



# Melvich Community SCIO

## JUNE 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 March 2022, 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 are in the final stage of conveyancing for the purchase of the land behind the old hall and we are expecting this process to be finished imminently. We have been successful in securing grant funding from various sources to enable us to progress with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stage 1 of the design/build process for our new community hub. A big thanks to the SSE Sustainable Development Fund, Highland Council's ward discretionary fund, the North Highland Initiative Infrastructure Support Programme and SSE Strathy North Windfarm for their grant contributions to enable us to proceed with this stage.

We have appointed Highland Council's internal design consultancy team to act as our architects for RIBA stage 1. This stage is titled "Preparation and briefing". It is essentially all about helping define the outline specifications to be taken through to the later phases and it assesses the feasibility of various aspects of the design. The information from our previous community consultations on the hub design are forming a key input to the work in this stage.

As part of the work, there have been laser topography surveys performed and physical ground investigation works (including percolation tests). The main challenges that are being highlighted at the moment are car parking provision and site drainage arrangements – we will be working with our architect team to find a suitable way forward to resolve these challenges.

Our trustees have reviewed a draft outline design brief and provided feedback to the principal architect. This outline design brief is in the process of being updated.

As part of the specifications we are defining that the new facility has to have a minimum design life of 100 years and it is to be designed/certified to the Passivhaus standard. Passivhaus is a tried & tested solution that gives us a range of proven approaches to deliver a net-zero-ready new building. Passivhaus buildings provide a high level of occupant comfort using very little energy for heating and cooling so this should mean that the building is sustainable for our community to run. Passivhaus buildings are more expensive to construct than traditional buildings however we believe that the benefits of constructing to this standard greatly outweigh the additional capital costs. For more information on the Passivhaus standard please visit the website [https://www.passivhaustrust.org.uk/what\\_is\\_passivhaus.php#2](https://www.passivhaustrust.org.uk/what_is_passivhaus.php#2).

Towards the end of this summer we anticipate that we will be doing further consultation when we have some initial outline drawings to share. Once RIBA stage 1 is completed, we should have a good handle on the likely costs for our new community hub and start to get an indication as to what it could look like on the land. We will then be in a good position to determine the contract strategy for completing the design stages and getting our new hub constructed.

If you have any questions or comments on the design aspects being considered for our new community hub please feel free to get in touch. This will be a facility for our current community and for future generations of our community to use so please help us get it right. Thank you.

### 3. MELVICH PUBLIC TOILETS

A huge thank you to everyone who completed our consultation questionnaire in relation to the Melvich Public Toilets. Your feedback has been very useful. The consensus from the consultation was that our community supported Melvich Community SCIO incorporating modern standard publicly accessible toilets into the new community hub (these would normally be accessed separately from the rest of the building) and for us to take ownership of the existing public toilets (with the intention of demolishing them and repurposing the land footprint once the new hub is available). As a result, we have submitted a Community Asset Transfer request to the Highland Council for consideration. We have funding in place from SSE Strathy North Windfarm to cover the anticipated legal costs for the transfer of the title deeds for the public toilets. It can take between 6 to 12 months for a Community Asset Transfer application to be considered so we will update you in the future on this topic.

### 4. COMMUNITY GROWING PROJECT



A huge thanks to our community growing project volunteers. There is a wide range of flowers and food stuffs in the planters – these all seem to be growing really well. The various visitors that we've hosted have all commented very positively on the community growing project.

The site of the former village hall is open for anyone to use (both residents and visitors) and it is acting as a community garden. Feel free to visit and relax/socialise there. If you want to get involved in the community growing project please get in touch.

### 5. MELVICH COMMUNITY SCIO MEMBERSHIP

Over 30 members of our community are members of Melvich Community SCIO. We would like to have more of our community as members so that you can have a voice in shaping our charity and activities going forward. It is also a good way to help show potential grant funders that you support the work of our charity. Once we have the new community hub available for use then there may also be some member's benefits but the details of this have not yet been discussed or agreed. If you would like to become a member please complete the enclosed form (or download from <https://melvichcommunityscio.org/membership-application>) and return to us. If you have any questions in relation to membership please get in touch.

### 6. MELVICH COMMUNITY SCIO MEMBERS MEETING – 1<sup>st</sup> JULY 2022

**At 7pm on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 at Strathy Hall**, we intend to hold a face-to-face meeting that is open to Melvich Community SCIO Members only. If you are not a member and wish to attend, please get your membership application in soon or come along and sign up on the night. This meeting will allow you to meet other Members and we wish to consult our members on various topics. We also intend to give an update on RIBA Stage 1 community hub design work. An agenda will be supplied to all members in advance of the meeting. This meeting will also be an opportunity for our members to ask questions of the trustees and help shape the future direction of the charity.

## 7. MELVICH COMMUNITY JUBILEE TEA PARTY

As the nation marked the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, volunteers from our community helped us hold a Community Jubilee Tea Party of our own. The sun shone and over 70 people attended the event. It was great seeing so many people out socialising in the community garden, enjoying the various baking/foods available and participating at our stalls. There are a huge number of people that helped make this event a success. You can read about it at <https://melvichcommunityscio.org/latest-updates-1/f/melvich-community-jubilee-tea-party-1>.



## 8. SPONSORED CYCLE RIDE IN AID OF MELVICH COMMUNITY SCIO



We were delighted that Eric and Rosemary Cameron decided to do a sponsored cycle ride in aid of Melvich Community SCIO as part of helping us raise funds for progressing our community hub.

A big thanks to them for tackling the challenge of cycling from Portskerra all the way to Altnaharra and back. They managed to raise over £800 as a result of their efforts. Thanks to everyone who sponsored them.

### MEMBERS MEETING

**1<sup>st</sup> JULY 2022 @ 7 PM – STRATHY HALL**

***New Members Welcome***