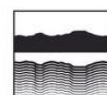


Dunvegan Community Trust

Cruachan Wood and Cnoc nan Craobh

Feasibility Study: Summary & Proposals

DCT
SC052078



**DUNVEGAN
COMMUNITY
TRUST**

Dunvegan Community Trust SCIO (DCT) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation with community membership established to distribute windfarm community benefit funds and to pursue projects to further community development and regeneration. DCT is considering the purchase of two woodlands at Orbst: Cruachan Wood and Cnoc nan Craobh, (also known locally as Bluebell Hill), which are both currently owned by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE). The acquisition would be through the Asset Transfer process which enables eligible community organisations to acquire land from public bodies at a discount from market value.

Cruachan Wood covers 8.7ha. It has been felled and restocked over the last 20 years and mostly comprises native broadleaves and naturally regenerating conifers, with significant areas affected by salmonberry and gorse. There is no active woodland management or provision for public access. DCT wishes to address the scarcity of affordable land and sees the wood as a potential site for the development of two woodland crofts¹ with associated house plots, under a model of tenure that retains the houses in the affordable sector and prevents speculation.

Cnoc nan Craobh (0.6ha) comprises open mature woodland on a small hill with a mix of mature and younger broadleaves. It is a beautiful spot of special significance to the community, and an established local destination for walks and outdoor recreation. DCT is keen to preserve the nature of the wood whilst enhancing its use by e.g. forest school.

DCT commissioned a feasibility study and business plan to help in the development of the project. The initial draft report² includes detailed information on the community area, and the wider policy background, and contains development and management options for the two woods. The final report, which will confirm and cost DCT's preferred options, will be used to support DCT's asset transfer request to HIE and the funding bid to the Scottish Land Fund if the project progresses.

Proposals

- DCT proposes to purchase both woods, plus an additional small plot of land to the south-east of Cruachan Wood. All areas are owned by HIE.
- Public access and amenity activities will be focussed on Cnoc nan Craobh, with woodland croft and housing development taking place at Cruachan Wood.
- Two crofts will be established at Cruachan Wood: the wood will be divided into “north” and “south” crofts, the precise boundary has yet to be decided.
- Two house sites will be created: these will be next to each other to reduce construction and servicing costs. Three options for the location of the house sites have been identified: one is in the central part of the wood, between the two access tracks, the other two are in the south-east corner of Cruachan Wood.
- A range of works to enhance recreation provision are being considered, including a small car park, to facilitate access to Cnoc nan Craobh.
- DCT will establish a volunteer group to assist in the practical management of the two woods.

DCT is now consulting with the community and local stakeholders to inform the future development of the project. If the project proceeds, the location of house plots will be strongly influenced by investigation of ground conditions and likely costs of construction.

¹ For more information on woodland crofts see the [Woodland Crofts Partnership](#) website

² Available on the [Dunvegan Community Trust](#) website