



# Melvich Community SCIO

## MARCH 2022 UPDATE



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Thanks for taking the time to read our updates. We hope that you find these updates useful and informative. Yet again, a lot has been happening in the background since our update to you in December 2021, so we thought it timely to give you another update.

## 2. STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

We are moving forward with implementing the preferred decision from the Options Assessment of knocking down the existing village hall, acquiring adjacent land and designing/constructing a replacement facility that is fit for purpose and will help meet the needs of our community in the medium to long term.

As you are aware the old village hall was demolished last year. We have secured the grant funding necessary from the Caithness North Sutherland Fund (CNSF) and Strathy North Windfarm Community fund to allow us to progress with purchasing the land adjacent to the former hall. Temporary marker posts were put in place to delineate the area and finalise discussion on the extent of land being purchased. Melvich Community SCIO's solicitor is progressing the purchase of the land (approximate extent of land purchase shown in orange in the aerial photo below). We hope to complete this purchase in the next month.



Once the area marked in orange is owned by Melvich Community SCIO then we can proceed with the design stages for our new fit for purpose multi-functional multi-generational inclusive community hub. Melvich Community SCIO intend to incorporate new modern standard public toilets (along with a Changing Places toilet) into a section of the community hub. Once these are available, our strategic plan is that the new public toilets in the hub would supersede the existing public toilets and we would then take ownership of the current public toilets with the intention of demolishing them and re-using the footprint of the building. We have grant funding secured (from Strathy North Windfarm Community Fund) to cover the anticipated legal fees for a community asset transfer of the public toilets. There is a triangle of land (marked in red in the aerial photo above) which we are trying to establish the ownership of, and we would like to take ownership of it so that we have a sensible land footprint to work with going forward.

We have already expressed an interest to Highland Council for a community asset transfer of the public toilets building and we now need to complete the formal application to make this community asset transfer happen. We have filled in the majority of the application form already but there is one section that **we need some help with from You**. We need to show the level and nature of support for the community asset transfer request from our community and, if relevant, from others. **Please complete the survey online using this link <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/PUBLICTOILETSURVEY/> or by hand and return it to one of the Melvich Community SCIO trustees, post it to the mailing address shown on the front page, or return it to West End stores in Melvich by no later than 18<sup>th</sup> April 2022.** Thank you. If the returned questionnaires show community support for this Community Asset Transfer, then we will submit the application to Highland Council for consideration – it typically takes about a year for a community asset transfer to go through due process.

### 3. OUTCOME OF INITIAL CONSULTATION ON HUB SPECIFICATIONS

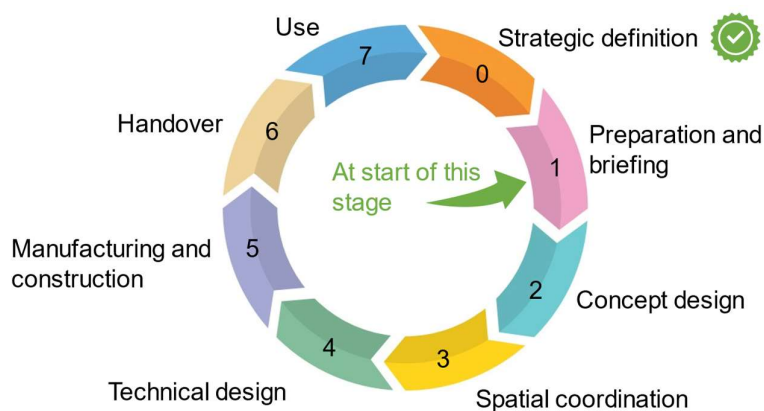
A huge thank you to each and every one of you who completed our consultation questionnaire on the specifications for the design of our new community hub and to those that have contributed to the specifications in advance of the questionnaire. Your inputs and insights are greatly appreciated and highly valuable.

The consensus from the consultation is that we are heading in the right direction with the high level needs to be incorporated into the new hub. There were concerns raised that there were potentially too many rooms or that the facility might be a bit large for our community.

Your feedback has been useful, and the detailed comments will be fed into the next stage of discussions in the design process. There were some rooms/facilities shown that could be merged into suitable multifunctional rooms so we will be giving this specific consideration. Also some of the facilities mentioned might be better placed elsewhere as part of strategic considerations for the medium to long term development and improvement of our community. The wider needs and aspirations of the area will be discussed further with the designers as a business plan is developed to support the feasibility stage of the project.

### 4. DESIGN AND BUILD OF NEW COMMUNITY HUB

We have been in discussions with various potential grant funding organisations over the last year or so and the consensus has been that any grant funding applications submitted should be against specific defined RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) plan of work stages which each have clearly defined expected outputs. We have already completed RIBA stage 0 and we are about to commence RIBA stage 1 (Preparation and briefing).



We have already secured some grant funding towards this stage (from SSE Sustainable Development Fund; Highland Council's ward discretionary fund; and North Highland Initiative Infrastructure Support Programme). We know that we will need more grant funding to complete

RIBA Stage 1 and we are in the process of applying for the additional monies needed to allow us to move forward with this work.

Once we have appropriate grant funding in place, then it is expected that it will take around 3 to 4 months to complete RIBA stage 1. As part of the programme for this stage, we intend to consult you again when we have some drawings and layouts to share. We hope that we will be doing this next round of consultation during this summer.

Once RIBA stage 1 is completed, then we should have a good handle on the likely costs for our new community hub and what it could look like. We will then be in a good position to determine the contract strategy for completing the design and getting our new hub constructed.

## 5. 100 CLUB

The top prize in the February 2022 Melvich Community SCIO 100 club draw was over £100. If you have not yet joined it, or wish to purchase more tickets, then please contact us for more information. Application Forms are available at the Post Office. Participating in our 100 club will help Melvich Community SCIO progress plans for the new community hub and you could Win 1 of 3 Monthly Cash Prizes. The more people play, the more tickets sold, the higher the prize money, which is currently standing at over £100 for 1<sup>st</sup> prize with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> prizes also available. **The next draw will take place on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022.**

## 6. COMMUNITY GROWING PROJECT



Good progress has been made by the community growing project volunteers. There are now a number of planters and benches at the site of the former village hall.

There are more items yet to come and discussions are ongoing regarding planting etc.

Feel free to stop and use the benches in our community space if you are passing.

If you would like to become involved in this community growing project, then please get in touch with us. Everyone is welcome to participate. We'll post more as this progresses and update you on how you might like to get involved.

## 7. AMAZON SMILE

If you do any online shopping with Amazon then please sign consider setting up Melvich Community SCIO as your chosen charity to receive donations on your eligible purchases.

To sign up for Amazon Smile, visit [smile.amazon.co.uk](https://smile.amazon.co.uk). If you've already got an Amazon account, simply log in to your account and search for Melvich Community SCIO in the 'pick your own charity' search bar on the right-hand side of the screen. Click to accept us as your chosen charity and you're ready to start shopping! Every little helps – thank you 😊

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO COMPLETE AND RETURN THE ENCLOSED QUESTIONNAIRE. THANK YOU.**