

# 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

Altnaharra Community Trust

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

Postal address:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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: [REDACTED]

Postal address:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Postcode: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

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.

	Company, and its company number is .....	
	Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), and its charity number is <b>SC 046400</b>	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

If yes what class of bodies does it fall within?

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)
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## 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.*

Former Altnaharra Primary School and Grounds

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: HC 00068

### 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: £1

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?

N/A

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

Proposed rent: £                      per

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?

N/A

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.*

*Objectives:*

*To gain community ownership and encourage the sense of empowerment in Altnaharra, despite the diminishing population over the last ten years.*

The vision of the community trust is to repurpose the use of the site into something positive for the area. The likelihood is to demolish the former school building and redevelop the site for **new local housing or small-scale commercial units for rent**, delivering tangible local benefits in population growth, employment, and sustainable use of land.

*Proposed project stages*

**1. Feasibility study and site appraisal (Year 1)**

- o Commission technical studies (structural, demolition, environmental, drainage). – support from CHT
- o Assess options for new affordable housing, small commercial/workshop units, or a mix. – support from CHT
- o Engage with the local community and statutory partners (Community Councils, neighbouring trusts, Highland Council, NW2045, HIE).

**2. Site clearance and demolition (Year 1/2)**

- o Safely demolish the derelict school building.
- o Prepare serviced plots or development-ready land.

**3. Redevelopment (Year 2–4)**

- o Deliver new community-led homes and/or business units that directly support repopulation and local employment.
- o Secure housing management partner or long-term lease agreements for commercial tenants.

The long-term outcomes of the above would include:

- Creation of new homes for year-round occupation.
- Job creation and workspace provision for small enterprises.
- The possible reversal and delay of local population decline through new residents and economic opportunities.
- Sustainable, low-maintenance use of publicly owned land.
- Strengthened community empowerment and self-determination.

### **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 main benefit to the community would be the ownership of a site that was closed and ultimately had a negative outcome on the area. The trust believes that by owning this site, they will gain back their sense of empowerment, therefore the residents will have an input into how this site will benefit them in the future. Other benefits include:

#### **Population renewal**

New homes attract and retain residents - Number of new households created and the area begins to flourish

Local employment

Commercial units support local business and self-employment - Jobs created/safeguarded and actively encouraged

Economic resilience

Increased year-round population supports local services - Service usage and turnover and supports the needs and wants from SG addressing depopulation.

Community empowerment

Community-led control of redevelopment - Legal ownership; number of volunteers

Environmental improvement

Removal of derelict building and creation of more energy-efficient units - Reduction in vacant land and emissions, supporting the effort to the better use of energy

### **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.*

None that we are aware of however we will have to apply to planning for change of use for whatever will be decided in the future.

### **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.*

The Altnaharra community believe that this asset transfer can only have a positive impact on their community – and had conversations with councillors at the time of the school closure to that effect. There will be a sense of empowerment and achievement to any work carried out at this site.

## 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 Altnaharra Community Trust are predominately led by Pieter Bakker and Colin Campbell, however they have five trustees in total.

The Trust was formed in 2015 to manage an annual community benefit fund from the locally built, Creag Riabhach wind farm and has started to receive that funding a couple of years ago.

Altnaharra as a community has always been a small village that we feel has often been neglected from various departments and lack of funding because of its remote location. Historically it has been centred around the primary school, the church and the hotel. Unfortunately, the primary school was mothballed several years ago due to a falling school roll, the church has fallen into disrepair and is no longer safe to use and the Hotel is now only operational on a seasonal basis. Employment in the area is mainly farming and sporting estate jobs (ie. Gamekeepers / cleaners) and the hotel also employ some live in seasonal workers. There are now opportunities for people to work from home due to the Trust engaging with BT several years ago to install Fibre to the premises for super-fast broadband in the village and surrounding areas.

The Trust would like to restore the village with additional funding where required to provide residents and tourists with suitable facilities for visiting.

The Trust has already begun restoration plans for the church building after having taken over the building from Church of Scotland and plan to restore the church but also ensure its use can be multi-functional.

The Trust is looking to the CAT of the school to use the site for some affordable homes and one or two workshop/business premises/opportunities which ultimately will provide the village with a centre.

In general, they are looking at making improvements to the village as many parts of it are derelict, run down and neglected.

The Trust would look to outsource the feasibility and development work for a housing/commercial space project as they are aware they do not have the capacity to do this on their own. Communities Housing Trust offer this service and have

experience in this, particularly in the NW Sutherland area. They are currently working on 7 projects around the area, helping to tackle the current depopulation crisis.

Funding is already in place to accommodate this stage of the development.

## 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 Altnaharra community trust have full support from the community councils in and around the area, including the support of the Farr North Community Development Trust (FNCDT).

FNCDT have really carried out a housing needs assessment through CHT to highlight the need in three community council areas including Bettyhill, Strathnaver and Altnaharra. The report showcases the support for the community and any future projects. Altnaharra's population has fallen by over 30% since 2001 (NRS estimates). There have been no primary school enrolments since 2017 due to the school being mothballed. There are limited housing turnover and the increasing short-term use in ad around the area reduce opportunities for permanent settlement.

Highland Council's Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) confirms unmet demand for affordable housing across NW Sutherland.

The local residents have consistently expressed concern about depopulation and the loss of key assets. Initial discussions show strong support for redevelopment of the former school site for housing or business use. ACT has engaged with the NorthWest2045 partnership along with other community organisations to ensure alignment with regional priorities.

Local businesses report challenges recruiting staff due to lack of accommodation. NW2045 identifies “limited housing for workers and small business space” as barriers to repopulation.

The Highland Council have been supportive of this CAT expression of interest for the reuse of the site. Based on the email communication with members of the Community Support and Ward Management, alongside the Land and Estates team.

## 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.*

Regular funding stream from the Creag Riabhach wind farm:

April 2024  
January 2025  
November 2025

This is a regular amount of funding to AT to be regenerated back in the community.

Pre-Acquisition Costs

Community Asset Transfer 1.00

Legal Fees and Costs 3,000\*

CHT fees 2,256.00

Total 5,257.00

ACT Funding

Creag Riabhach wind farm April '24 141,646.94

January '25 165,465.57

November '25 (due) (178,000.00)\*

Total in bank 478,000.00

\*\*150,000.00 of this amount in savings\*\*

Altnaharra Community Trust could also apply to other funding streams including the RIHF Feasibility Fund for the next stage of feasibility work.

The community accounts are healthy and in a good position to move forward with any potential work to help improve their village and enhance community empowerment.

Demolition costs est 60,000.00 to clear the site. Further details in business plan attached as well as copies of quotes.

## 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 [REDACTED]

Address [REDACTED]

Date 15-12-2025

Position Chairperson

Signature [REDACTED]

Name [REDACTED]

Address Mudale Farmhouse, Altnaharra, Lairg, Sutherland

Date 15-12-2025

Position Treasurer

Signature [REDACTED]

## 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: ACT Constitution

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

Documents attached: none received from HC

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

n/a

### **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: Business Plan for Former Altnaharra Primary School

### **Section 5 – evidence of community support**

Documents attached: Farr North Development HNDA, Letter of support.

### **Section 6 – funding**

Documents attached: ACT Accounts 23/24, Quote for Demolition

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