

## CAT Request re Lochhead Avenue (Lochwinnoch Community Development Trust)

### Representations Received (17-24<sup>th</sup> March 2023)

NOTE – Only representations provided with a full name and address have been included. All representations have been reproduced in this format in their entirety, however, personal information has been removed or redacted.

#### 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023


#57	I am writing to you as a resident of Lochwinnoch in support of the application of LCDT to take over the lease of Lochhead Gardens Gap site for ten years. I have been following the work that has been happening there for the past couple of years and have been hugely impressed by the commitment of all the people involved and the community spirit that this has engendered in the area. It would be wonderful to see this secured for the next ten years to allow the community groups involved with the site to benefit from the possibilities afforded by a long term lease.
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#### 18<sup>th</sup> March 2023

#59	<p>I am writing with regard to the above CAT Request Representation.</p> <p>I do not agree with the LCDT plans for the site.</p> <p>I am not involved with LCDT and / or its associated groups.</p> <p>I do not wish LCDT to take over development of the site for ten years.</p> <p>I do not agree that the site should be open to purchase by LCDT.</p> <p>I would like to make the following comments:</p> <p>I have looked at the application with the outline plans for the site, but so far, have been unable to find out how much has been spent to date, how the project will be funded, nor how the site will be funded and maintained both during the development period and later, if the site were to be purchased, and how funds would be found for the purchase.</p> <p>Renfrewshire Council has spent a considerable sum renovating the McKillop Hall, and I feel it should be encouraging greater use of this facility, rather than encouraging the relocation of activities to Lochhead Avenue. The Hall is an ideal place, right in the centre of the village, for recreation, films, clubs, groups, exercise classes, play groups, social meeting groups, birthday parties, festivals, art exhibitions, flower shows, further learning classes, shows, plays etc. It may be that the Council could consider how they price the rental of the Hall, and finish off the upgrading, so that more of such groups can afford to use the Hall, rather than provide funding for a new project such as the Lochhead Garden one. If the Hall is not used to its full potential, the expended money will go to waste. Lower rent must surely be better than no rent.</p> <p>Encouraging use of the Hall would bring people into the centre of the village, increasing the footfall, and allowing the existing shops, Takeaways, cafés at No 8 cafés and the Junction, etc to continue to exist, and for new businesses to fill up the empty shops in the High Street, e.g., where the former St Vincent Charity shop and the Heritage Farmers Market were, and some of the empty premises in Church Street.</p>
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	<p>Farmers' markets could be set up on the pavement area in front of the Hall. There is ample space for stalls, and this too would increase activity in the existing businesses in the High Street, and encourage others to follow suit. It would also encourage more tourists to visit Lochwinnoch, and eat in the local cafés and restaurants.</p> <p>The Library has excellent opening hours and provides a warm and safe place for all ages to sit and chat or read.</p> <p>The ROAR lunch club meets in the McKillop and is an easily accessible location for those seeking warmth and company.</p> <p>With regard to the question of providing outdoor spaces for specific activities, there is a brand new, state of the art, play ground which is close to the High Street, with adjacent playing grounds. There is ample space there for many different activities in these grounds. Castle Semple, the walk along the loch, the cycle path and the woodland paths in Johnshill, Parkhill and Courtshaw Hill provide all ages and abilities with wonderful places to explore and learn about wildlife and plants. Again, money has already been expended on all of these outdoor spaces, and full use of these should be made, rather than spreading the available funds too thinly by having a further project.</p>
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**19<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

#60	<p>We are very supportive of this application. The volunteering opportunities alone are worth supporting for this wonderful project and these opportunities will only grow as the project grows.</p> <p>The larder is a brilliant asset for our village, helping those that need help but also going a long way to stop food wastage and therefore helping the planet which is something I feel very passionately about.</p> <p>The other parts of the project that have been suggested in the application will make it a space where people can enjoy nature and also meet with friends and family and really enjoy the space that is essentially waste ground. A huge asset for our lovely village.</p> <p></p> <p>We hope this public consultation will deliver a positive outcome for Lochhead Gardens and prove that this is something that the villagers want and will be of benefit to many.</p>
#61	<p>I wish to express my support for the Lochhead Gardens proposal. Having read the Project Plan and other documents available it seems like a good addition to village amenities with potential advantages for everyone in the community.</p> <p>The possible benefits are already demonstrated at the Larder. People come to see what produce is available, but, just as important, there is lots of social interaction and good chat when the Larder is open. Being a flat site in the heart of the village it is accessible for all. People of all ages come in and have a bit of a chat in passing, even if they don't actually want anything from the Larder.</p> <p>The Larder is also of benefit to the volunteers and Duke of Edinburgh Scheme students who help out there. Again, a good mix of young and older people, working together.</p> <p>Of course the Larder is only one small part of what is envisaged for the area and there would be many more opportunities for people to become involved as the rest of the site is developed for the enjoyment of all with many different projects already suggested.</p>

Lochwinnoch is very fortunate to have the chance to use this space for the benefit of all in the village and I very much hope the application is approved.

**20<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

#62 Renfrewshire Council should adopt the policy applied by Knowsley Council, England to community groups and speculative approaches for asset transfer. They state - “ the Council does not invite speculative approaches for asset transfer. There is a need to demonstrate a sustainable business plan.”

Lochwinnoch Community Development Trust have not demonstrated a sustainable business plan. They are entirely dependent on funds from charities. There is no guarantee this funding will continue especially in the present economic crisis. There is a possibility that their organisation could fail and be liquidated. There have been 28 officers and 21 resignations indicative of a failing organisation.

Their business plan lacks a track record of delivering services. Like many organisations dependent on grant funding they don't properly budget and take time to consider if money is being carefully spent. This is in contrast to the cautious approach people take when they are budgeting for themselves from their own money. As an example they paid £9,200 to pay for soil testing and community consultation costs including paying a professional garden designer. This expenditure is ridiculously high. There was no need for a professional designer. Amateur gardeners could easily have drawn up basic plans.

Their “ Empire building” mindset includes an intention of working towards community buyout of some of the farm and peat lands in Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park.

Why do they want to do this? How will it benefit the community?

On the website in Companies House under the heading Nature of Business they list

- 1- growing vegetables, melons, roots and tubers - this aim may have been met .
- 2- Production of electricity - this has not happened.
- 3 - Water collection and supply - this has not happened.

When Struthers Lemonade Factory ceased to trade there was talk of a local takeover of the bore hole and of being able to supply water to another lemonade business. However unsurprisingly this never happened.

If the asset transfer is granted Lochwinnoch will lose the potential of an ideal site well placed for a care home and for sheltered housing being all on the flat and accessible by anyone disabled.

LCDT should update Companies House with an accurate Nature of Business list and delete the electricity and water references which are not applicable.

LCDT also aim to buy the vacant Church of Scotland building. Apparently their aim is to provide an indoor space for villagers. This makes no economic sense.

There are currently ample indoor spaces in Lochwinnoch .They include the council owned McKillop Institute, the Primary School, the Annexe and also Lochwinnoch Golf Club, Bowling Club where a room can be rented cheaply.

If LCDT purchased the church building they would also take over all the further running costs, maintenance, heating and insurance. Yet more costs for them to pay although they would be seeking the funding from a charity.

**21<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

#63	<p>I write in support of LCDT's application for a CAT of Lochhead Gardens. The project is delivering, and has huge further potential, social, economical and environmental benefits and will transform a nature depleted post industrial landscape.</p> <p>The benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Economic support to citizens of Lochwinnoch and beyond in the current cost of living crisis.</li><li>• A focus for community volunteering and community cohesion with opportunities for young people - kids nature play, youth groups and school engagement</li><li>• Redistribute food which would otherwise go to landfill</li><li>• Proposed market stalls would provide additional business opportunities for local shops and producers</li><li>• Garden redesign and improvements would improve amenity, connection with nature and biodiversity in the village</li><li>• Provide an area for local people to grow their own food reducing carbon footprint/plastic packaging/food miles</li><li>• Provide an area for learning, education and awareness raising around food growing</li><li>• Improve the health &amp; wellbeing of the gardens users and neighbours.</li></ul> <p>The LCDT Garden's development would help realise the United Nations sustainable development goals and The Scottish Government's strategic objectives on making Scotland wealthier and fairer, safer and stronger, healthier, greener and smarter.</p>
#64	<p>This email it to confirm my support of the community asset transfer application for a 10-year lease of Lochhead Gardens</p>
#65	<p>I agree with the LCDT plans for the site; I wish LCDT to take over development of the site; I agree the site should be open to purchase by LCDT.</p> <p>This could be a valuable community asset.</p>
#66	<p>The Larder benefits myself (and others) greatly by providing every day necessities as well as items not normally available within the village. As someone on benefits with no personal form of transport, who struggles to make ends meet, the larder has provided me with fresh fruit and vegetables which has previously been a privilege. As well as this, it has been a huge stress relief knowing I will have a hot meal to look forward to at night. Knowing the larder has a permanent place within the village would provide a sense of security for us all, but especially those struggling.</p>
#67	<p>I am writing on behalf of the Lochwinnoch Force For Nature group and what I say below has been endorsed by our Committee</p> <p>We have looked at the proposed plans produced by the Lochwinnoch Community Development Trust and <b>support the Community Asset Transfer application</b>. Not only are there significant benefits to wildlife already 'built in', we will help to maximise any other opportunities. The site also lends itself admirably to show people wildlife and hold events and workshops to a very wide variety of people.</p>
#68	<p>I am writing to express my support for the application by Lochwinnoch Community Development Project for the Community Asset Transfer of the area at Lochhead Avenue. I understand the application is for a 10-year lease with option to buy.</p> <p>LCDT activities on the site have already enhanced the attraction of Lochwinnoch and their vision for the site is excellent. I have carefully scrutinised the application and looked at</p>

	<p>the plans too and I have no hesitation in fully supporting their application for a 10-year lease.</p> <p>I am a regular visitor to the site [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] is also a volunteer at the Larder. With an outdoor nature-based activities group based there (for 12 and under, I think) as well as home-schooled groups visiting regularly, there is a very wide range of people using the site. This can only get better as the plans come to fruition. It will become a great focus for all the villagers and visitors to the village</p>
#69	<p>I should like to support the above Asset Transfer request.</p> <p>I have a particular interest in the objective within the development for the provision of space for local groups. I am involved presently with the [REDACTED] an all inclusive group which will need a regular meeting space. A location within the Lochhead Garden Development would be ideal, and having the space within the control of the Community Development Trust would ensure that it best served the needs of the community and would be affordable.</p>
#70	<p>I am writing in support of the lease of the Lochhead Gardens to the LCDT.</p> <p>This initiative is extremely valuable to the community, as it engenders opportunities for community-led support and wellbeing.</p> <p>The larder is an asset to the community, tackling ongoing food insecurity in a dignified manner, whilst reducing food waste, packaging and costs with transportation.</p> <p>It promotes community connection and awareness and understanding of the links between food and healthy lifestyle choices.</p> <p>Several projects for the benefit of the community are emerging from the approach, supporting those struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, as well as promoting volunteering and skill development towards employability.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>The project is a flagship of best practice and has been receiving high levels of support not only by local residents but also by funders.</p> <p>If this project is not allowed continuation, the Council will need to provide extra support for those in the village that have no other resort.</p>
#72	<p>I am writing in full support for the CAT request for this area of ground.</p> <p>The team have already achieved a lot with the Larder facility, starting from scratch, helping maintain food dignity and providing a real asset to the village.</p>

	<p>It also provides a place for volunteers and customers to meet and chat and exchange friendship and information.</p> <p>The garden plans will allow expansion and diversification of their services to the community which will be good for everyone.</p>
#73	<p>Whilst LCDT have fair proposals I am of the view that the ground should be used to meet the housing needs of the village which are priority.</p> <p>There is a lack of sheltered housing for our older people and very sheltered housing or supported accommodation for younger adults.</p> <p>The location of the ground is central to village amenities and on flat ground.</p> <p>Investment in this type of housing should be considered as a spend to save development for the Council. Savings on care home and residential care costs are substantial.</p> <p>Additionally there is opportunity to build social housing with options to rent to buy affording economic opportunity for our local people</p> <p>The village requires to maintain it's community as much as possible.</p> <p>The LCDT proposals duplicate amenities that the village already has apart from the community larder which can easily be relocated within the village.</p> <p>The Council has a duty to effectively manage resources to meet local community priorities.</p>
#74	<p>As local business owners , we think this project will be great for the village and it will make good use of a piece of ground which has been neglected for a long time.</p> <p>The community has already benefited from the Larder and from other local group events that have been held there</p>
#75	<p>I fully support the application for the Community Asset Transfer of the space at Lochhead Gardens to the Lochwinnoch Community Development Trust, due to the tremendous improvements they have made to this community space. It was once a boggy useless piece of waste land and an off-putting eye-sore in an otherwise attractive village. It has transformed into a vital community space with many useful projects in operation, all of which have positive impacts on the local population.</p> <p>It is most obviously the site of the community larder, and its location within the Gardens is very helpful, as it's a central location with purpose built facilities. It is visible to passers by, but it's also a calm and peaceful space. Having the larder available to all comers means that those that depend on it do not feel singled out for charity and it normalises giving away unsaleable food to those who wish to be environmentally conscious no matter their economic circumstances. Importantly it provides a place for people to chat across all social/economic divides and unites the community in common goals. It fosters a sense of community and supports the creation of social networks, which is sorely needed in these times. For those like myself who have volunteered in the post-covid era it provides a safe option to be sociable again and for those who have been ill or unemployed due to covid, it is a place to regain social skills and work skills that had to be shelved in uncertain times.</p> <p>So many local groups have been able to use the space at Lochhead gardens, to grow fresh food and teach people to grow their food in their own backyards, events to promote biodiversity and the importance of wildflowers. Lochwinnoch Primary School and the local Toddler group have made visits to the space and the Lochwinnoch Feel Good festival has held fun community events. Many high schoolers from Lochwinnoch, striving for their Duke of Edinburgh awards, have been able to do a lot of community work in the gardens.</p>

	<p>Of high importance is Wildcare, run by Evie Jackson, which is a wonderful space devoted to nature based play and learning for many pre-school children as well at holiday clubs. It's wonderful that this has been established in a safe space within the village, meaning that children do not have to cross busy roads or be ferried about in cars to embrace nature.</p> <p>I have heard of many possible projects that the LCDT can foster in this space that would be wonderful for locals, such as an Arts Hub, Mens Shed, therapy spaces and I hope to see more community events held there in future. This space is the equivalent of the 'village square' that we don't presently have. It's a good size that allows lots of people to use it but also feel like they're allowed to use a square of it for themselves and share what's on offer. There are many creative people in the village who have been able to shine and share their skills as a direct result of this space being made available to them.</p> <p>I feel like so much positive impact has been made on the village and its inhabitants, by the activities at the Lochhead Gardens, as a support to many people, those in economic need, a healthy outlet for those with spare time, skills and hobbies, a place to be active and social, and a place where all people are welcomed. So much more can be achieved by these motivated, hardworking people of the LCDT, who have put so much effort, if they are given the opportunity.</p>
#76	<p>I am writing to give my support for the application for the Community asset transfer at Lochhead Gardens.</p> <p>I think that the space will continue to benefit the local community and give the opportunity for many to be involved, in growing their own food, benefiting from the fruit trees, and with the option to have a social space that can be used for various groups.</p>

**23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023**

#77	<p>As a resident of Lochwinnoch I have positive feedback and also some concerns to raise.</p> <p>In terms of positive it is good to see a group coming together with the intention of supporting the village and the environment and making some use of what has been an unused piece of waste land for some time.</p> <p>Concerns about the plans are:</p> <p>&gt; Sustainability of the group - currently from communications shared it appears to be a group of volunteers delivering the various initiatives and maintaining the site. I am concerned that individual circumstances or appetite for a project change and therefore significant concern for the viability of this longer term plan. I understand the application is by the trust however again are they a viable and sustainable group to take this forward. Others have commented about lack of transparency or progress with past initiatives. Work is needed to build confidence and backing for this project to ensure the wider community supports. There are very mixed views and again negative feedback in terms of the consultation process which seems to be lacking and particularly with groups and businesses more directly impacted.</p> <p>&gt; Funding - this seems to have progressed from recycling waste food to branching into many different initiatives however relying on grants and most recently asking villagers to donate to a Go fund me page to cover the expenses of "volunteers". Presumably for this to be agreed Renfrewshire council are carrying out due diligence to ensure the group can self fund / secure funds for the time suggested (10 years)?</p>
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	<p>&gt; Maintenance of the site - volunteers have removed a lot of the greenery that was previously shielding the eye from what is an unsightly area and now this is on full view to passers by. There is no adequate storage facility for items that are stacked and somewhat unsightly for what was previously a green space. Presumably this extension of use would require adequate and ongoing formal management of the site beyond relying on volunteers?</p> <p>&gt; Wider use proposed in terms of markets and events. I agree with all other objection emails that there are other building and green spaces in the village that would benefit from the income generated, already have suitable licences and insurance (presumably) and therefore why distract and reduce the viability of those already established businesses.</p> <p>&gt; Parking - Lochhead Avenue is not the place for multiple cars and the activities have already increased the car traffic to this area. Market stalls and day or evening events could not be managed safely in this current space.</p> <p>Overall, despite seeing the positive and negatives of the project I object to the longer term asset transfer of the site on the basis of lack of infrastructure in and around the site to support the initiatives being proposed.</p>
#78	<p>I am writing on behalf of the Local Energy Action Plan (LEAP), in my role as Charity Manager, in support of the Community Asset Transfer request by Lochwinnoch Community Development Trust for Lochhead Gardens in Lochwinnoch. We are a Lochwinnoch based charity and LCDT allow us to locate our Community Larder at the site which redistributes surplus food waste from supermarkets allowing dignified food access. The Larder currently has 1049 service users representing 409 households, a figure which rises daily. Most of our members are from our local community of Lochwinnoch, with roughly a third coming from across Renfrewshire as well as North Ayrshire, bringing significant footfall into the village. Lochwinnoch is a rural area and this causes difficulty for low income households as they are more disconnected from the support services available in urban areas; The nearest Food Bank is ten miles away and the public transport links are poor. This is a challenge for rural areas where deprivation can often be overlooked due to lower population numbers.</p> <p>We are often visited by more than 100 households in a single opening and open four days per week, delivering parcels on a fifth day. The volume of people accessing the Larder is growing all the time as more people require support with food security to supplement their groceries due to the rising cost of living. Since the 31st of December 2022 to the end of February we have redistributed 7.52 tonnes of surplus food.</p> <p>In May 2022 we surveyed our service users about how it changed their local shopping habits. 49 households representing c150 individuals responded to the survey. This was around half of our membership at that time.</p> <p><b>Prior to using the larder, where did you do most of your shopping?</b> 89.8% of respondents said Supermarkets Outside the Village and 10.2% said Small Local Shops</p> <p>We followed up with:</p> <p><b>Now that you use the larder, where do you do most of your shopping?</b> 67.3% of respondents said Supermarkets Outside the Village, 20.4% said Small Local Shops, 12.2% said the Larder.</p> <p>This demonstrates that the Larder is having a positive effect on the local economy even before the consideration of the extra footfall it brings into the village and we have strong relationships and partnerships with many local businesses and retailers. LEAP also employs</p>



	<p>five staff who support Larder operations to a varying extents, all of whom live locally, which is another demonstration of the positive impact it has on the Lochwinnoch economy.</p> <p>The Larder is about more than just the food - it is a welcoming space for people who often come for a cup of tea and some human contact. The Larder welcomes all people regardless of their circumstances in line with guidance for Dignified Food Provision and has become an intergenerational meeting place where diverse groups connect. There is something powerful in the relationships which are formed across social boundaries in this space.</p> <p>Our Larder project engages more than 70 volunteers of all ages. Providing meaningful volunteering opportunities is an important part of what we do. We support teenagers working towards their Duke of Edinburgh Awards with Saturday shifts at the Larder. This is the only place within the village where young volunteers access these types of opportunities. Our Volunteer Team reflects the diversity within our village and we engage volunteers for a number of different reasons; Some are looking to improve their employability; others are retirees looking for social connections and purpose; many are there for the environmental benefits and altruism. Together they all experience a sense of reward from helping to deliver this project on the ground, within the community</p>
#79	<p>It has been amazing to see how LCDT has transformed what was an unused and unloved site into a lovely outdoor community hub, and the plans that they have would surely benefit the whole village.</p> <p>I am absolutely behind the Larder that operates at the site and use it occasionally. Saving food from going to waste by giving freely to anyone who needs it is a great thing. I'm sure that a wee chat with the volunteers, who are all such lovely people, brightens up many larder users day.</p> <p>As an outdoor space the site is unlike any other in the area, and although I understand the need for housing in the village, I think this particular site is too valuable to sacrifice. It is a fantastic place for the children. Mine have been attending the Wildcard which operates at the site, and also we have been volunteering there with the whole family, helping to shape up the garden and vegetable beds. Opposed to the play park and loch, this site is full of activities for children; mud kitchen, trees to climb, stones to turn, bushes to explore. And they are learn so much about caring for nature and growing their own food. Most importantly though, the fence around the site helps to keep a clear boundary within which it is safe for the children to explore.</p> <p>All this together creates a lovely community space, and I truly wish it will remain this way.</p>
#80	<p>I would like to lodge my full support for the application by LCDT for the 10 year lease at Lochhead Gardens. I agree that the site should be open to purchase by LDCT.</p> <p>I believe this would be a fantastic project which will enhance life in our village and support other initiatives in our area</p>
#81	<p>I agree with the LCDT plans for the site;</p> <p>I wish LCDT to take over development of the site;</p> <p>I agree the site should be open to purchase by LCDT.</p>
#82	<p>I write with my full support for the Lochhead Avenue, Lochwinnoch CAT Request. I support this, not only due to the way the site is currently being used, but, with its future potential in mind.</p>

	<p>The Lochhead Avenue site currently provides a central, easily accessible, safe space within Lochwinnoch for a number of well established community projects and is a huge asset to the village.</p> <p>Having moved to Lochwinnoch under 2 years ago, we have been made to feel very welcome whenever we have visited Lochhead gardens, whether that be to make use of the community larder, to visit Evie's Wildcare during the Feel Good Festival, or to meet friends at the site to let our children play. This safe, enclosed space is the perfect location for a wide variety of family and community based activities. The site provides a valuable, social green space which, going forward, has huge potential for increased usage for, for example, regular community gatherings, outdoor playgroups, expansion of childcare services and regular food markets and fayres.</p>
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**24 March 2023**

#83	<p>I am a resident in Lochwinnoch and writing to offer my support for the LCDT CAT of Lochhead Gardens. I do not use the larder nor a member of LCDT. My support is given for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group who have voluntarily managed this space have done a fantastic job. They have taken a derelict site in the heart of the village and turned it into a lovely, community area.</li> <li>• Since the LCDT has taken over the site, the whole village seems to be thriving. Two new cafe's have opened (annexe and Route 767), as well as a new bakery and sustainable products shop. There is enough capacity for all of these businesses.</li> <li>• It is important the site is not turned from green to grey via new buildings etc. The LCDT plans include new greenery and a natural feel, which are in keeping with the space and promote health/well-being.</li> <li>• The plans will specifically support the most vulnerable and deprived by offering them food and a space to meet without stigma. With Scotland's stalling life expectancy and widening health inequalities, incentives like these are required.</li> </ul>
#84	<p>I agree with the LCDT plans for the site;</p> <p>I wish LCDT to take over development of the site;</p> <p>I agree the site should be open to purchase by LCDT.</p>