

Glenurquhart Rural Community Association

Trustees' Annual Report 2021-2022

Glenurquhart Rural Community Association (GURCA) is a Development Trust set up and managed with the purpose of benefitting the Glen Urquhart and Drumnadrochit community, through the advancement of community development, education and citizenship, and the provision of recreational facilities.

What did we do, and who did we help?

In 2021-2022, although still impacted by the ongoing Covid restrictions, we were able to move forward with several projects:

Appointment of a Community Development Officer

In 2021, GURCA was successful in obtaining three years' funding, via Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS), for a Community Development Officer (CDO). We went through the process of advertising, interviewing candidates and finally, appointing our CDO, Dan Light, in January 2022.



DANIEL LIGHT

MEET OUR
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Going forward, this paid post will help the Board of Trustees, who are all unpaid volunteers, with the increasing workload associated with a growing community and a range of potential projects. Dan is already progressing with a range of events designed to tackle mental health and wellbeing in our community, aided by grant funding secured from Highland Third Sector Interface.

Agreement of a long term lease for Blairbeg Park between GURCA and Glen Urquhart Shinty Club

GURCA owns Blairbeg Park, which is a large area of playing fields in the centre of Drumnadrochit. For many years, the park has been home to our local shinty club, under a short term lease arrangement. The club has invested much time and effort into trying to develop the facilities there but, without the benefit of secure tenure, has struggled to secure

significant funding. In 2020, the club approached GURCA to request a long term (99 year) lease.

GURCA produced a paper outlining the pros and cons of such an arrangement, along with proposed mitigation actions, and circulated this to all members before conducting a poll of members to gain approval for the principle of a long term lease. This was approved by an overwhelming majority of members, and in 2021 negotiations commenced between GURCA and the Shinty Club.

In November 2021 we were pleased to sign the lease giving long term tenure of the park to the Shinty Club.

The benefits of this arrangement are already being seen, with a much closer and more collaborative relationship between the two organisations, and a clear delineation of responsibilities for the maintenance and upkeep of this community asset. The parties are keen to take this forward in the future and develop and expand sporting facilities for all the community (not just shinty players).

Village Hall improvements

GURCA continues to seek practical solutions for the problems encountered with our much loved but ageing Public Hall. The long term aspiration remains to completely redevelop, modernise and reconfigure the hall, but we were again unsuccessful in securing the levels of funding required to facilitate this. In the short term we have, therefore, sought solutions for some of the immediate issues.

We agreed to use around £4k of our funds to have urgent patch repair work to the roof of the annexe and meeting rooms, to stop the significant leaks and associated damage to that area of the hall, and specific work to stem a leak into the main hall.

In early 2022, we successfully applied for funding to allow the replacement of the very large windows in the Main Hall, and to replace the slating on the Main Hall roof. This work is scheduled to take place over the summer of 2022 and will not be work that will require to be 'undone' in the event that we do secure funds for the modernisation plan in the future.

The immediate benefits to hall users of a warmer and dryer facility will be welcomed.

Community Action Plan

GURCA worked collaboratively with Glenurquhart Community Council (GUCC) and Soirbheas during 2021 to secure funding for the development of a Community Action Plan. The work was tendered and in early 2022 the consultation was launched. An online survey, drop in sessions, and interviews with key stakeholders, will feed into the final document which is due to be complete in 2022. The results from the Action Plan will inform GURCA's decision making going forward with regards to prioritising potential developments and funding bids.

Community Right to Buy – local woodland

In 2021, GURCA responded to a mandate obtained from members via an online poll, and worked towards the submission of a Community Right to Buy application for several plots of woodland central to Drumnadrochit. We obtained Scottish Land Fund Stage 1 support to have the plots surveyed and valued, and undertook the large amounts of administration work necessary to support any applications. For 2 plots, we progressed to having applications ready to submit, but were prevented from doing so by the plots being sold before the process could be completed.

Although our efforts were unsuccessful this time, we have learned a lot about the level of documentation and evidence required to support any such submissions, and the necessary process. There was a very high level of community support for the proposal, and we will continue to consider ways to protect these plots of land for the community.

Loch Ness Hub



GURCA is the Anchor Shareholder of Loch Ness Hub Ltd, a Community Benefit Society based in Drumnadrochit. In 2021, all the ongoing management of the Hub and its business was passed over to its Board of Directors, but GURCA remains strongly supportive of the Hub and its objectives, and has 2 of its Trustees as Hub Directors, in accordance with the Hub's governing Rules.



GURCA and our community is already benefitting from the Hub directly through the rental income received by GURCA from the Hub for the building it occupies.

Community Litterpicks

In 2021, in collaboration with Loch Ness Hub, community litterpicking events were introduced. GURCA has now taken the lead on this initiative, and regular litterpicking sessions have been organised, which will take place throughout the year.

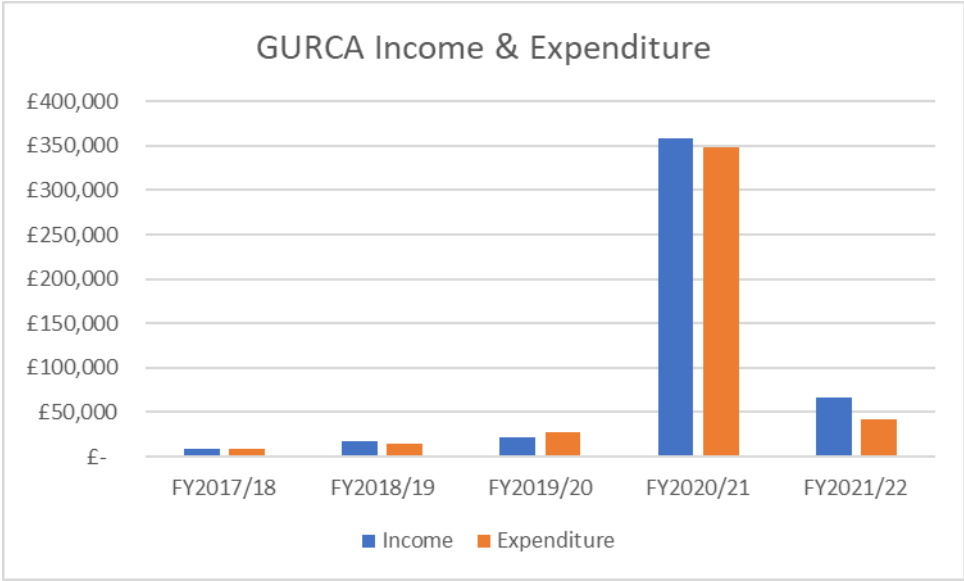


Market on the Green

The popularity of the regular Markets on the Green has resulted in their frequency increasing to twice monthly throughout the summer. The markets are held on the green which is owned by GURCA, and bring direct benefits to our community through rental income for stalls, as well as providing increased attractions for tourists and local people alike.



Financial Review



2021-22 accounts in summary:

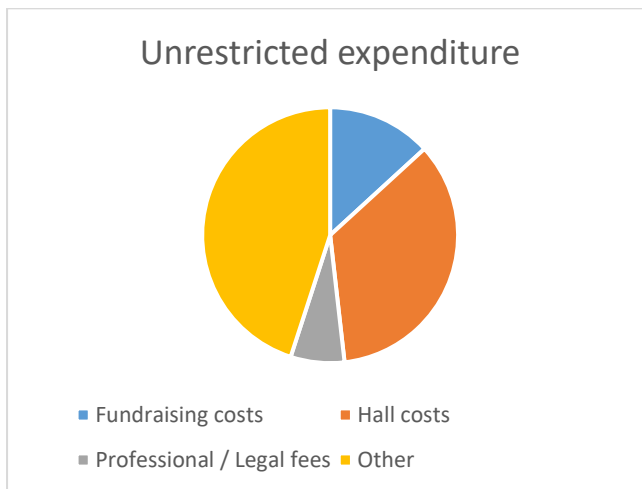
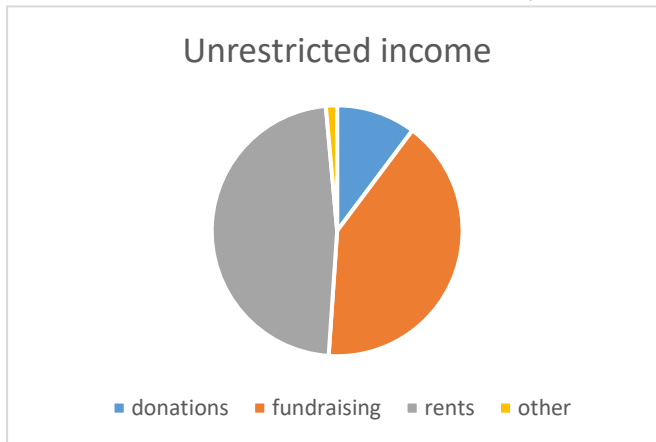
Unrestricted funds

Brought forward from 2020-21 £25,327

Unrestricted income £15,908

Unrestricted Expenditure £19,809

Carried forward to 2022-23 £21,426



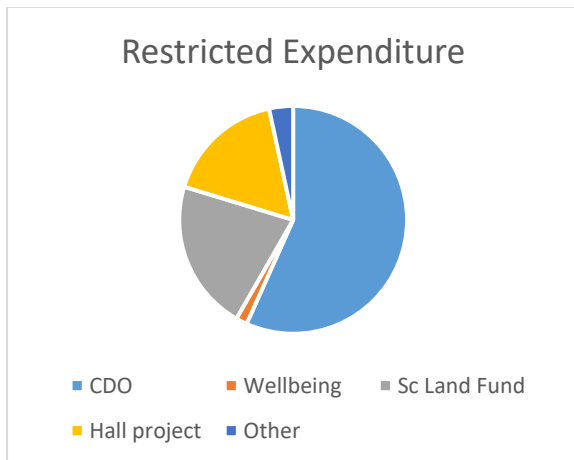
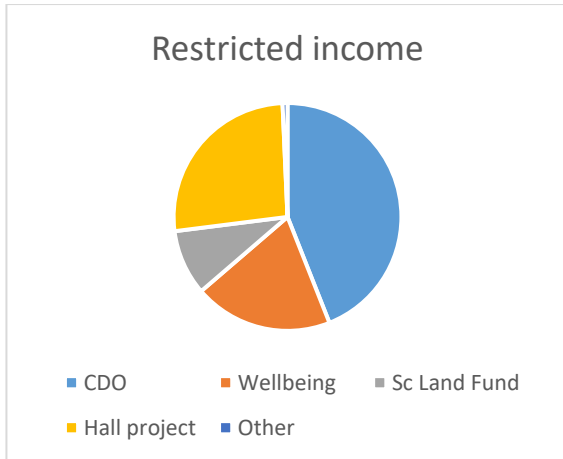
Restricted Funds

Brought forward from 2020-21 £21,292

Restricted income £50,002

Restricted Expenditure £21,715

Carried forward to 2022-23 £49,579



As can be seen, almost three quarters of our unrestricted income came from rents (from users of the hall, and Loch Ness Hub) and fundraising activities such as the Markets on the Green, the Glenurquhart Bulletin, and the fireworks / childrens parties.

Around a third of our unrestricted expenditure went towards the day to day running of the Glenurquhart Public Hall, and we expect these costs to rise as use of the hall returns to pre covid levels, and the impact of fuel price increases is felt. The work we will undertake in the coming year to improve the hall's energy efficiency is timely.

Our year end saw a small loss in unrestricted funds, of -£3,901. However, our unrestricted funds carried forward remain within the amounts required by our Reserves Policy.

Reserves Policy

GURCA Trustees review the Reserves Policy annually. The current agreed level of required reserves of unrestricted funds is £20k

GURCA's primary unrestricted funding streams are from rents, community events, and donations. The charity owns a number of fixed assets on behalf of the community, namely; Glen Urquhart Public Hall, Blairbeg Playing Fields, the Drumnadrochit Village Green, and the Loch Ness Hub building. Each of these assets charge rents to users, or in the case of the Village Green, is used to host events which provide donated income to GURCA.

Reserves are the funds that GURCA has which can be freely spent on any of its charitable purposes. This definition excludes restricted funds as these must be spent in a specific way. Reserves also exclude the tangible fixed assets held by GURCA (such as the buildings and land owned by GURCA).

Having a reserves policy is part of the internal financial management of GURCA and will help us manage our resources better and plan ahead for our needs. A reserves policy is required by GURCA to ensure that critical activities undertaken by GURCA are not affected by any funding shortfall. As we consider our budget for the year ahead and our future plans, we need to consider any uncertainty over our income or the risk of unexpected expenditure.

Particular areas for consideration are:

- Funds to allow for unforeseen emergencies or other unexpected needs, for example an unexpected repair bill or requirement to fund an urgent project.
- Unforeseen day to day operational costs, such as excessive heating costs, or additional insurance premiums.
- Grant income not being renewed with little advance notice which would impact our ability to fund ongoing commitments such as the CDO salary, activities and projects underway etc.
- Planned commitments which may need more funds than estimated.
- The short-term funding of identified projects and activities, for example money may need to be spent before grant funding is received.

Reserve Details

The following outlines the steps taken by GURCA trustees to establish the level of reserves as well as the amounts identified. The areas of consideration listed above were assessed against the criteria of likelihood, impact on the charity's ongoing operations and the ability to execute its purpose. Not all possible impacts will happen simultaneously, thus the total amount of reserves identified by this policy will reflect sufficient funds to cope with an undefined subset of events. Key to the ongoing effectiveness of GURCA is its ability to retain its Community Development Officer (CDO). Thus, the reserves ensure a minimum of six months' salary and expenses so as to enable alternative CDO salary income to be identified and secured. The other impacts considered were the expenditure required to "keep the lights on" in the Public Hall (heating, lighting and insurances), and finally reserves to meet either emergency maintenance, or initial funding of projects awaiting grant funder income.

- A six months reserve for CDO salary and expenses is £15k
- Emergency operational, maintenance and project reserve is £5k

The total level of unrestricted reserves required by GURCA is £20k

Trustees and Governance

GURCA Trustees during 2021-22 were as follows:

Susan Clark – Chair

Carolyn Wilson – Secretary

Monique Riddle – Treasurer

Neil Barron (stepped down June 2021)

Margaret Davidson

David Fraser (from June 2021)

Gordon Findlay

Fiona Macdonald (from June 2021)

Fraser Mackenzie

Dot MacKenzie

Fiona Urquhart

Gordon Watson

Natalie Wink (from June 2021, stepped down February 2022)

GURCA Trustees are all unpaid volunteers. **None of the Trustees received any payments for any services during 2021-22.**

Trustees are governed by GURCA's Code of Conduct for Trustees.

Trustees meet regularly (usually 6 times per annum) and review GURCA's financial position on a quarterly basis.