

GLEN URQUHART MENS SHED (GUMS) COMMUNITY CONSULTATION REPORT



Soirbheas

Investing in the communities of Glen Urquhart & Strathglass

Introduction

As part of their Development Support Day programme, Soirbheas agreed to provide an allocation of staff time to assist with developing the Glen Urquhart Men's Shed Community Consultation. Agreed assignments of support include the creation of this Community Consultation Report.

About the project

A Men's Shed is a community-based, non-profit, non-commercial organization accessible to all, providing a safe, friendly, and healing environment where people can work on meaningful projects at their own pace in their own time in the company of others. It provides a supportive environment for people to gather, volunteer, work, teach, learn, and seek fellowship with other like-minded people, and promote and stabilize the mental, physical, emotional, and economic wellbeing of people in a community.

Glen Urquhart Men's Shed (GUMS) was formed in 2018. They currently have temporary use of the Caretakers cottage at Blairbeg hall in Drumnadrochit (free of charge), comprising of 3 small rooms. In the next few years, there are plans to refurbish Blairbeg hall, meaning GUMS would need to vacate the cottage. Therefore, GUMS have been searching for suitable premises for a permanent Men's Shed. They started to look for alternative, suitable premises and in 2019 discovered that Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) were going to relocate their base from Balnain to Shenval. In 2022, FLS allowed GUMS to inspect the buildings at Balnain, which confirmed they could be suitable for a permanent Men's Shed premises which provides more suitable space and facilities that will enable them, and other community interests, to expand their membership and activities.

As a result, GUMS have developed a Business Plan detailing the site and their vision to support an application for an asset transfer of the former Forestry and Land Scotland Offices, Workshop & Land, at Balnain Glen Urquhart. As part of their Business Plan and application, GUMS consulted with the local community to seek their views on the proposal: whether they support it, and what else the site could be used for. This report will collate the data, and based on the consultations, will provide a number of recommendations on how the project can move to the next stages.

Executive Summary

GUMS held two Community Consultations: one on Wednesday 24th May 2023 in Drumnadrochit, and one on Tuesday 30th May 2023 in Balnain. There was a good turnout at each consultation (see images in Appendix 1, pg. 11), and a total of 113 questionnaires were completed by members of the community. Most respondents are from the local area. When asked whether they knew about Men's Shed before the event, 96% of respondents said that they did know about it. When asked whether they support the proposal to acquire the Forestry site and buildings at Balnain for a Men's Shed/ Community facility, 98% of respondents said that they did. When asked, as well as the Men's Shed, what they would like the space to be used for, the top suggestion (mentioned 28 times) was for office space/hot desking. When asked whether they were aware of any other suitable sites for a Men's Shed, 96.46% of respondents did not answer the question or are not aware of any other suitable sites for a Men's Shed.

Community Engagement Snapshot



2

CONSULTATION
DAYS



36

ONLINE SURVEYS
FILLED OUT



77

PAPER SURVEYS
FILLED OUT



96%

KNEW ABOUT
MENS SHED BEFORE
THE EVENT



98%

OF RESPONDENTS
SUPPORT THE
PROPOSAL



28

MENTIONS
OF HOT DESKING
AS "OTHER USE"



96.46%

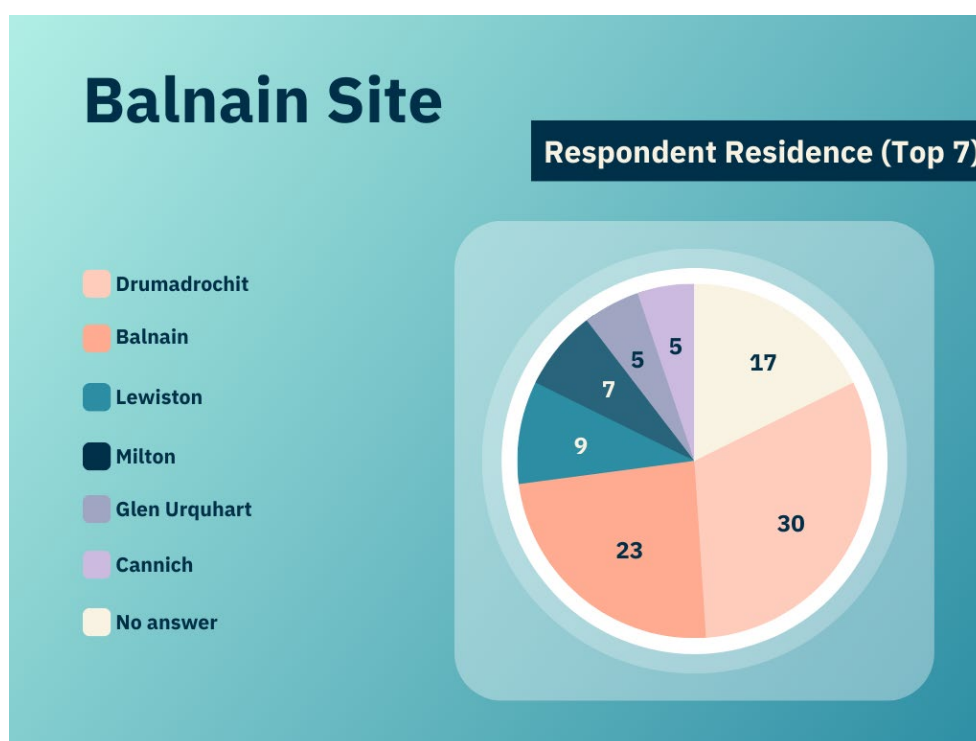
DID NOT ANSWER/
NOT AWARE OF
ANOTHER SITE

The Consultation Process

The Consultation events were advertised on various social media channels, including GUMS, GURCA, and Soirbheas Facebook pages. They were also shared on the local discussion groups on Facebook. GURCA and Soirbheas shared in their online Newsletters. A poster (see Appendix 2, pg.12) was distributed within the local community and displayed on local notice boards. The events were also shared via word-of-mouth.

A questionnaire (see Appendix 3, pg.13) was devised for visitors to fill in either in-person at the consultations or online. 80 paper questionnaires were filled out, however two were void as no questions were answered, and two were by the same person. This resulted in 77 valid paper questionnaires, 36 valid online questionnaires, resulting in a total of 113 valid questionnaires. Information was also gathered from a series of interactive posters which detailed the whole proposal.

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to provide details of their residence.

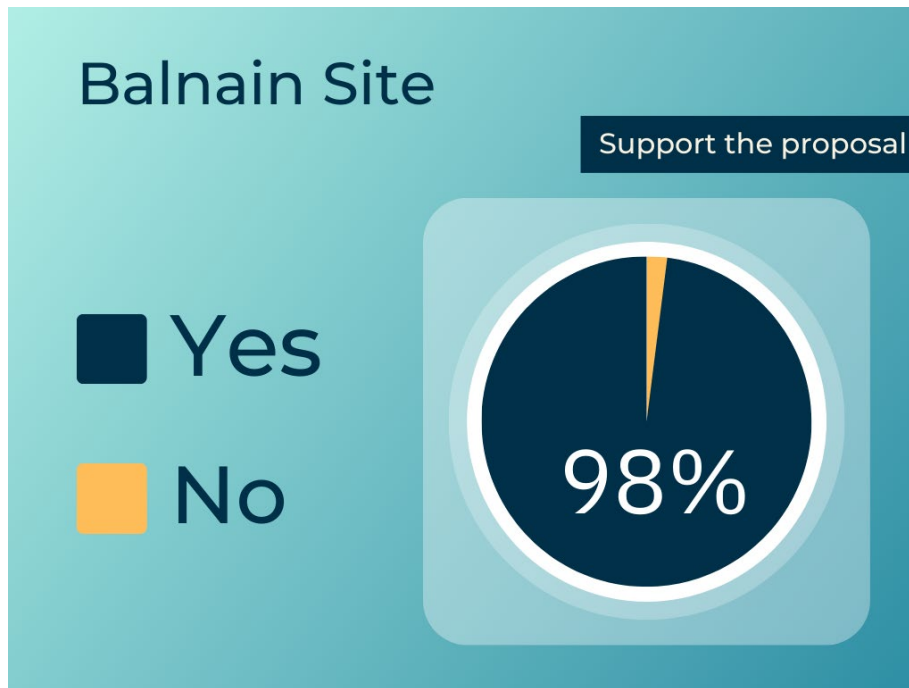


17 respondents did not provide details. Most respondents are from the local area, including 30 from Drumnadrochit; 23 from Balnain; 17 from Lewiston; 9 from Lewiston; 7 from Milton; 5 from Glen Urquhart; 5 from Cannich; 4 from Kilmore; 3 from Achmony; 3 from Bearnock; 2 from Shenval. Individuals were from Balbeg, Bunloit, Tomich, and Strathnacro. One respondent was from Inverness.

Community Engagement Findings

Questionnaire Data Results

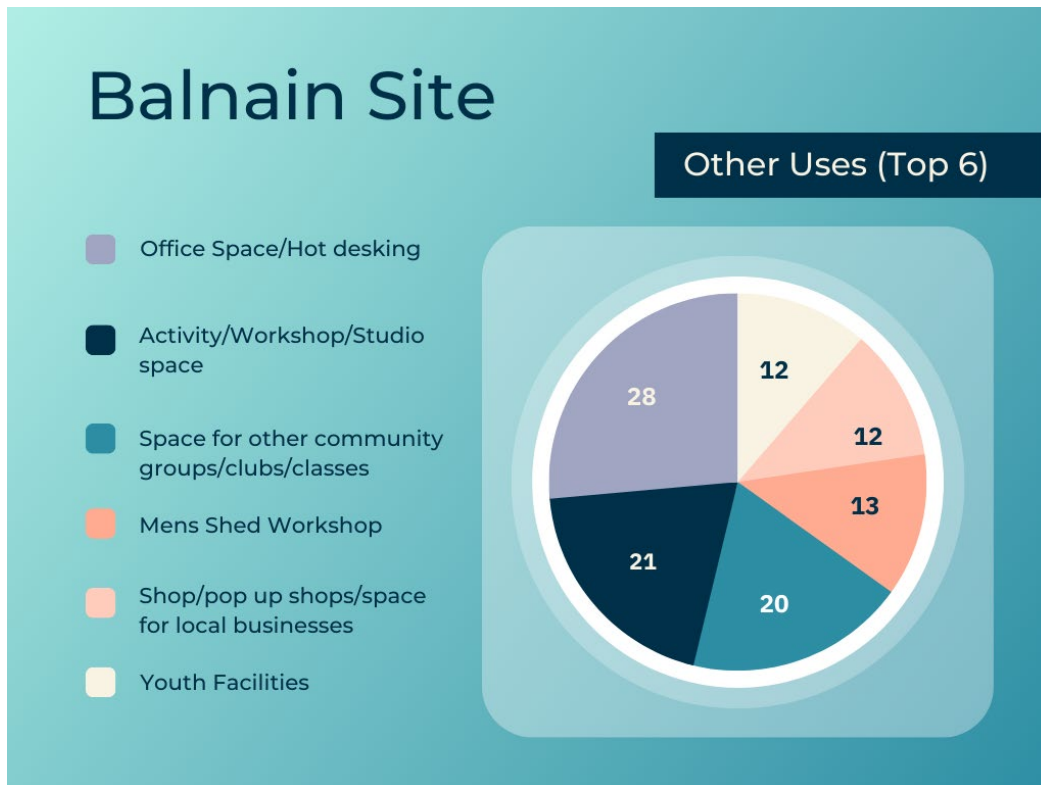
In the questionnaire the community was asked “Do you support the proposal to acquire the Forestry site and buildings at Balnain for a Men’s Shed/ Community facility”.



98% of respondents said that they do support the proposal. Whilst a great result, one respondent "would favour a shed staying in Drum where more population wouldn't need to travel, if a suitable site could be found". Similarly, two other respondents mentioned transport as an issue. Another two respondents were also concerned about the asbestos roof on one of the buildings on the proposed site and whether this will become a costly issue in future.

Two Members of the community did not support the proposal, expressing their concerns over the proposed purchase of the land.

Next, the questionnaire asked the community “If the site were to be purchased by GURCA and re-developed into a Community Hub for groups/individuals, as well as the Men’s Shed, what would you like the space to be used for?”.



28 respondents suggested office space/hot desking, including meeting facilities, study areas, and printing facilities.

21 respondents suggested an activity/workshop/studio space, including a car/mechanical workshop, music, crafting, art, photography, mug, and jewellery making.

20 respondents suggested space for other community groups/clubs/classes, including yoga/pilates groups, a model railway club, arts and crafts groups, storytelling, other community projects, Gaelic, night, yoga, and gym classes.

13 respondents suggested the Men’s Shed Workshop itself, including practical skills days/nights for women, and practical skills days with youth.

13 respondents suggested a shop/pop-up shops/ space for local businesses, including a barber, hairdressers, beauty treatments, and local produce outlets, e.g., butcher and fishmonger.

12 respondents suggested youth facilities, including a youth club, a green kids club, educational youth development centre, and use by Balnain Primary School.

9 respondents suggested a community outdoor space, including growing, allotments, a polytunnel/greenhouse, gardening skills, a community garden/food growing, environmental volunteering, nature education, a picnic area, outdoor education.

7 respondents suggested changing/toilet/shower facilities for Loch users, including for wild swimmers, fishers, walkers/cyclists, and paddleboarders.

6 respondents suggested a Women's Shed; 5 suggested a café; 5 suggested Public Toilet Facilities; 4 suggested a location for events/markets; 4 suggested tool/paint share hire; 4 suggested a repair shop, including bike and canoe repairs; 2 suggested community storage, including for a rowing skiff and table tennis; 2 suggested gym facilities; 2 suggested housing, including low cost for young locals and starter houses for locals in the Glen; 2 mentioned car parking, including continued use of it as overflow for Balnain Hall.

Individuals suggested a community skip and trailer, car/bus/lorry charging point, a games room, motorhome parking for a fee, and an exhibition space with photos/stories from the past in Balnain and the wider community.

Several respondents' comments were worth mentioning:

"Office space could pay for the upkeep of other community groups"

"Would need a separate area for men's shed for safety reasons"

"My only concern is it becoming more focussed on tourists and not locals. It's a relatively unknown spot for locals to use for swim and water sports, we would like to keep it discreet, not overused. i.e., we enjoy our quiet swims"

"Prefer it not to be overdeveloped - keep some space for wildlife please"

Next, the questionnaire asked the community "Are you aware of any other suitable sites for a Men's Shed?".

77 respondents (68.14%) are not aware of any other suitable sites for a Men's Shed, and 32 (28.32%) respondents did not answer the question. Only 4 respondents (3.54 %) answered yes to the question. One suggested the potential of talking with farmers in the area with unused land/space, two mentioned the old Café 82 site, and one mentioned the site of the old Co-Op.

Interactive Poster Results

During the two consultations, community members were able to interact with a series of laid out poster which detailed the proposal. When asked to add their own ideas, suggestions, and thoughts, four respondents mentioned their concerns over campervans and/or campers using the site and leaving their rubbish behind. One respondent mentioned keeping the existing access from the traffic lights to the hall for School children. Three mentioned that they wish for the site to remain a local hub, not a tourist hub. All other suggestions were mentioned in the questionnaire.

Recommendations

Whilst there are some reservations, the community consultation results reveal that the local community support the proposal that the Balnain site be purchased and re-developed into a Community Hub for groups/individuals, as well as the Men's Shed.

It is recommended that:

- An Operating Model be developed for the site, detailing what the site will be used for over and above the use by GUMS.
- A Feasibility Study is developed for the site, detailing the Operating Model, community consultation results, identifying who the potential stakeholders are, and the practicability of the overall community vision.
- A lead organisation be identified, and an agreement be made between it and GUMS detailing how the project will be undertaken, managed, and the terms/responsibilities of each organisation.
- If a lead organisation is identified, development of a Partnership Agreement/ Business Plan/ Funding Strategy be developed for the site.
- Whilst there are limited options for alternative site for the Men's Shed, it is recommended that, as a contingency measure, other sites (particularly in Drumnadrochit) continue to be explored.
- Consideration be given to creating a Project Co-Ordinator post.

Appendices

Appendix 1: images

Drumnadrochit:



Balnain:



Appendix 2: Poster

Glenurquhart Men's Shed supported by **Glenurquhart Rural Community Association**

cordially invite you to a

Community Consultation

We need your support!
Please come along and let us know what you think

We are proposing to transfer the current Forestry & Land Scotland site at Balnain to community ownership via a community asset transfer and use the site as a home for the Glen Urquhart Men's Shed and other community groups.

Glenurquhart Public Hall, Drumnadrochit
Wednesday 24th May 3pm – 8pm

Join us for a brew
Meet the "Shedders"
Find out more

Village Hall, Balnain
Tuesday 30th May 3pm – 8pm





Appendix 3: Questionnaire



GLEN URQUHART MEN'S SHED

Members of the Scottish Men's Shed Association
Covering Drumnadrochit, Glen Urquhart, Cannich, Tomich & surrounding rural areas
Scottish Incorporated Charitable Organisation No: SC052227

Balnain Forestry Site Questionnaire

What is a Men's Shed?

In essence, a men's shed is a venue where everyday men "with time on their hands" can meet, enjoy each other's company, build friendships, engage in social events and collaborate for the benefit of each other and the local community. The Men's Shed movement is primarily driven by the health needs of retired men who are prone to feelings of a lack of purpose and isolation which often develop into mental, and then physical, health issues. However, the Shed is open to adult men of any age.

What's the plan?

We would like to site our Men's shed on the existing Balnain Forestry site. As Forestry & Land Scotland are vacating the site, the opportunity has arisen to engage in a Community Asset Transfer. The site would be owned by GURCA and we would lease the Shed from them. The plan at the moment is to make use of the existing structures within the site. We also envisage being able to offer the use of some of the structures on the site for other community uses, depending on demand.

We would be very grateful if you would take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire.
Thanks!

1. Did you know about Men's Shed before this event? Yes No

2. Would you be interested in getting involved?

If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, please indicate how you would like to get involved:

Please Turn Over



David Ferguson –



urquhartshed@outlook.com



<https://glenshed.square.site/>



<https://www.facebook.com/GlenUrquhartMensShed>

Principal Office: Coille Na Co, Glen Urquhart, Drumnadrochit, Highland IV63 6TH



GLEN URQUHART MEN'S SHED

Members of the Scottish Men's Shed Association
Covering Drumnadrochit, Glen Urquhart, Cannich, Tomich & surrounding rural areas
Scottish Incorporated Charitable Organisation No: SC052227

3. Do you support the proposal to acquire the Forestry site and buildings at Balnain for a Men's Shed / Community facility? Yes No

4. If the site were to be purchased by GURCA, and re-developed into a Community Hub for groups/individuals, as well as the Mens Shed, what would you like the space to be used for? For example, office space for your group/organization.

5. Are you aware of any other suitable sites for a Mens Shed?

Addition Comments / Feedback

(OPTIONAL information – should you wish to hear more about our Men's Shed)

Name

Address

Telephone No

Email



David Ferguson –



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<https://glenshed.square.site/>



<https://www.facebook.com/GlenUrquhartMensShed>

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Business Details

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Charity no. SC052227
Inaugural date: Glen Urquhart Men's Shed formed in August 2018