

community
enterprise

Business Case

The Field, Alness

28th November 2023

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1 Introduction and Background

Executive Summary

The Place will take a long term lease of The Field, a 2.4 acre site owned by the Highland Council, through a Community Asset Transfer under the Community Empowerment Act for an annual rent of £1.

The Place have already cleared the site, installed services and facilities to carry out much needed and welcomed community activities particularly directed towards youth provision. They are supported by multiple funders, work with multiple partners and are embedded in the local community benefitting from widespread community support.

The Place has taken The Field from a forgotten wasteland to a vibrant and thriving community space in the space of a few short years. The Place is working towards making The Field financially sustainable to ensure it remains a community facility. One step towards financial sustainability is to reduce the outgoings. When the new lease is agreed this will bring the annual rent down from £9,900 to £1, a significant step in the right direction.

Background

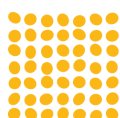
The Place Youth Club was established as a charity in 1983, is the leading organisation in delivering youth work in Alness and has the following aims:-

- To provide a safe environment to allow our members to have fun.
- To help young people to achieve their potential in all aspects of life so that they become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society
- To work in partnership with a range of agencies to improve the development and management of The Field; to improve health and wellbeing and offer opportunities for community involvement.
- To work closely with Partners at Drop In to improve health and wellbeing of young people and the wider community by offering sign posting and support

Areas of Alness sit in the most deprived 20% decile on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020; with one area in the most deprived 10% decile. Alness has a much higher than average number of people on medication for mental health. Particularly during and post pandemic young people are suffering and struggling with different aspects of their lives. Knowing the local community the charity recognises the poverty, drug problems, and mental health issues within the town and more importantly they recognise the impact these things have on the local youngsters.

The Place works with more than 1000 unique participants, offering fun days, workshops, festivals, playschemes, groupwork, drop ins, 1-1's. The strength of The Place however is the high level of partnership working delivered.

The Place recognises the importance of The Field becoming sustainable. Income is being generated by allowing the resource to be used for children's parties and community events. This will ensure that eventually the project will become financially sustainable.



People

The **Management Committee** have a wealth of skills and knowledge and include a Child psychologist, Optometrist, Mental health nurse, Nursery Owner, Electrical engineer, former teacher and also some young people. The committee also have lived experience with members having children with additional support needs, serious mental health issues and addiction.

Serhat Yavuz *Chairperson*



Colin Pettinger *Vice Chairperson*

Elizabeth Ross *Secretary*



a group of people who bring their skills and expertise to the table to support the charity as a whole.

John Douglas *Treasurer*



Carrie Yavuz *Member*

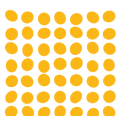


Morag Russell *Member*

Angela Mackay *Member*



Robert Mackay *Member*



[REDACTED]

Michael O'Neill *Member*

[REDACTED]

Gary Miller *Member*

[REDACTED]

The Place has a dedicated **staff team** with many years of experience in youth work delivery

Janette Douglas, Anna O'Brien - The Place Co-ordinators

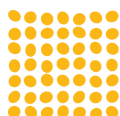
Sharlene Henderson, Helen Ross, Natalie Hamilton, Ellie Vass, Megan McSpadden, Sophie Hynd, Libby Ross, Keira Manson, Owen Ross – Youth Workers

Partners and user groups

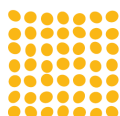
No other organisation offers the same provision that The Place provides young people in Alness. The Place is recognised by Youth highland as one of nine HUBS delivering quality youth work in the Highlands. The Place is part of the Voluntary Youth Network also having links with statutory providers such as SDS (Careers) and CYC (Connecting Young Carers). Collaboration with local and regional organisations enables them to deliver projects and workshops. The Place is recognised for delivering quality youth work and the funding received demonstrates that. The charity has a positive relationship with major funders and recently has secured funding for two years to have a Project Coordinator be based at The Field to develop the project and work with groups.

The following list of funders, users and partners which includes Blooming Gardeners, who access The Field three times per week, highlights the breadth of support for the project.

- Crocus - working with young people who have suffered bereavement
- Alness Academy - working with two school groups and a number of 1-1 pupils
- Hi Hopes/ Developing Young workforce - 1-1 work with young ones
- Scouts and Cubs - Jamborees held in The Field and used by local/wider groups
- Army cadets - work done within The Field
- Dandelion Project/Feis Ross - workshops and projects delivered by Feis Ross
- Department of Works and Pensions - Placements in The Field
- Community Justice Team and 1-1 - work delivered in The Field
- Ankerville Nursery - Have a small garden in The Field
- WEA - some groups they work with suffering from mental health issues have planting areas they are responsible for



- Milnafua Community Group - as they don't have a community hall anymore The Field provides specific activities for the community
 - SDS - regular meetings
 - Centred - mental health group - using The Field
 - HLH My future My success - groupwork and social enterprise
 - Social Enterprise - working to develop a group
 - Mikeysline - workshops and attend meetings
 - Foxes Tails – Pre-school workshops delivered in The Field
 - Connecting Young carers - Workshops and activities
 - Youth Highland - workshops and meetings
 - Primary schools - 1-1 work and community days
 - Aquascot - local company uses The Field for its corporate days
 - Highlands and Islands Climate Hub - funding support
 - Co-op - funding support
 - Alness Pharmacy - funding support
 - Highland Cares - funding support
 - Averoan Masonic Lodge - funding support
 - Scottish Land Commission - film about The Field widely distributed throughout Scotland
 - Action for children - working in partnership
 - Youth Action - working in partnership with youngsters
 - Lord Lieutenant of Ross and Cromarty - Regular visits and support to The Place
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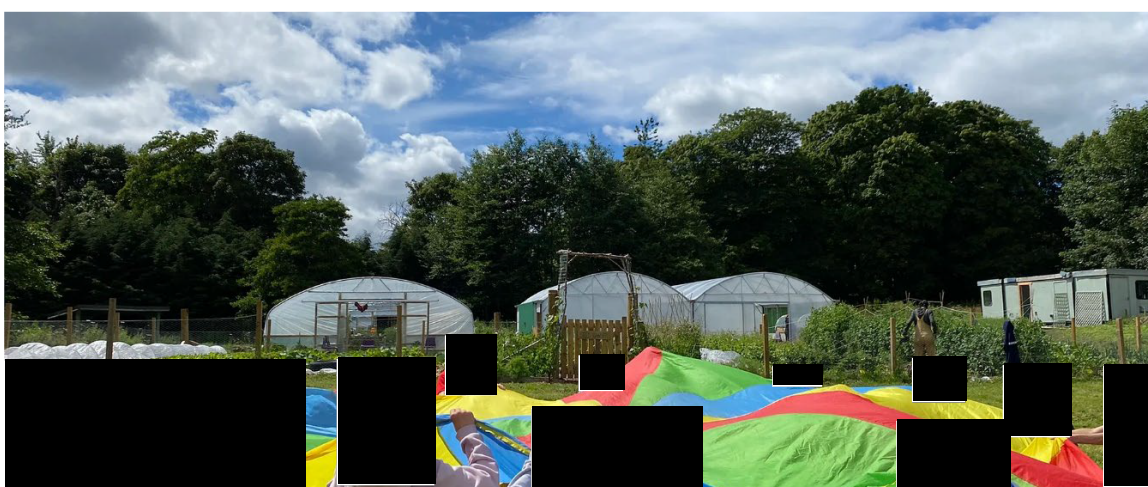
2. The Field

The Field is a 2.4 acre area of ground owned by The Highland Council. It was lying empty for over thirty five years and was a completely overgrown, inaccessible piece of land. With emphasis on safety and being outside, The Place saw the potential to develop a project that could offer not only a safe environment to deliver youth work but also opportunities to upskill young people and develop an enterprise. Subsequently the charity entered into a 99-year lease for the land which has now been developed not only into a youth enterprise project but also a community resource. An enormous amount of work went into groundworks, as the area had been untouched and was overgrown with nettles, thistles and brush making it almost impossible to access. The works included clearing the site, obtaining planning permission and installing water, sewage and electric services.



The initial plan had been to just have a safe place for young people to come together under the leased stretch tent. The longer the charity was there the more they realised the importance of having services on site. A number of partnership meetings were held in the tent and then the field started to be used by other partner agencies. The Place offered a space free of charge to Blooming Gardeners who are a charity that works with adults with additional support needs. Blooming Gardeners applied for planning to erect a polytunnel and The Place saw it as mutually beneficial as they could tap into their horticultural skills and knowledge.

The site now houses two polytunnels. There is a large stretch tent in situ which is the base for most of the work The Place do with youngsters during the holidays. Also a cabin which houses a small office and a new kitchen which is used for providing meals for the youngsters attending playscheme. The charity have a plumbed in toilet block, container, stable, shed, Geodesic Dome and a huge array of tools and equipment.



Since taking on The Field it has naturally evolved into a vibrant and thriving space. In the first full year of operating from The Field 341 sessions were delivered with 6526 youngsters attending events. This

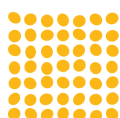


figure does not include all those from the community that attended events such as family fun days and Christmas events.



The Place entered into a partnership with the Dandelion project, led by Feis Ross and this was for the group to deliver an “unexpected garden”. This was a National initiative to encourage youngsters to grow things and in effect the Dandelion Project took over a portion of The Field and developed a huge growing area. They also held a number of community festivals and used the field produce to offer soup and snacks to the local community. They also held local workshops which benefitted many groups with some of them still continuing within the community.

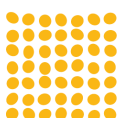
Future plans and development of The Field are fluid. The more partners that become involved the more ideas are generated. The charity is very much young person led and although The Field is increasingly seen as a community asset its roots have been very much based around the young people in the community. Future plans are based around health and wellbeing and a Plant to Plate project. Young people (and adults) will have the opportunity to plant, grow, harvest and cook their produce. It is hoped that youngsters will be able to become skilled in planning and producing healthy, cheap meals.

A Social Enterprise project set up by youngsters using recycled barrel staves has started to generate a small profit which is being used to develop community events.

The Field is used as an employability tool where youngsters who are not particularly academic are given the opportunity to access wider achievement and work towards recognised qualifications in a calm, welcoming environment.

The area is used to deliver playschemes and fun days for the community. It has proven itself as the perfect venue to hold small festivals and this may become a regular feature if the community respond favourably.

These projects demonstrate the versatility of The Field and how the community have embraced it. Partners use local youth workers as the bridging gap to develop relationships with hard-to-reach youngsters. The primary aim is to reduce mental health concerns and improve the health and wellbeing of all those taking part. There are no plans to make any major changes to what has already been delivered but the project will evolve naturally to meet the needs of the community. These plans will not include any structural changes or any radical projects as the primary aim is to improve the environment and support the community.



3. Financial Analysis

Funding

The Place receives no statutory funding. All funding is secured from external funders to enable the charity to work with young people in the community.

The following table details the grant support for the current year

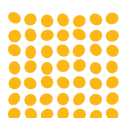
Grant income	
Alness CC Windfarm	
Fast Cash (MFR)	
YH Ideas into Action	
Robertson	
MFR	
Meals and More	
BBC CIN	
CO-OP	
Lottery Young Start	
Social Enterprise	
Aquascot	
Highland Cares	
Coulhill	
Fyrish Friday	
Obsdale	
Totals	

Many of the funders support the project on an ongoing annual basis. That said the management committee is realistic and recognises that income generation needs to be considered to form a part of the plan for financial sustainability. There is potential for the Field to generate income from corporate bookings and private children's parties. It is early days as there is a strong desire that the facility should be free for community use and the pursuit of income should not curtail availability of the facility to the community.

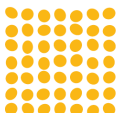
Like many small charities The Place holds fundraising events and receives donations. It is difficult to predict how successful an event will be or what donations might be made.

Financial projections

Income	Annual amount	Notes
Grants		
Fundraising events		
Donations		
Private hires		
Corporate hires		
TOTAL INCOME		
Expenditure		
Staff costs		
Electricity		
The Field Rent		



Drop-in Rent	
Rates and Water	
Insurance	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	



4. SWOT

SWOT

Strengths Highly respected youth work organisation Embedded in the community Massive local support Active partnerships - local and national Multiple funders Flexible and open to ideas	Weaknesses Reliant on grant funding
Opportunities Community growing increasingly popular Potential for corporate hires Potential for private hires	Threats The Highland Council reject the CAT request Funding streams dry up

