach further into the community. It is intended through work with the Highland Good Food Partnership for this project to be an exemplar and example of best practice to other communities throughout Highland. The Trust has a core ethos of Climate Action and

holds environmental policies and seeks to be a core contributor towards the Thurso community reaching net zero targets by 2045 through its work.

Health and Social Wellbeing

Food is a key source of health. The Greenhouses facility will produce food grown to permaculture standards and will seek to obtain accreditation as Organic food through the Soil Association scheme. Produce will be mainly for enterprise purposes but there will also be an agreement via our other projects of the Sharing Shed and our Community Meals service for produce to be used in these services. The facility will encourage health and social wellbeing through the workshops, events and training that it delivers. Social Wellbeing is also created through community empowerment. The facility will be owned, managed and run by the community with widespread community benefits from any profit that is incurred being reinvested back into the community. Growing and food are linked to social wellbeing and sessions will be run through the facility to empower and support health including provision of volunteering opportunities through social prescriptions and voluntary work to improve mental wellbeing.

Reducing Inequalities

Every young person in Thurso should be valued. Currently through our consultation we have found that for many young people this is not the case. Generational inequalities have led to many young people in the area not having a sense of hope for opportunity. They feel written off and go further astray into addiction, mental health issues and possible interaction with the criminal justice system. The facilities we are proposing will assist in reducing these inequalities by taking a chance on young people who feel ostracised from the system and opportunities to find work and education. Training through holistic methods of giving vocational training and life skills along with encouragement towards enterprise and entrepreneurship.

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.

No SSSI exists or heritage designations.

No plans are proposed for the site that introduce new infrastructure or changes to existing buildings.

Legal report outlines:

There is a deed from 1897 referred to for burdens and that deed provides that the only buildings to be built on the subjects of that disposition (ie Greenhouse area) are

dwelling houses, villas or shops and that if any such buildings are not erected then the land is to be used for gardening or similar but not pasturing, grazing cattle or keeping/raising poultry. There is a restriction on the land being used for brewery, tannery, foundry, chemical works, inn, tavern or shop selling alcohol without written consent of the Deacon's Court. These may not be enforceable and in any even do not prevent the use of area for Greenhouses etc.

The usage of the site is for Greenhouses and gardening and there are no plans to introduce any other facilities or services contrary to the deeds.

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.

No negative consequences are anticipated.

The project has been developed in recognition of the success of an existing growing project and in recognition of the need to develop youth training facilities in the area. It will be managed and operated by the community with specific aims to reduce inequalities in the Thurso and wider Caithness area.

The project aims to create a more resilient, environmentally sustainable and lower carbon Thurso and fits with key aims to reduce carbon emissions and build resilience in the community.

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.

Thurso Community Development Trust is still a relatively new organisation but has amassed a significant track record in its 3 years since forming. Key to this success has been the ability to identify and evidence community needs and form this into suitable and realistic projects which benefit the community and take the community on a journey of empowerment with the organisation.

Pertinent to this application is the Thurso Grows project which over 2 years through a lease arrangement with Highland Council has transformed the Community Garden Space at the bottom of Falconer Waters Court from an abandoned and overgrown space to a flourishing community garden with empowered volunteers and high levels of community engagement. We have an experienced Royal Horticultural Society qualified gardener and a further gardener who is qualified in permaculture. Our Board of Trustees consists of qualified professionals in adult education, environment and marketing. All are assisted by an experienced Development Manager who has a very significant background in finance, facilities management, funding, project management, addressing inequalities and sustainable development holding a BSc (Hons) Sustainable Development and BA Child & Youth Studies.

The Trust also has significant strong partnership working throughout the Caithness area and wider Highlands networks. We are a core partner in the work of the Caithness Resilience Group and Caithness Community Planning Partnership. We are also a core partner and pertinent to this project in the Highland Good Food Partnership. One of many projects being developed through the partnership is the use of 'Glasshouses' or Greenhouses to develop sustainable food systems in Highland and it is hoped this project will be a trial of this and act as an exemplar to establishing a further network throughout Highland. The Trust has also recently been selected by the Scottish Government to establish a pilot Climate Action Hub for the North Highlands operated from Thurso and this project will be complimentary to the work in the Greenhouses.

Thurso Community Development Trust

The Trust has the core aim of making Thurso a better place to live, work and visit through sustainable community led development. The Trust operates on a basis of community evidence of need to inform and develop projects. In 2018 using the Place Standard methodology widespread consultation was carried out in the Thurso area to identify the needs of the community. 1180 responses were received, 20% of the adult population of the town. This consultation work continued throughout 2019 where specific engagement was carried out within those experiencing inequality in Thurso with consultation work feeding into the Caithness Community Planning Partnership and the emerging Thurso Locality Plan.

To date the projects of the Trust include:

Thurso Grows – funded by the Climate Challenge Fund, a community garden space which encourages local food growing and food waste minimisation. This project has engaged through events, workshops and activities 2,153 members of the Thurso Community.

Discover Thurso – a community led tourism development project creating destination marketing website and associated social media along with a tourism development plan. Through this project over 300 members of the community were trained in the art of delivering tourism information to visitors and working collaboratively.

Community Support – From March 2020 and still currently being run is our Covid-19 Community Support efforts where we have assisted over 600 members of the community in the Thurso, Halkirk and Caithness West Community Council areas with

shopping, prescriptions, errands and a continued meals service. We have delivered over 15,000 hot meals and continue to do so on a weekly basis.

The Sharing Shed – reducing food waste in Thurso by redistributing surplus food through a community larder.

Thurso Community Magazine – produced quarterly with a circulation each quarter of 1,500 reaching those in the community who do not have online access to share community news and as a community anchor for the town share information on other third sector and voluntary organisation.

Thurso Harbour Toilets – The Trust operate these on a donations scheme for the benefit of the community and visitors to the area.

In addition to this the Trust are currently gaining further skills and experience in developing other projects in the town including exploring the feasibility of the Drill Hall, Sinclair Street, Thurso as a community hub for the town, an identified priority need and are in the process of moving offices to one in the town centre which will also accommodate and Zero Waste Refill Shop and workshop space.

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.

Initial Community Consultation in 2018 which formed the basis of the Trust Strategic plan informed the organisation that the local Thurso Community wanted to see greater effort made in local food particularly in growing and skills to be shared throughout the community. This initially involved suggesting purpose for the Old Auction Mart Site next to Thurso Railway Station as a large Greenhouse and community growing facility with orchard. However, it was known to the organisation that this area of land was to change hands to a developer.

In September 2018, the Trust were approached by Caithness Biodiversity Group regarding the 'Bee Bubble' Garden at the bottom of Falconer Waters Court. Significant consultation was made within the community to take over this asset and form a Climate Challenge Fund project with assistance from a Development Grant

from Climate Challenge Fund. This project has been running successfully now for 2 years and evidence and support within the community is abundant in the need to extend. Over Summer 2020 the Trust established a takeover of Sir John's Square Gardens in the centre of Thurso planting vegetables to replace the flower order of Highland Council cancelled due to Covid. Widespread support for this project was evidenced and having the knowledge that the Greenhouses Facility was no longer needed by Highland Council gave us the ability to engage with those who were attending volunteer and pop up market sessions in the Square. Of those we discussed the project with 100% were in favour of extended growing spaces and would purchase both vegetables and plants from a social enterprise specialising in this service locally.

In September 2020 we conducted a survey into Climate Action in Thurso, results attached, evidencing community need and support for the project. Several social media posts have achieved widespread support including a video posted from the Greenhouses on 21st November 2020 which engaged with 1,200 members of the community. A further Member's Meeting (which is open to all not only Member's of the Trust was attended by 49 people within the community and all voted to establish the project.

Consultation in 2019 specifically with Young Men in the Thurso area found evidence of inequalities and a lack of hope amongst young men in particular with mental health, addiction and lack of job and training opportunities evident. The project is born out of a need to for our community to be more resilient and to build local food chains in the face of Climate Change but more specifically it is to give training opportunities and holistic care and support to people within the community like these young men who do not enter well into mainstream employment and training. Assisted whole life skills support will be given to them. Covid-19 Recovery Surveys in 2020 revealed significant concerns across the community that there were now a lack of opportunities for young people and that mental health was a priority. Due to the Caithness Cares (Mental Health Pathfinder Project) currently being run in Caithness we have engaged again with the young men who we spoke to in 2019 and engaged further across the community and all would support initiatives such as this. The greatest need that these young people have is for someone, an organisation to place value on them and support and engage with them while providing an opportunity.

Climate Action Consultation Attached

Covid-19 Recovery Consultation Attached

Letters of Support from Community Organisations Attached

Young Men's Consultation Attached

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.

Thurso Community Development Trust will pay the £1 nominal lease from unrestricted reserves.

This project represents the adaptation of the Trust from an organisation dependent on grant income to one which generates income for the benefit of the community. In order to refurbish the Greenhouses capital investment is required. The proposed facility will run alongside a Zero Waste Refill Shop which will enable the sale of produce therefore the funding applications are linked. Three funding applications have therefore been made to refurbish facilities and provide capital and revenue investment for the first 18 months of operation.

Crown Estate Coastal Communities Funding

A total grant of £77,376 has been applied for this includes capital investment in the Greenhouses complex and also the associated Zero Waste Refill Shop. The breakdown of the budget is attached in a budgets record and the Business plan for Socially Growing Greenhouses and Shop is attached.

Scottish Government Adapt & Thrive

A total of £55,000 has been applied for which will mainly supplement staffing costs over an 18 month period particularly that of the Gardener and the Enterprise manager who will have the duty of managing the refurbishment of the Greenhouses facility.

Refurbishment of the Greenhouses includes:

Replacement of Polytunnels

Repair to existing polycarbonate sheeting on greenhouses

Levelling of paths

Repair and renewal of heating system. The heating system currently in place will be repaired but we plan to work with Interface and secure an academic partner to look at alternatives for heating which are low carbon and deal with waste innovation to heat the greenhouses in the longer term.

Repair to sheds including collapsed roof.

Replacement doors on all greenhouses

Repair to toilet facility

Initial equipment purchases including tools, seeds and trays.

Refurbishment of one Greenhouse to accommodate an events space.

Should either of these funding bids fail the Trust has a secondary plan to apply for alternative funding to Baille and Stroupster Wind Farm who have both expressed an interest in the project if current funding bids fail. As we are establishing a social enterprise we will also consider social enterprise loan funding towards capital costs. We also have the support of Highlands and Islands Enterprise who will account manage the social enterprise and have confirmed assistance will be given for any funding shortfall.

Some work is being done 'in kind' via volunteers for the simpler tasks of painting and replacement of polycarbonate sheeting while for other work we will employ the work of local contractors.

It is the intention that revenue will be generated quickly from the site. One Greenhouse is ready to plant in immediately with others coming on stream as others are refurbished. The attached Business Plan for Socially Growing Greenhouses and Shop outlines the plans for the social enterprise. Income can be generated immediately via wholesale fruit and vegetable boxes operating from the site supplemented by produce as it becomes available. We have spoken to local hoteliers and cafes who express interest in the business and purchasing from it. There is no displacement to be considered as no business exists in Caithness akin to Socially Growing other than Caithness Summer Fruits and soft fruits will not be grown in the Greenhouses.

Signature

Two office-bearers (board members, charity trustees or committee members) of the community transfer body must sign the form. They must provide their full names and home addresses for the purposes of prevention and detection of fraud.

This form and supporting documents will be made available online for any interested person to read and comment on. Personal information will be redacted before the form is made available.

We, the undersigned on behalf of the community transfer body as noted at section 1, make an asset transfer request as specified in this form.

We declare that the information provided in this form and any accompanying documents is accurate to the best of our knowledge.

Name Helen Allan

Address 

Date 5th April 2021

Position Chairperson

Signature **Redacted by Highland Council**

Name Carol Paterson

Address 

Date 5th April 2021

Position Treasurer

Signature **Redacted by Highland Council**

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: TCDT Constitution

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

Documents attached:

Schedule of Condition

Greenhouses Map and Plan

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

Documents attached:

TCDT Terms and Conditions

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:

Socially Growing Business Plan

Section 5 – evidence of community support

Documents attached:

Climate Action Consultation Attached

Covid-19 Recovery Consultation Attached

Letters of Support from Community Organisations Attached

Young Men’s Consultation Attached

Section 6 – funding

Documents attached:

Budgets Coastal Communities Refurbishment and capital investment

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