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Community Facilities in Rural Scotland: A Study of Their Use, Provision and Condition



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COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN RURAL SCOTLAND: A STUDY OF THEIR USE, PROVISION AND CONDITION

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Scottish Government Social Research
2008

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are indebted to those individuals and groups who have given their time and thoughts to enable an evidence-base to be built on the condition, management and potential of rural community buildings in Scotland.

In particular, as a project team, we would like to thank:

- those who helped with the survey pilot;
- those who took the time and effort to respond to the main survey;
- the management committees who agreed for their community facility to be used as a case-study in this research and to all case-study participants who took part either individually, attended meetings and sent on documentation after the visit; and
- those who agreed to be interviewed from a range of funding and advice organisations across Scotland.

This research would not have been possible without your contributions and honesty, as well as your wide-ranging suggestions.

Our sincere thanks.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Rural community facilities (RCFs) are local assets which serve as central points or “hubs”, and as venues for service provision, from within and outwith the community, sometimes providing for the co-location of multiple services. The main aims of this commissioned research were to gather and analyse data on the current provision and condition of rural community facilities and to assess the levels and nature of their use.

2. A combination of desk-based and primary research was undertaken to meet these aims. This included a review of relevant literature; updating an existing database of main contact for RCFs; and primary research to gather information on various aspects of RCF and to explore their role in the delivery of a range of activities in a community and economic sustainability of RCFs. The primary research consisted of a postal survey of RCF contacts, completed by 322 respondents; interviews with nine funders and advisers; and detailed case studies of six facilities, which included in-depth interviews with committee and other community members.

3. SCVO (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations) collaborated on the project with the Scottish Government, providing information and an initial database of RCF contacts. The research was undertaken by a team led by researchers from the Scottish Agricultural College, shortly after the launch of Rural Direct under Scotland’s Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (SRDP).¹ The findings on information-sources and sources of funding should be seen in that context.

The condition and maintenance of the buildings

4. Two-thirds of the surveyed facilities are more than fifty years old and almost two-thirds reported that they require improvements, to make them “fit for purpose” or to comply with legislation. Rising fuel costs inevitably increase running costs for the buildings. The main source of fuel for two-thirds of surveyed buildings was electricity, with oil used by one-fifth. A minority have renewable energy installations and less than half have energy conservation measures. Surveyed premises were more likely to be adapted for people with mobility problems than for those with hearing or sight disabilities. The research found that a high proportion of buildings had unsatisfactory or unsuitable physical fabric, and high running costs associated with the energy forms used and poor energy efficiency.

Ownership and location

5. Four-fifths of surveyed facilities are owned by the local community; less than one fifth are owned by a local authority, which may have implications for how buildings are managed (and perceived) by the local community.

¹ Rural Direct offers advice, across rural Scotland, on funding sources and how to access them. The findings on sources of information and funding and advice, therefore, refer to the situation before the full operational establishment of Rural Direct.

6. As well as understanding local needs, committees need to be aware of their proximity to other service venues and providers that could complement or compete with them and the implications this has for business planning and their longer-term sustainability.

Management committees and governance

7. The majority of committees meet at least quarterly, but 25% meet only once or twice a year. The majority of committees have difficulty in recruiting and retaining volunteers for the management and running of the facility. Survey respondents expressed concern at the 'amount of red tape' experienced in relation to risk assessments, energy audits and health and safety audits, for example.

8. Less than one fifth of respondent committees had prepared a business plan in the past five years and two-thirds had no budget preparation year-on-year. Almost one third of respondents reported that their facility has a budget deficit. Virtually no committees had received training in business planning, management or governance in the past year; less than one-fifth had been to workshops, conferences or networking events. This finding supports a general perception amongst those involved in RCFs and stakeholders that the longer term sustainability of many facilities presents a considerable challenge and raises the issue of where there may be unidentified or unmet needs for capacity-building, especially given the increased pressure for strategic business planning from potential funders.

9. Over three quarters had received funds from one to five funding sources in the last five years. The biggest funders were local authorities and the National Lottery; funding is also available through the Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP), including LEADER.

10. The findings suggest that RCF committees might benefit from better and more readily available support and advice, of a consistent standard, particularly in relation to: energy conservation and renewables; legislation and regulatory responsibilities; business and budget planning; and the evaluation of their potential to be multi-service outlets where appropriate.

Use of facilities

11. Surveyed facilities served a wide age-range of people: over three-quarters were used by young and elderly people; more than half provided a venue for parents and toddlers.

12. A principal purpose of the facilities surveyed was to provide a venue for community activities. Less than one-fifth were used for public services (such as a library, local authority services, a post office, a GP surgery or other health services). Given the Scottish Government's 2008 report *Delivering for Remote & Rural Health*² and 2007 Action Plan *Better Health, Better Care*,³ and findings from this research on current use, there may be scope for innovative ways of providing greater access to

² <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/05/06084423/0>

³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/12/11103453/0>

health services through these buildings. It may be worthwhile considering whether there could or should be greater partnership between public sector service providers and rural community facilities.

Sharing of best practice for RCFs in Scotland

13. Despite the considerable challenges to their ongoing sustainability that many rural community facilities are facing, there are plentiful (and often unrecognised) examples of good practice and imaginative approaches to finding solutions to those challenges. Further consideration should be given on how to successfully:

- share experiences and advice in relation to the facilities' physical condition and maintenance;
- provide assistance, guidance and templates in relation to their administrative and regulatory responsibilities;
- share experiences of how management committees could be encouraged to build on their existing "catchments" through, perhaps, more diverse service delivery, for health, education or governance;
- share good practice on better engagement with the wider community.

1 INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

Background

1.1. Rural community facilities (RCFs) are local assets which serve as central points or “hubs”, and as venues for service provision, from within and outwith the community, sometimes providing for the co-location of multiple services. In June 2007, as part of its *Halls for All* campaign, the SCVO lodged a petition with the Scottish Parliament, which called for greater central government support for village halls and other community buildings and for comprehensive research to establish a baseline of information about village halls in Scotland that will inform the debate on the best ways of supporting them.

1.2. This research was a core element of the Scottish Government response to the petition, reflecting the recognition that there was a lack of good understanding of the provision, condition and usage of community facilities and their importance in rural areas. The Scottish Government was also pleased to facilitate a summit on community facilities organised by SCVO in February 2008, in Aviemore. The event was well attended by people involved in the use and management of community facilities, including volunteers, staff, local government, and representatives of other agencies and relevant bodies.⁴

1.3. For the purposes of this project, rural community facilities were defined as facilities that are owned or managed by the community or voluntary sector and which provide a wide range of leisure, health, social and cultural services for all residents of the community. They are often regarded as essential for modern living, provide important focal points for the local community and are frequently critical for the less advantaged or mobile in society.

Aims and objectives of the project

1.4. The project had two general aims: to gather and analyse data on the current provision and condition of rural community facilities (RCFs) and to assess the levels and the nature of usage of these buildings across rural Scotland. To meet its aims, the objectives of the project were to:

- update contacts information held by Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) for a database of community buildings in rural Scotland;
- explore advice and support services available to committees running community facilities;
- investigate sources and levels of funding for RCFs;
- establish baseline information on use, income, management, insurance, condition, energy efficiency and heating;
- investigate the different uses of community buildings and their importance to the delivery of a range of activities, including health improvement;
- critically review the economic sustainability and value of multi-service facilities compared to those with a single focus and purpose.

⁴ See the SCVO website for a report on this event:
www.scvo.org.uk/VillageHalls/NewsAndEvents/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=891&al=t&from=Home

Community facilities in rural life: findings from a review of literature and data

1.5. To build up an understanding of RCFs, the first phase of the project involved a review of published literature and existing data. The findings from this showed that, rural community facilities (RCFs) are typically described in one of two ways. Firstly, as community assets which act as central points or “hubs” for communities, allowing for inclusion of sometimes disparate sectors of the community. Secondly, as hubs for service provision from both within and outwith the community, for example allowing for the (co)location of multiple services under a single roof. The latter aspect of service provision is significant given the higher (than urban) cost per head for service provision in rural areas (due to sparse and dispersed populations) coupled with the decline in rural service provision witnessed over recent years.

1.6. Given the perceived social centrality of community buildings, their potential to “house” combinations of rural service provision, and at the very least function as meeting places through which to overcome potential isolation and reinforce community cohesion, an SCVO 2001 survey provided some important insights as to key issues facing Scotland’s RCFs. The main findings were:

- (i) that there were an estimated 3,000-plus community buildings in Scotland (excluding community of interest buildings)
- (ii) less than half of respondents reported that the halls had good external structures and roofs, and over one third had at least one internal facility ‘inadequate for purpose’
- (iii) nearly all used costly, inefficient and unreliable night storage heating
- (iv) half had incomes of less than £5,000 a year
- (v) one third were not registered charities, and only 6% were set up as companies limited by guarantee
- (vi) 60% didn’t have a written policy on health and safety, and one third on equal opportunities
- (vii) one third were not insured under reinstatement cover, 50% under employer’s liability, and 10% for public liability
- (viii) nearly half did not have full disabled access and 20% could not be reached by public transport

1.7. The SCVO report also focussed on “hall management capacity” for managing change – both at an operational level and in terms of more strategic thinking, planning and acting:

These findings highlight the extent of investment required, but equally so the need for a strategic approach not only by the committees themselves but in partnership with external agencies in order to enable these buildings to be utilised for the benefit of their communities. Some communities have successfully tackled these problems and the case studies summarise the lessons drawn from such initiatives. (2001, p.4)

The Charity Commission for England and Wales has explored what are the ingredients for a successful village hall:⁵

Box 1.1. Attributes of a successful village hall or community centre. Source: Charity Commission for England and Wales.

As a general rule, active, vibrant governance and an active, vibrant village hall or community centre go hand in hand. Our research revealed a clearly identifiable link between the ability of village hall and community centre charities to attract users, their ability to attract trustees and other volunteers, and their ability to generate funding. Many of the successful charities we identified had a 'cradle to grave' policy of offering something for everyone. The charities that thrive are those in which trustees are pro-active in understanding their responsibilities and in ensuring that their charity provides activities that meet local needs.

Our research shows that a successful village hall or community centre charity usually has:

- A governing document that is workable and up-to-date, containing provisions for everything that the trustees need to do.
- A trustee body that is diverse, knows the extent of its role, responsibilities and powers and presents potential new trustees with a realistic picture of what is involved.
- A building that meets legislative requirements and that can facilitate a range of activities.
- An effective means of communicating and consulting with the local community to ensure that its needs and interests are understood and that the community knows about the charity's activities and plans.
- A funding regime that is sustainable and diverse enough to allow trustees sufficient flexibility to direct their activities in accordance with local needs and interests.
- A strategic plan, however simple, that takes account of the impact of proposed changes on all aspects of the running of the charity.

1.8. A need for strategic planning is seen in the context of breaking the "dependency cycle" on external funding, short-term solutions and "fire-fighting". An alternative comprises systematic appraisal of the state, condition and potential of an RCF, and a plan for achieving goals within a timeframe. A range of funding sources makes up the resource-base, alongside funds from local rental to groups and individuals; these are viewed within a context of wider aims.

1.9. The SQW *Final Evaluation Report of the Scottish Land Fund* (2007) also highlights issues of capacity-building, strategic planning and management:

The stronger projects are characterised by good leadership and imagination... (funders) should promote and build on this imagination and confident leadership... There were many examples of those engaged in the projects developing softer skills such as negotiating, reaching consensus, managing meetings, delegating and leading, but also some practical skills such as designing communication materials, using spreadsheets, book-keeping, public speaking and project monitoring. (p.18 and p.32).

Policy context in Scotland in relation to rural community buildings

1.10. The wider context within which RCFs sit includes provision of services to rural areas. The 1995 White Paper on Rural Scotland included an audit of service

⁵ <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/rs9.asp#3> (accessed 10th July 2008)

provision in fifty locations, followed by the Rural Services Charter Checklist (1996)⁶, and formation of the Scottish National Rural Partnership to take forward the proposals of the White Paper. The *Rural Services Charter Checklist* stated that “rural communities expect to receive the same high quality services as their urban counterparts”⁷.

1.11. Other important initiatives include the *Local Government in Scotland Act (2003)*, which formed the statutory basis for Community Planning in Scotland and the Community Planning Partnership targets for 2008 (2005/2006); and *Closing the Opportunity Gap*, alongside Rural Service Priority Areas (RSPAs).

1.12. November 2007 saw the introduction of the Scottish Government Concordat and Single Outcome Agreements. In at least one local authority, a strategy of “rural proofing” has been introduced with the aim of ensuring that the potential effects of decisions, practices and policies do not have an adverse effect on rural communities of the local authority area.

1.13. In 2008, the Scotland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (SRDP) was launched, within which (i) Rural Priorities (in the Regional Proposal Assessment Committee [RPAC] Regions)⁸ and (ii) LEADER Local Action Group plans or programmes both provide potential for members of rural communities to apply for funding in connection with community facilities and services. The eleven RPACs each have Priorities, and the ones of relevance to RCFs are called *Thriving Rural Communities*. Rural communities can then submit proposals to the RPAC which take account of these.

Methods

1.14. The main research activities were: desk research; a postal survey of RCFs contacts; stakeholder interviews; and detailed case studies of six RCFs (see Appendix 2 for details of the approach used). The desk research comprised: a literature review of research into RCFs in the UK; a listing of RCFs in Scotland to update the SCVO contacts database; and an inventory of advice and support services and sources and levels of funding.

1.15. A draft postal survey was peer-reviewed and piloted with 29 respondents. The finalised survey (Appendix 3) was then sent, in August and September 2008, to all 861 contacts which had been identified for the RCF database⁹. The questionnaire covered: the building, its management, economic viability, usage and users, advice, support and training. Survey data were entered into SPSS. Data analysis included: descriptive statistics, recoding and creating new variables, investigating multi-purpose versus single focus, identifying statistically significant differences in the data, exploring regional differences, and analysis of textual data.

⁶ Scottish National Rural Partnership (1996) *Scottish Rural Charter Checklist* HMSO

⁷ <http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/scotoff/people/section6.htm>

⁸ SRDP Rural Development Contracts: Rural Priorities: (i) Axis 3, Option 7: Community Services & Facilities; (ii) Axis 3, Option 11: Collaborative Local Development Strategies

⁹ The overall response rate was 37% giving 322 responses. Conducting the survey over the summer months, when many committees do not meet, and many RCFs experience less use by the community, may have reduced the potential response rate.

1.16. Telephone interviews were conducted with nine organisations that provide advice, support services and/or funding to RCFs: The Big Lottery, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland, The Robertson Trust, Scottish Community Projects Fund, Community Energy Scotland, and local authorities. Topics included: advice and support; sources and levels of funding; possibilities for more joined-up funding; possibilities for (and challenges against) streamlining administrative processes; prospects to continue support; and possible new sources of funding. These interviews provided qualitative data, which were subject to Thematic Analysis.

1.17. Six RCF case studies were conducted, three each in the Highland and Forth RPAC Regions. Two case study RCFs were also selected for further analysis of building condition. The format for meetings was governed by a standard 'topic guide' which ensured consistency of topics between cases, whilst allowing for flexibility reflecting the type of consultee (management committee, user-group representative, community representative, private sector representative) and their issues and concerns.

2 FINDINGS: CONDITION, USES AND SUSTAINABILITY

Introduction

2.1 The findings in this chapter are presented according to the main themes of the research: RCF state and condition, governance and management, economic sustainability, the nature of use and RCF users. For each of these themes, the findings from the postal survey are presented first (with relevant question numbers), before the findings from the six case studies are outlined. Following this, regional variation in the survey findings is outlined, giving first the descriptive observations followed by any statistically significant differences between regions. The postal survey was sent to 861 unique contacts, and responses were received from 322 RCFs, giving a response rate of 37%.

2.2 Table 2.1 shows the percentage of 322 responses¹⁰ to the postal survey from each RPAC regions:

Table 2.1. Responses received by RPAC

RPAC Region	Percentage ¹¹ of responses from each RPAC Region
Argyll	6.3
Ayrshire	1.1
Borders	10.5
Clyde Valley	3.2
Dumfries and Galloway	12.6
Forth	9.8
Grampian	17.9
Highland	17.9
Northern Isles	3.9
Tayside	13.3
Western Isles	3.5

2.3 Roughly equal numbers of RCFs were less (51.1%), or more (48.9%) than 30 minutes' drive from a town with at least 10,000 people (Q5). Almost two-thirds (63.9%) could be "easily reached" by public transport (Q17). Almost one-fifth (18.7%) reported having no venue within a 10-mile radius that provided similar facilities (Q4), and 80% of RCFs did have a venue providing similar facilities within 10 miles. Statistically significant differences included:

- Buildings that do not have a shop were likely to be closer to a similar venue, specifically they were more likely to be less than 10 miles from a similar venue; buildings that had a shop were more likely to be 10 miles or more from a similar venue (Q4 & Q6)
- Those buildings where there is never a GP surgery were most likely to be less than 10 miles to a similar venue; those buildings where there is a GP surgery every week were more likely to be 10 miles or more from a similar venue. (Q4 & Q59)

¹⁰ 322 responses comprises 303 (35%) from the main survey and 19 from the pilot survey

¹¹ Percentage of respondents who specified their local authority on the questionnaire as requested (285 out of 322).

Physical condition of RCFs

Survey findings

2.4 Almost two-thirds of RCFs were reported to be more than 50 years old (Q1, Table 2.2.). This is particularly relevant for timber framed and lined buildings where wet rot and woodworm cause significant damage. Late Victorian structures will require re-roofing due to nail sickness and repairs to the rainwater disposal systems which are in most cases inadequate leading to damage to the fabric of the building. Sixty per cent of respondents suggested that their RCF required improvements, of which 31% related to compliance with legislation (31.1%; Q26) or to make them “fit for purpose” (60.9%; Q25). In addition, 52.3% stated that they had work planned for the future (Q24). Statistically significant differences with reference to the age of RCFs include:

- Buildings where commercial activities never happen or happen only less than monthly are likely to be older (pre-1945) than those buildings where commercial activities happen every month or every week, where the buildings are likely to be post-war. (Q1 & Q59).
- Buildings that do not have a shop are likely to be older – more likely to be pre-war; buildings that have a shop are more likely to be post war (Q1 & Q6)
- Buildings with three or four service providers using the building in an average week were likely to be newer buildings (post-war); those with two or less service providers using the building in an average week are likely to be older buildings – pre-1944. (Q1 & Q52)
- Buildings where there are other services (library, other LA services) being provided weekly or monthly are likely to be newer (post war) than those buildings (pre 1945) where services such as library or other LA services happen only less than monthly or never happen (Q1 & Q59)
- Those buildings where groups of people with disabilities use the building at least once a month, are more likely to have been built since 1945 (Q1 & Q55).
- Buildings with no disabled parking spaces are likely to be older (pre 1945) (Q1 & Q20).

Table 2.2. Date of construction

When built	Percentage
Pre 1900	32.7
1900-1944	31.1
1945-1999	28.8
2000 or later	7.4

2.5 The main fuel source for RCFs (Q7, Table 2.3.) was electricity (electrical panel, storage heaters or quartz type radiant heaters); this is probably due to trading-off the relatively low initial capital cost of installation versus the then often higher ongoing costs.

Table 2.3. Main fuel source

Main fuel source	Percentage
Mains gas	12.3
Electricity	61.2
Oil	21.1
Other	5.4

2.6 Further, 95.2% of RCFs did not have renewable energy installations (such as a wind turbine or solar panels) (Q9), with such options being utilised only in very recent projects. The RCFs were also asked if they have any energy conservation measures (Q10).

Table 2.4. Energy conservation measures

Energy conservation measure	Percentage
Double glazing installed	55
Draft proofing around windows and doors	41
Roof insulation	40
Low energy light fittings	31
Cavity wall insulation (recently built/upgraded)	20

2.7 Further, 59% of RCFs had no draft proofing around windows and doors and the majority of buildings appear to be poorly insulated, and thus a large proportion of the existing building stock could be improved. Only 31% of buildings have some form of low voltage light fittings; significant reduction in energy use could be gained for a reasonably low capital cost. Thus, although there may be a justifiable interest in renewable energy options, it is important to consider them in the context of ensuring energy conservation within RCFs.

2.8 The data in Table 4.5. suggest that there was much greater adaptation of RCF premises for those with mobility problems than for those with hearing or sight disabilities (Q12) - provision was very limited and action required in many cases, particularly in relation to emergency situations, for example, fire alarms or warning beacons. In most cases, efforts were being made to provide access to the buildings with the provision of ramps. The dimensions required by legislation relating to activity spaces has increased in the past few years and therefore a high proportion of disabled toilets may not meet these current standard.

2.9 When looking at the external facilities of RCFs, the findings show that 65.2% had no car parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities, 33.4% provided fewer than five, and 1.3% of halls provided more than five. Of course, these data are of limited use without knowing the size of the local population or, better, the number of local people with disabilities within the local population. However, it is possible to observe that about two-thirds of surveyed RCFs did not provide even one parking place reserved for disabled people.

Table 2.5. Provision for those with disabilities

Provision for those with disabilities	Percentage with provision
Are all internal areas accessible for people with mobility problems?	73.8
Does the building have measures to assist the partially sighted?	13.3
Are there measures to assist people with a hearing impairment?	19.5
Is there an accessible entrance for wheelchair users and pushchairs?	93.5

2.10 Respondents were presented with a list of rooms and facilities; 90% reported having between five and fourteen rooms, areas and facilities. This may be important when considering the multi-use, multi-service and single-use issues, in terms of the potential of RCFs' future income.

Table 2.6. Number of rooms and facilities

Number of rooms or facilities/areas	Percentage
Less than 5	6.6
5-9	63.3
10-14	26.9
15 or more	3.1

Six case studies: building size, design & flexibility

2.11 This section outlines the findings from the six case studies, in relation to building size, design and flexibility. The RCF features are summarised, and then detailed information of floor plans and RCF committees' decisions are provided for the six RCFs. A summary of the range of spaces in the six detailed case studies is given in Table 2.7. There was no great variation in the capacity of the buildings, with the smallest hall having a seating capacity 60 and the largest 180.

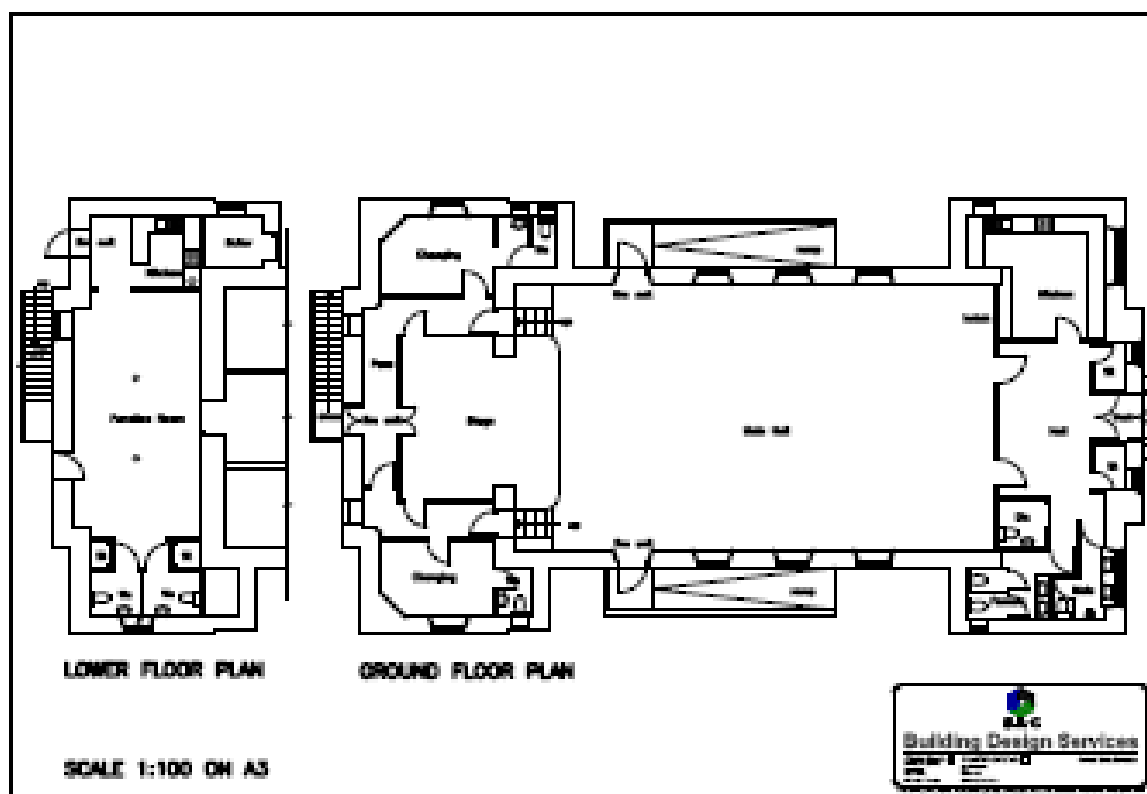
Table 2.7. Case studies' facilities and rooms for hire¹²

	H1	H2	H3	F1	F2	F3
Main hall capacity (seated)	60	80	100	180	120	80
Rooms for public hire	0	1	1	1	1	6
Main hall stage	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Kitchen	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Storage space	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Showers	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Accessible toilet	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dedicated office	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Dedicated dining area	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

2.12 F3 Community Centre's 'sports hall' is not used for sports as its floor level heating makes it unsafe. Neither is the hall considered suitable for functions, such as arts performances, due to the building material and design and because of the other two halls more suited to this purpose in the village. F2 Hall Resource Centre was considered ill-suited to sports such as football which might cause damage to windows, for example, in this listed building (see Figure 2.1.) The lower ground floor is largely un-used.

¹² H1, H2 and H3 are the three case study RCFs in Highland Region, and F1, F2 and F3 are the three case study RCFs in Forth Region.

Figure 2.1. F2 Hall resource centre floor plan

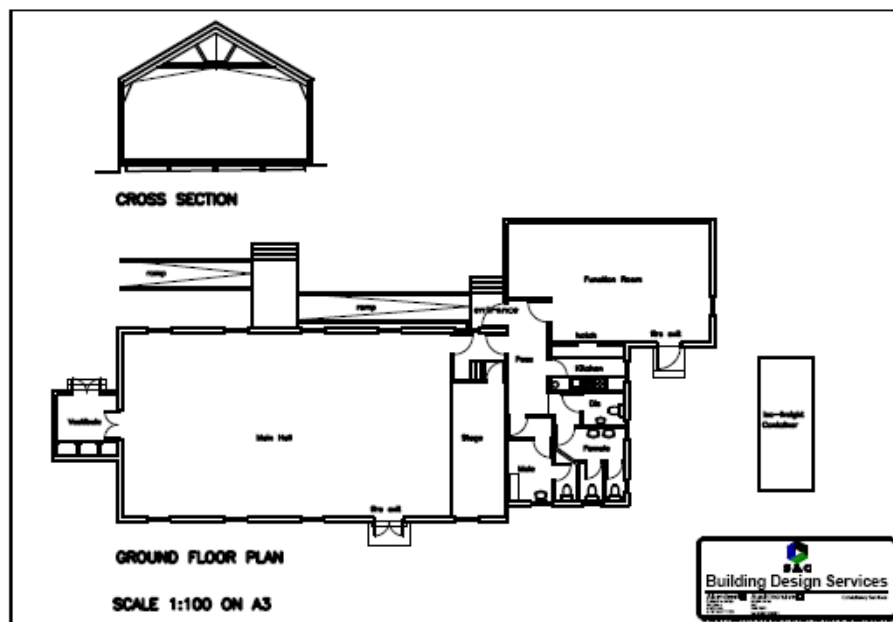


2.13 RCFs with more flexible spaces were more successful in attracting a wider range of uses. The combination of a meeting room suitable for private meetings, support groups, or service providers with a multi-purpose hall that could accommodate 'stage' performances, indoor sports, exhibitions, dances, and large meetings seemed to offer best 'value' for the community. H2 Community Hall was a good example of a flexible space enabled by its modern fittings – underfloor heating, demountable stage and chairs – in the main hall which created a safe, comfortable, quiet and flexible space. The general purpose meeting room also had fold-away tables and the hall had storage space of a size to enable these non-permanent fittings to be stowed away properly. H3 Public Hall and F1 Public Hall had a similar wide range of uses facilitated by the same combination of a large multi-purpose main hall and a flexible small hall. Both these facilities had invested in hard-core car parks in order to increase the versatility of the halls and make them attractive to more users. The age of the buildings meant, however, that insufficient storage space was available either for storage of chairs or for the 'equipment' of regular user-groups, such as mother and toddlers or the youth club (see Figure 2.2.).

2.14 All management bodies had lists of improvements planned for their buildings, and several had plans to increase the range of uses in the building. It was believed these improvements would enable the hall to attract more external groups and professional performers to the village. Whilst there was consensus that this was a good aspiration, "the structural things have always taken priority over anything like that". Whilst H2 Community Hall committee valued the flexibility of small hall, and

currently generated a reliable stand-alone income from its annual rent as an office, concerns over the permanence of this let and the frequent changes in its usage which compromised the office space, were behind plans to extend the building.

Figure 2.2. H3 Public Hall floor plan



2.15 Creating a dedicated meeting cum office space, with permanent tables, would release the current small hall for other income-generating activities, of which a café was currently being considered as a viable option. Thus whilst the flexibility of the small hall was currently being used to good effect, the need for flexibility and compromise was seen as a burden and constraint.

2.16 As part of the research project, a buildings expert visited two of the six case studies in order to carry out a more detailed assessment. The following two Boxes comprise a summary of the conditions and assessments¹³. These two examples are intended to illustrate the types and range of issues being faced by committees when they are considering maintenance of, and improvements to, the fabric and facilities of the RCFs.

¹³ The examples have been anonymised to preserve the confidentiality of the committees.

Box 2.1. Description of case study RCF one

BUILDING CASE STUDY ONE



Summary description of RCF:

- Located on elevated site adjacent to public roadway; large hardcore car park; rising ground with mixed woodland at rear.
- Built circa 1937. Timber suspended floor on masonry substructure, timber framed walls, timber external doors, white pvc-u double glazed casement windows.
- Pitched roof. Ceiling lining between trusses plasterboard; presence of insulation to roof structure is unknown.
- The main hall excluding stage area is approx. 14.7m long x 8.3m wide with an eaves and apex height of approx. 3.5m and 6.0m respectively.
- Entry via original vestibule at end; single glazed timber double doors leading to stepped access or via door leading to extension; level access from winding concrete ramp complete with handrails and kerb down to road level.
- Kitchen and sanitary facilities for male, female and disabled.
- Extension (approx. 9.0m long x 5.3m wide and ceiling height 2.3m) constructed in mid 1970's; timber framed walls; flat roof.
- Fire alarm system: break glass points and sounders. Fire fighting equipment: fire extinguishers, fire blanket and hose reel.
- Water supply connected to mains?
- Foul drainage to septic tank located in woodland on opposite side of roadway.
- Heating main hall: Radiant type heaters at high level part-operated on standard meter and part on coin-operated meter. Small hall: portable electric panel heaters. Sanitary accommodation: electric and frost-stat heaters.
- Fluorescent type fittings with safety cover in main hall and spot type task lighting; pendant and fluorescent type luminaries. Switched socket outlets.

Assessment:

- Generally building is in reasonable condition with investment made in the mid 1990's to improve roof covering, floor to main hall, windows, etc. The building would benefit from a number of improvements including:
 - Main timber structure may be in need of repair / replacement and investigation should be carried out to establish the presence of rot at

low level in particular. Lack of insulation is also of concern and will have an impact on running costs.

- Sanitary accommodation benefit from significant upgrade with renewal of all white goods, plumbing and electrical services; some of existing electrical fittings appear dated. Floor and wall finishes also require upgrading with more hygienic / easily washable surfaces utilised.
- Fire alarm system benefit from upgrade: fire detection with smoke / heat detectors installed linked to fire panel, including visual beacons.
- Cleaner's cupboard would be great benefit.
- The dimensions of the existing disabled toilet fractionally smaller than the recommendation in the current Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations and no grab rails or alarm system were installed.
- There is however no provision of specific facilities for partially sighted or those with a hearing impairment, e.g. tactile surfaces, hearing loop.
- The existing flat roof to the small hall may require renewal and alternatives to felt should be looked at.
- The high ground level at the rear of the property as well as minimal ground drainage is of concern; sub-floor ventilation should be checked.
- External decoration to protect the building fabric has been carried out a low level; should also be carried out at the more inaccessible areas.
- A number of the double glazed units appear to have failed and one window frame was damaged beyond repair.
- Lack of storage evident within the main hall with very limited space available below stage and in cupboards off entrance vestibule. This may be a particular problem when there are a number of groups utilising the facilities. A short term solution has been found with the use of a second hand iso-freight container located between building and car park. Mid / Long term solution may be the enlargement of the existing vestibule to provide adequate storage.

Box 2.2. Description of case study RCF two

BUILDING CASE STUDY TWO



Summary description of RCF:

- Located on main street in mixed-use area: residential, retail and institutional buildings. Small gravel topped hardcore car park at front. Large grassed area to boundary wall and farmland beyond.
- Very imposing single storey building c.1896; 'B' listing from Historic Scotland.
- Predominantly whinstone and sandstone with elaborate detailing particularly to front elevation.
- Timber external doors and timber single glazed sash and case windows with steel framed wire mesh security shutters throughout.
- Timber floor, suspended on masonry substructure with air vents at low level.
- Pitched roof. Zinc and lead flashings to ridge, hips, abutments. Cast iron rainwater goods, black pvcu gutters and downpipes. The ceiling finish is timber linings with circular vents leading to roof space.
- Entry: via original entrance with timber panelled double doors leading to vestibule, hallway area with doors to main hall, male, female and disabled sanitary facilities, kitchen and storage areas.
- Kitchen and sanitary facilities upgraded in 1990's.
- Attic area; access from small hatch within main hall at high level.
- Main hall excluding back stage area approx. 16.3m long x 9.3m wide with an eaves and apex height of approx. 4.5m and 8.0m respectively.
- Natural light provided by 3 large windows; emergency exit via fire doors leading to ramped access.
- Back stage: 2 changing rooms with attached sanitary accommodation.
- Full height basement below stage and back stage areas. Access to small multi-purpose room approx. 4.5m wide x 8.6m long. Male/female toilets suitable for disabled users.
- Small boiler room; gas fired boiler.
- Fire alarm system: fire control panel, break glass call points, sounders; smoke / heat detection in kitchen. Fire fighting: fire extinguishes and fire blanket.
- Water supply connected to mains
- Foul drainage to the main sewer.
- Heating: gas fired central heating system serving radiators.
- Lighting: pendant and fluorescent type luminaries. Switched socket outlets.

Assessment:

- Generally the building is in reasonable condition with investment made in the mid 1990's to improve kitchen, sanitary accommodation, heating system, basement area and access to building.
- However the building would benefit from a number of improvements including:
 - Investigation into state of roof to establish if nail sickness is an issue as the age of building would suggest that sarking particularly at eaves, ridge and valley areas in particular prone to wet rot and nail head failure results in slate slippage. A 5-10 year programme investigation would be worthwhile.
 - Also no underslating felt or insulation is likely to be present and the introduction of insulation to roof area would greatly benefit running costs.
 - General maintenance of roof including the removal of vegetation at high level will protect the fabric of the building.
 - The exterior of the timber windows would benefit from regular maintenance.
 - Repairs are required to the main hall timber floor where tongue and groove boards have been lifted for services and edges have been broken, holes made, etc.
 - Sanitary accommodation on ground floor would benefit from minor upgrade with redecoration, replacement of cubicles etc. Dimensions of existing disabled toilet smaller than recommendations in the current Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations but grab rails were fitted. No alarm system was installed.
 - Provision of ramped access to both fire exits from the main hall is functional for escape purposes primarily due to the gradient of ramp and proximity to parking area and therefore is inadequate for disabled access. Sympathetic improvements could be made to the main entrance in accordance with Historic Scotland and Building Control to include designated disabled parking and a level access suitable for wheelchair users.
 - There is also no provision at present of specific facilities for partially sighted or those with a hearing impairment, e.g. tactile surfaces, hearing loop, etc.

Governance and management

Surveyed RCFs

2.17 Approximately 80% of respondent halls are owned in some way by the local community (Q27, Table 2.8.); this represents a considerable asset-base being managed locally for local use. Local authorities own 13.2% of the surveyed RCFs.

Table 2.8. Ownership types

Type of owner	Percentage
Local community	36.7%
Local voluntary/community organisation	23.8%
Local Trust	20.9%
Local Authority	13.2%
Other	5.5%

2.18 Respondents were asked to indicate the structure of the management of the organisation (Q28, Table 2.9.). Further, 79.9% of the organisations that manage the building are registered charities (Q29); 20% are not.

Table 2.9. Management structure

Structure	Percentage
Voluntary association	68.3%
Trust	18.1%
Company limited by guarantee	7.3%
Other	6.3%

2.19 The make-up of the RCF committees (Q30, Table 2.10) shows a diverse range of backgrounds, including groups who are often to some extent excluded in some way from active community participation, for example, people who live alone, women who may be confined to the home by pre-school children (sometimes due to lack of childcare and/or public transport in their local area), disabled people and newcomers to the community. A substantial proportion included at least one or two younger people, despite RCFs traditionally being seen as managed by older, often retired, people.

Table 2.10. Composition of surveyed committees

Type of person	Percentage with someone of that type on their committee
Lives alone	69.6
Has pre-school children	54.4
Has lived in the community all their life	87.5
Is under 25 years old	28.6
Is retired	89.1
Has a disability	32.9
Moved to the community in last 5 years	63.6

2.20 Conversely, Table 2.10. also shows a high percentage of RCFs with retired people on their committees, and this links with the finding that the majority of RCFs reported difficulty in recruiting new members to the committee (Q32): “Very difficult” 42.3%; “Difficult” 48.4%. This finding echoes evidence from the case studies and

from the textual responses to the survey, where retention and recruitment of new “young blood” onto the RCF committees was a challenge.

2.21 The average size of RCF committees (Q49, Table 2.11.) was approximately nine people. Across the 322 RCFs for which survey data are available, this suggests almost three thousand individuals are involved. In addition to members of the RCF committee, there are staff employed to run/manage the building and additional volunteers (Q49, Table 2.12.). Table 2.12. shows the number of hours per month typically contributed by these three groups to their RCF.

Table 2.11. Number of committee members

Number of committee members	Percentage
1-5	15.7
6-10	50.5
More than 10	33.8

Table 2.12. Numbers of people and hours contributed to management

Numbers involved	% surveyed RCFs	Hours per month	% surveyed RCFs
Members of main management committee			
1-5	15.7	10 or less	55.3
6-10	49.8	11-20	17.6
More than 10	34.5	More than 20	27.1
Staff employed to run/manage building			
0	39.8	10 or less	46.8
1-3	54.6	11-20	13.8
4 or more	6.1	More than 20	39.4
Volunteers (not on committee)			
0	34.9	10 or less	74.7
1-5	34.2	11-20	12.0
6-10	21.2	More than 20	13.3
More than 10	9.6		

2.22 Respondents were asked which approaches they used (a) to inform the community and (b) to find out what the community wants (Q33) (Tables 2.13. and 2.14.).

Table 2.13. Committee approaches to informing the community

To inform the community	Percentage	
	Yes	No
Public meetings	82.9	17.1
Community representation on the committee	81.8	18.2
Newsletter	44.3	55.7
Everyday contact with people living in the area	93.7	6.3
Website	21.7	78.3

2.23 The data reflect active informal communication was prevalent within the RCF locations. Public meetings and community representation on the committee were also used; less than half the RCFs used a newsletter and less than a quarter used a website.

Table 2.14. Committee approaches to finding out what the community wants

To find out what the community wants	Percentage	
	Yes	No
Public meetings	75.5	24.5
Community representation on the committee	86.9	13.1
User/community surveys	45.8	54.2
Everyday contact with people living in the area	93.7	6.3
Website	15.3	84.7

2.24 To find out what local people want, the most cited means of communication was “everyday contact with people living in the area”; second was community representation on the committee. Public meetings appear to be used less for finding out what people want than for informing people of what is happening. User surveys were used in just under half of RCFs; some of this could be related to funding applications which required a “needs assessment” in order for the funder to be sure that what was being planned is a wider community aspiration.

2.25 Respondents were also asked to indicate how often they meet as an RCF committee (Q31). The findings show that 77.8% of RCFs meet at least quarterly, whilst almost one quarter (22.8%) meet only one or two times a year or irregularly. A quarter of RCFs are being managed in a way that does not require their committee to meet at least quarterly.

2.26 Respondents were asked whether their RCF had a written policy on any of seven policy-related topics (Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, environmental policy, policy on volunteers, child protection, food hygiene and employment) (Q38). Almost half did not have written policies on any:

Table 2.15. Number of written policies

Number of written policies	Percentage
None	45.3%
1-3	40.7%
4 or more	14.0%

Six case studies: management of the rural community buildings

2.27 The case-studies included local authority owned and community owned facilities. Each RCF committee had a different relationship with its respective local authority, and differing levels of involvement and support. F2 and F3 have a 25-year lease with the local authority at a nominal cost. Both are constituted as unincorporated bodies. Whereas F3 receives 60 percent revenue funding from the local authority through a 3-year Service Level Agreement, and the local authority is responsible for the external upkeep of the Community Resource Centre. F2 Hall Resource Centre receives no regular financial support from the local authority, but the local authority is approached for one-off grants for capital improvements. All other RCF committees apply for, and receive, an annual maintenance grant from their local authority.

2.28 Four of the case-studies had a Trust legal structure and were managed by an elected committee. In all cases, the trustees operated in an ‘ex-officio’ capacity and were, what would have been traditionally been regarded as, people of stature in the local community: the local doctor, bank manager, councillor, minister, chair of the

local Community Association, and local estate manager/owner, forest manager. In some instances, the nominated trustee position no longer existed, and in others, the current trustees were not informed or aware of their position. When informed that their position carried with it a Trustee position, Trustees were described as having a passive role.

2.29 Two case-study facilities were managed by a constituted voluntary organisation. With the exception of H1 Village Hall, all managing organisations were registered charities. Whilst the annual return to the OSCR was seen by some as onerous, the benefits of being a registered charity were perceived to outweigh this cost.

2.30 The Management Committee of each RCF is pivotal to its ongoing use. In common across RCF committees was the appointment of office-bearers and ordinary committee members at the annual AGM, however, maintaining an active and able committee was regarded as a critical challenge to the RCFs' sustainability. The common constraints and challenges identified were the skills and abilities of the existing committee and the difficulty in attracting new members to become active in the facilities' management. Three management 'models' were identified:

- Resourced managerial committee
- Highly involved managerial committee
- Laissez-faire managerial committee

2.31 F3 Community Centre and F1 Public Hall had 'resourced managerial committees' which met on a regular basis but no more than quarterly, and employed staff to act as care-takers, albeit on a part-time basis of for low pecuniary benefit. The level of weekly use warranted staff time and enabled committee members to be released from the onerous task of opening the facility and locking up. Box 2.3. describes the management in place by F3 Community Centre. The staff costs were equivalent to approximately 72% of annual revenue costs for this community facility.

Box 2.3. The Resourced Management Committee

F3's management committee comprises the four office bearers (chair, vice-chair, honorary secretary and treasurer) and approximately 11 committee members, of which four are representatives of regular user groups in the building. Several 'ordinary' committee members are appointed managerial roles, including "building convenor" and "staff liaison officer". Additionally, the Community Centre has two Council Representatives and four ex-officio members. All user-groups are invited to have a representative attend at least three meetings per annum. This includes a representative from the business that franchises the café. The Centre has three members of part-time paid staff: a clerical assistant, caretaker and cleaner. Volunteers on the management committee also contribute to the ongoing management of the building. The treasurer, for example, spends each Monday morning at the Centre. The employment of staff, however, enables this involvement to be primarily managerial rather than practical. The trust has a membership structure for individuals and group affiliation.[F3 Community Centre]

2.32 F1 Public Hall management committee considers itself to be highly fortunate to have recruited successive hall-keepers who are on call 24 hours a day for a "miserly sum", but this situation was also recognised to be fragile, given the high level of voluntarism and personal sacrifice involved:

It's a constant worry to us. It's not an attractive job; it's totally tied down, very time consuming, and quite thankless. And we just have a dread of the hall-keeper saying "well I'm retiring now, I'm stopping. (F1 Public Hall).

The 'involved management committees' relied primarily on committee members to undertake the regular running and care-taking duties of the community facility. With insufficient income to cover any staffing costs, the running of the building was generally dependent upon a few committed and relatively time-rich individuals. One committee member comments that it is possible to undertake his combined role of treasurer, funding form-filler, and care-taker "only because I'm retired". He goes on, "everybody's getting older. That's the worrying thing." The sustainability of this management structure was recognised to be fragile by the three case-studies given the dependency upon key members of the committee.

2.33 Since it was re-formed in 2004, the committee for H2 Community Hall has had extended periods without a chair or a secretary, due to difficulty in persuading people to act as a local 'figurehead' for the hall in the position of chair, and a lack of willingness to have the responsibility of an office, although at variance with all other facility management groups, one committee member comments, "There's plenty of people willing to come forward and say they'll be on the committee." The lack of capacity within the community to run these facilities was considered to be a serious threat to their future sustainability.

2.34 RCFs managed by 'involved management structures' did not require ordinary committee members to undertake much work other than attendance at meetings and support at community events, whereas office bearers were more likely to assume care-taking, project development as well as general volunteering roles at functions (Box 2.4.). The frequency of meetings varied according to the level of usage: monthly in the case of H2 Community Hall, every six weeks for H3 Public Hall, and irregularly for F2 Hall Resource Centre.

Box 2.4. The Involved Management Committee

F2's management committee was formed and constituted in 1993. It comprises four office bearers, and four committee members, however, "Really there's only five of us that are actively involved all the time. The other three are on the committee but they just appear now and again. They make up the numbers". The five who are actively involved have been on the committee since its inception, however, the size of the committee has gradually shrunk over 15 years. Active involvement involves care-taking responsibilities such as opening and closing the hall, weekly cleaning, minor maintenance and repair including painting and guttering. This amounts to an estimated nine hours per week for the committee. One member states, "We'd like to get more younger people on the committee" whilst another reflect, "It does worry you, we're all getting, we're all getting older but you know what I mean? You get less able." When asked if they had approached people to come onto the committee, one member responded, "We haven't really done it much. We have our AGM and it's there for everybody. And we'll say to folk, "mind the AGM is on Thursday, if you could come. But I think when you say that, they think crumbs if I go I'll finish up treasurer or something!" Currently, three of the five committee members are of retirement age and are able to make this time commitment on a weekly basis. [F2 Hall Resource Centre]

2.35 The laissez-faire managerial committee was found in one example. H1 Village Hall was described as being managed 'by the community for the community'. Over the past decade, the primary use of this facility was community events run by the hall committee or by other community groups, but in practice, successful through general

community effort. These events had declined in frequency in tandem with a decline in the condition of the building, but even prior to this, the committee had not met regularly (Box 2.5.).

2.36 Whilst the management committee believed that the building needs significant structural repairs, or alternatively a new building, plans instigated 15 years ago had not resulted in any increased formality of meetings. The plans were continuing to be pushed forward by one isolated individual, with support from others on the committee and the community.

2.37 The most successful model is perceived to be one in which user-groups are represented on the committee and “take ownership” of the facility. The advantages include increased communication on the levels of satisfaction of the user-groups with the facility, consultation on proposed changes and plans, and being able to seek their support on fund-raising community events.

Box 2.5. The Laissez Faire Management Committee

The management committee of this study meets on an irregular and infrequent basis: ““it wasn’t like right, let’s have a meeting...if something was happening I’d come and phone round...There’s no point having a meeting when nothing needs talked about”. Informal mechanisms are more important than formal mechanism for getting things done, outside of the main office bearer responsibilities, such as the AGM and production of annual accounts. The committee itself is a loose structure, as one member describes, “The hall was just run by the community...If something was on, people would just come and help”. The committee currently has four elected office bearers and five ordinary members. The current treasurer has been serving for over 30 years and members joke, once you’re on the committee, “you’re “on it for a generation!!”. The committee has one new member, currently with a vice chair office, who said he became involved because, “something should be done about this place”. Over the past decade the low level of usage, and absence of weekly or monthly user-group hire, mean that the work involved in running the hall has been relatively low. On the other hand the community is now developing plans for a replacement hall. Currently one committee member is driving the project, “I’m doing everything more or less”, but there is shared concern that the current committee does not have the capacity to manage such a large undertaking. **[H1 Village Hall]**

Economic sustainability

Surveyed RCFs

2.38 Almost one third of RCFs run with a budget deficit (Table 2.16). When asked whether the committee normally covers the running cost of the building (including minor repairs) from bookings and other income-generating activity (Q45), 89.1% answered yes, 10.7% answered no. Almost one-fifth of RCFs do not hold financial reserves or a contingency fund to cover emergency repairs (Q43).

Table 2.16. Financial balances

Balance	Percentage
Deficit	28.5
Surplus less than £1000	26.0
Surplus £1,000-£4,999	32.6
Surplus £5,000-£9,999	6.6
Surplus greater than £10,000	6.2

The number of different activities taking place on a weekly basis (Q59) many of which are likely to generate an income for the RCF, were:

Table 2.17. Number of activities taking place on a weekly basis

Number of activities taking place in RCF on a weekly basis	Percentage
None	20.6
1	24.8
2-5	49.3
6 or more	5.2

2.39 Over three quarters (76.7%) of RCFs had received funds from between one and five funding sources in the last five years, and less than 10% (8.4%) had acquired funding from six or more sources (Q48, Table 2.18.). In the past five years, 14.9% of RCFs had received no funding.

Table 2.18. Funding sources from which RCFs have received funding in the past five years

Funding source	Percentage who had received funding from this source in the past five years
Central government	18.3
Local government	67.0
Donations from individual	64.8
Quangos, e.g. Scottish Arts Council	12.8
Local businesses	20.3
National business	7.1
EU funding, e.g. LEADER	7.4
National Lottery	37.8
Charitable Trust (national)	22.6
Charitable Trust (local)	19.6
Legacies	7.9
Other	18.9

2.40 Less than 18% of RCF committees had prepared a business plan in the last five years; 77% had not. Further, 30% of RCF committees had prepared a budget for each year; two-thirds (65%) had not. Given the needs outlined for building repair, maintenance and improvement (Q66, Table 2.19.), it is significant that there was little evidence of business planning across the survey results..

Table 2.19. Future funding needs

Ongoing funding needs of surveyed RCFs
Internal
Build new kitchen to comply with H&S and disabled access
Small kitchen extension
Refurbish kitchen and facilities (e.g. cooker, dishwasher)
Upgrade fire alarms
Painting of hall (internal)
Changing rooms (replace/refurbish)
Information Technology
Lighting
Disabled access toilets
Hot water in cloak room

New water heater
New heating system
Renewable energy heating and lighting
Insulation
Utilities bills (fuel, water, rates, electricity, fire safety equipment maintenance, electrical appliance testing): revenue finding required.
Replacement of stage
New public address system
Replacement of hall floor (sprung floor)
Storage facilities
External
Roof repair
Painting of hall (external)
Bike racks
Tarmac for car park/increase car park
Improved water supply
Structural repairs
Access ramps
All weather sports pitch
External masonry
Garden grounds

2.41 Statistically significant differences relating business planning with other factors or characteristics include:

- committees running an RCF with a shop were more likely to have prepared a business plan in the last five years (Q6 & Q40);
- buildings where commercial activities take place every week or every month were most likely to be managed by committees that prepare a budget for each year (Q42 & Q59).

Six case studies: experience of accessing and generating funding

2.42 All six case-study RCFs were reliant upon external funding for the majority of capital costs, although it was accepted that community organisations needed to provide a percentage of match-funding through fund-raising efforts. Without access to external funding for capital improvements – and more so, renovation or replacement of a building – case-studies would have insufficient funds to modernise the buildings or to comply with legislation.

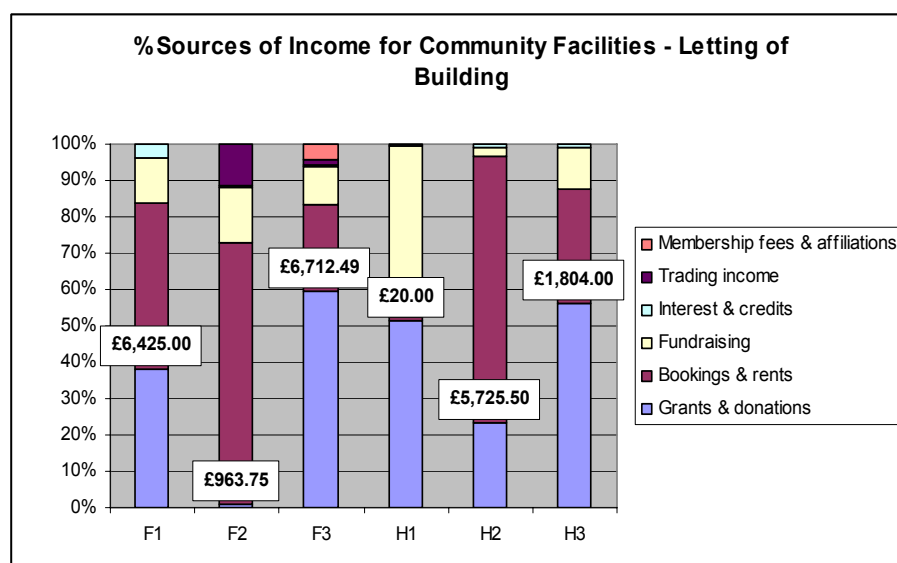
2.43 With the exception of H1 Village Hall, all RCF committees sought external funding over the past 10-15 years according to the identified needs. H2 management committee had raised £270,000 of external funding for their new build completed in 2004 and F2 had raised in excess of £100,000 to refurbish its community facility, re-opened in 1997. Both projects were rejected by National Lottery funding programmes, which were perceived to be essential to achieve projects of this size. Whereas F2 achieved eventual success in raising the amount needed as a result of its project fitting the eligibility criteria of the Heritage Lottery Fund, H2 Community Hall had to scale back its plans. Seeking external funding was regarded as time consuming and often requiring drive and determination, however, all those consulted that had applied for external funding were successful.

2.44 All RCF case-studies raised their own funds predominantly through organising community events and functions. However, not all community events run by hall committees were fund-raising efforts: one Highland case-study had held celebratory festive ceilidhs and parties free of charge to locals and the other donated profits to other charitable causes. Whereas one Highland village hall had reduced the number of community ceilidhs and whist drives, which had once been the mainstay of their fund-raising activities, due to a lack of interest, the fund-raising efforts of Fife organisations were increasing in order to generate additional revenue.

2.45 Recent and planned fund-raising efforts in the Highland RCFs did not to generate an income for covering maintenance and running costs - which were generally being met by letting income and grant-aid - but were to raise funds for planned capital improvements. The capacity of the local community to generate funds was perceived to be high; the sense of community and the importance placed on the facility meant fund-raising efforts had been well supported in the past.

2.46 The case studies illustrate the importance of letting revenue to the financial sustainability of community buildings, in addition to maintenance grants and their own-fundraising efforts. Figure 2.3 illustrates this.:

Figure 2.3. Percentage sources of income for case study RCFs – Letting of the building



2.47 Nearly all RCF committees publicised rates of hire based upon hourly or sessional rates. The tariffs tended to differ according to whether the users were local or non-local, voluntary or commercial/function hire, or fund-raising/non-fund raising activities. The costs of extended types of hire (more than one day) were usually negotiated on a case-by-case basis. However, whereas some users calculated a daily fee on the basis of the hourly rate, others negotiated a lesser fee. One committee built in differential rates according to whether the heating was used or not, and whether or not the user would clean the hall after use in order to ensure that their own costs were covered. Few committees reviewed their rates of hire on an annual or even regular basis which therefore limited the extent to which charges could be increased in one year.

2.48 H2 Community Hall committee planned to increase their rates in order to meet running costs, and did not voice any concerns with regards to affordability. Others were less sanguine about making changes to hall rates, and experienced dilemma over the need to cover increased running costs yet ensure affordability given “we see it as a service to the community”. The dependency on regular users led to reluctance to increase rates lest they found somewhere more affordable, or simply could not cover the costs, with the risk of the group disbanding.

2.49 Charges varied substantially even within this small number of case-studies: main hall hire charges varied between £5.00 an hour to £10.00 for local voluntary groups, and an evening session hire by private or non-local groups varied between £10.00 to £80.00.

2.50 The level of council maintenance grant support was variable across case-studies. Two of the facilities in the Highlands received a maximum annual maintenance grant of £800, whereas H1 Village Hall received £392. The F3 Hall Resource Centre did not receive an annual maintenance grant whereas F2 Public Hall received a flat rate of £200 per annum in addition to generating external grant support from the council through its ‘two pound for one pound’ grant scheme which matches village hall fund-raising up to a ceiling of £900. F3 Community Centre’s partnership with the council meant that it received 60 percent of running costs per annum. These maintenance grants were considered to be essential for enabling these facilities to meet their running costs, yet nonetheless, insufficient.

2.51 The level of income generated by some RCF users, together with regular fund-raising efforts and maintenance grants from the local authority, had, in the past, generated sufficient funds for some community buildings to reinvest in building improvements and repair without seeking external grant-aid. F2 Hall Resource Centre, which receives no annual maintenance grant from the local authority and is no longer able to cover its annual running costs from its letting income, has depleted its financial reserves in order to undertake necessary repairs.

2.52 The RCF case-studies had a diversity of funding needs. At one end of the spectrum H2 Community Hall was a brand new purpose-built hall (Box 2.6.) and at the other H1 Village Hall was a dilapidated former primacy school and the committee were in the process of planning a rebuild. The remainder fell somewhere in between and the facilities were subject to ongoing repairs, or in the case of several, an evolving programme of improvements (Box 2.7.).

Box 2.6. The case study new build funding needs

Following an extended period of recognising that the old structure was inadequate, the community decided to “grasp the nettle” when having visited a new hall in another locality. Over a four-year period community consultations were held, fund-raising stepped up, plans drawn up, and funding applications submitted. Following four unsuccessful submissions the committee without which the committee could not cover the costs of the original proposal, disillusionment set in and “everybody disappeared.” Rather than loose the other funding committed to the project, several decided to have plans drawn up for a smaller building. One of these individuals recalls that he decided, “unless somebody takes this and runs with this, it’s not going to happen. So I just said right, I’m not listening any more to anything really.” Within six months, new plans were drawn and instead of the “mega-wonder” originally envisaged, a much smaller building was built. During the earlier period, the organisation had

had the input of a community resource officer funded by Highlands and Islands Enterprise to help source funding. However, one member who was involved in the process stated, “I don’t think there was ever a coherent business plan. And that was probably one of the reasons we constantly got knocked back by the lottery. Because they probably couldn’t see how we were going to run it on a sustainable basis.” Completed in 2004, the new build was co-funded by Highland Council, the then Scottish Executive, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Lloyds TSB Foundation, a plethora of other grant-making trusts and donations, in addition to £30,000 of funds raised by the community. The committee is now seeking to pursue ‘stage two’ of the building in line with the original plans.

[H2 Community Hall]

Box 2.7. The case study evolving improvement programme – funding needs

F1 Village Hall ... was rebuilt during the 1950s. Perceived to be generally in good condition, over the past decade the committee has undertaken an evolving programme of improvements including a new hard-core car park, the installation of wheelchair and pushchair access, the provision of a disabled toilet with baby changing unit, installation of a new central heating unit and boiler, and installation of a bar area. Additionally, new chairs have recently been purchased and ongoing minor improvements such as emergency exit lighting implemented. The priority for the future is the replacement of windows in the annex in order to improve the building’s insulation and concomitantly, reduce heating bills. When asked what their approach to financial planning was, the chairperson responded “Balanced. There are those on the committee that are keen for improvements, and those who tell us we mustn’t lose our nest egg! (P1). The organisation has a savings fund which provides them with an income through interest and which they are reluctant to use for capital investment, although the level of match-funding required for the hard-core car park was an exception to this generally respected principle. Whilst this amount has been reduced by inflation, the capital sum has been maintained since this time. The treasurer, an accountant, prepares an annual budget and a financial report is prepared for each meeting. All projects and investments are discussed and agreed at meetings, prior to seeking external funding. One user-group representative said of their approach, “It is a very organised committee. They’re on the ball.” The committee says that lottery funding and the local Council are their first port-of-call, and that only once in recent memory has a grant application been declined. **[F1 Public Hall]**

The nature of use and RCF users

Surveyed RCFs

2.53 When describing the findings relating to the number and types of users, it should be noted that we do not have a benchmark for what is a “good” level of local population use or of user numbers. These levels are likely to vary with locality, proximity to other facilities, as well as with local needs and activities.

2.54 The number of individual RCF users in an average week (Q53) is shown in Table 2.20. When examining the numbers of people in the area who are served by the RCF (Q57, Table 2.21.), we can see that it is effectively ‘a few hundred’ people and over three-quarters of Scotland’s surveyed RCFs serve a catchment population of fewer than 1,000 people. Over half of the surveyed RCFs (52.8%) are used by less than 20% of the local population (Q56)¹⁴. Approximately one third (33.1%) of surveyed RCFs serve 20-39% of their local population, and 14% of surveyed RCFs serve more than 40% of their local population.

¹⁴ This finding is comparable to the broadly consistent figure across ACRE’s national surveys of English village halls every ten years, which typically show that approximately 57% of halls are used by fewer than 25% of the resident population (ACRE 1998).

Table 2.20. Number of users

Number of people	Percentage
None	3.7
1-49	43.3
50-99	26.5
100 or more	26.5

Table 2.21. Numbers of people served by the RCFs

Number of people	Percentage
Fewer than 100	10.4
100-999	67.3
1,000 or more	22.3

2.55 A cross-section of users was making use of RCFs at least once a month (Q55, Table 2.22). A majority of RCFs are providing a venue for a wide age-range of people in their geographical area. Buildings used by groups of people with disabilities at least once a month, were more likely to serve an area with a population of 1000 or more; and buildings that have clubs for disabled/infirm people every week, were most likely to have been built since 1945.

2.56 The survey data show the range and frequency of activities taking place in RCFs (Q59, Table 2.23), illustrating the importance of RCFs as a venue for private functions as well as for community meetings and activities. The findings seem to suggest a principal purpose of providing a venue for activities generated by the local community, rather than as a locus for 'services'.

Table 2.22. Activities taking place

Activity	Percentage where activity take place...	
	Sum of weekly, monthly, less than monthly	Every week
Private functions	94.6	3.3
Community events	94.4	4.2
Community/voluntary group meetings	93.8	22.3
Public consultation/public meetings	81.3	0.7
Arts events	69.5	5.0
Indoor sports and games	67.2	48.5
Community council meetings	66.0	0.4
Kids groups	64.2	43.4
Fitness classes	61.1	41.3
"Other" than those listed	61.0	14.0
MP/local councillor surgery	50.2	1.5
Education and training	47.0	13.9
Commercial activities	40.5	1.1
Local business group meetings	26.3	0.8
Outdoor sports events	24.6	6.3
Support groups	12.6	5.0
Clubs for disabled/infirm people	12.5	5.7
Services (e.g. library, other LA services)	11.4	4.3
Day care services	10.8	7.2
Other primary health services (i.e. extra to GP)	7.8	0.7
Post Office services	3.2	2.1
GP surgery	2.5	1.8

2.57 Further, the RCFs are evidently important for a variety of sport, fitness and cultural activities, and as a facility for good governance (community council meetings and MP/councillor surgeries); there was a relatively high weekly use for sports and games, fitness classes and kids groups (almost half surveyed RCFs). There was rather less use for 'social welfare' in a more narrow sense (support groups, clubs for those with disabilities or the infirm, day care services, for example).

2.58 RCFs being a venue for the delivery of public services (library, other local authority services, post office, GP surgery and other health services) was fairly uncommon. In response to the question, "*During an average week, how many service providers use the building? (by "service", we mean Post Office, local authority services, health services, banks etc)*" (Q52), 83.7% of respondents stated that no service providers used the RCFs; less than one-fifth (14.3%) stated that "1 or 2" services used their RCF in an average week, with only 2% reporting use by "3 or 4" services.

2.59 Statistically significant differences in the survey data on RCFs as a venue for externally provided services and other factors or characteristics, are:

- RCFs with three or four service providers using the building during an average week were likely to be serving a population of more than 1000; RCFs with two or fewer service providers were likely to be serving a population of less than 1000 (Q57 & Q52).
- RCFs with no service providers using the building in an average week were likely to have less than 10 indoor rooms/facilities; those with one or more service providers were likely to have 10 or more rooms/facilities (Q6 & Q52).
- RCFs with no service providers using the building are likely to have only 1 activity happening on a weekly basis. Those buildings with at least one service provider are likely to have between 2-5 activities (Q59 & Q52).
- RCFs with 2 or fewer service providers are likely to have 15 or fewer groups using the building during an average week. RCFs with 3 or more service providers are likely to have more than 15 groups using the building (Q51 & Q52)
- RCFs with 3 or 4 service providers using the building per week are more likely to be managed by committees that prepare a budget each year (Q42 & Q52), to have received support from a project officer (Q62 & Q52), and to have non-routine work in progress on the building (Q23 & Q52).

2.60 Another statistically significant finding was that RCFs that never have a GP surgery or other primary health care services were most likely to be less than 10 miles from a similar venue providing similar facilities; those where there is a GP surgery at least once every month were more likely to be more than 10 miles from a similar venue. Further, only 7.9% of RCFs were regularly (monthly or weekly) used for day care. Other statistically significant differences associated with RCFs and GP surgeries include:

- where there is a GP surgery every week, the RCF was more likely to have between 10-14 activities (from a provided list of 22) happening on a weekly basis (Q59);
- where there is never a GP surgery or only one less than monthly, the RCF was more likely to have between 5-9 activities happening on a weekly basis (Q59);

- RCFs where there is never a GP surgery were least likely to have received support from a project officer (Q59 & Q62)

2.61 While variable access to a range of potentially health promoting facilities was observed in findings (e.g. 14.6% have access to a community garden; 11.6% have access to a multi-use games area), it might be incorrect to assume that all of these facilities are: a) equally important; or b) equally practical. Forty seven per cent of RCFs host fitness classes regularly (weekly or monthly); this leaves 53% that potentially could provide this facility – the question arises why do around half provide classes, while the other half do not – do they have suitable space, but do not use it? Or are there other facilities nearby that are fulfilling this purpose? With reference to indoor and outdoor sports activities associated with the surveyed RCFs, statistically significant differences in the data were:

- buildings where indoor sports activities never take place were most likely to be licensed for less than 100 people; those where indoor sports activities take place every week were most likely to be licensed for between 100-250;.
- buildings where outdoor sports activities take place every week were most likely to have been built since the war.

2.62 Considering groups that could potentially benefit from health promoting activities (physical and mental health), it is noteworthy that 73.1% of facilities were used regularly by elderly people. People meeting together can be beneficial to mental health so this may be as important as fitness classes and sports.

2.63 The above survey findings are significant in the light of discussions around RCFs as multi-service outlets (MSOs). These are defined as RCFs which host services provided by outside agencies, such as the Post Office, the health service (such as a visiting nurse or General Practitioner's surgery), and local government (such as childcare or educational provision). This differs from "multi-activity"; RCFs are almost by definition multi-function or multi-activity buildings, as the data in this report clearly show. However, if we draw a distinction between 'functions / activities' and 'services' delivered by outside agencies, then only a small proportion of halls qualify as MSOs. The following findings are some examples of statistically significant differences from the survey data:

- RCFs hosting a shop (Q6) were more likely to be located 10 miles or more from the nearest RCF (Q4), and were more likely to have over 100 people using the RCF every week.
- RCFs where a GP surgery is held at least once a week (Q59) were more likely to be located 10 miles or more from the next nearest similar RCF/facility (Q4), more likely to have at least 10 other activities happening weekly (Q59), and more likely to say that it is not at all difficult to recruit new committee members (Q32). RCFs that host 'other primary health services' (Q59) were also more likely to host several other activities (Q59).
- RCFs that host libraries or other local authority services (Q59) were more likely to have 50 or more people using the hall each week.
- RCFs acting as venues for commercial activities such as antique fairs, sales (Q59) were more likely to host other activities as well, to serve a more populous

catchment area (i.e. a population of more than 1,000 people), and to have at least 100 people using the hall each week.

- Buildings where there are weekly Post Office services were most likely to have had renovation/improvement/building work in the last five years (Q59 & 22).
- RCFs hosting several service providers each week (Q52), are more likely to be used by a large number of groups (16 or more) each week (Q51), to have over 100 individual users each week and to serve a catchment area of over 1,000 people.

2.64 When considering multi-use and multi-service options for RCFs, as part of their ongoing sustainability, an overall impression from the data is that in 'multi-use' (as defined here), commercial activities are still unusual; there were few examples of the profit from a commercial activity being used to "subsidise" other resource activities. Further, multi-service (MSO) buildings represent larger capital investments and generally require (and generate) greater revenues. They generate larger surpluses, but perhaps are no more sustainable than single purpose buildings because their need for re-investment is greater.

Six case studies: under-use of RCFs, and the role of RCF committees in generating multiple income streams

2.65 The three RCF committees in the Forth Region were all of the opinion that their facilities were under-utilised, and were not being used by all sectors of the population. In common to all was a concern that younger age cohorts – secondary school and above – were not involved in the running of the building or attracted to many of the activities or functions held there.

2.66 There was a sense of helplessness over how to address under-use, which was perceived to relate to: (i) a declining sense of 'community' and willingness to be involved; (ii) RCFs no longer holding the type of activities that attract young people; (iii) competition from other public and private facilities in the locality; (iv) competition from new facilities and provisions in neighbouring secondary-school towns.

2.67 Several facilities, such as F1 Public Hall, felt unable to attract any more regular user-groups, given that in the village there was "no guides, no brownies, no boys-brigade, there's nothing". In the case of F2, the availability of other halls and meeting rooms was a real constraint on any increased day-time use, although it was felt by some community members that the facilities in this Hall were of better standard than in others. Indeed, the storage, toilet and baby-changing facilities were all cited as reasons for the new Mothers and Toddlers group for choosing to establish itself in this facility over others in the village. Competition was also an issue for one Highland hall:

Of course we're in direct competition with the hotel down there who have exactly the same limits. 100 people. So...in the middle of winter it's sometimes a bit more comfortable down...it depends what we're putting on. Some things work better in the pub, some things work much better in here. (H3 Public Hall)

2.68 The quote above illustrates how, like in other case-studies, some types of building and facilities were considered more appropriate to some uses than others. In the case of H3 Public Hall, this RCF committee member and key user-group chairperson would select the most appropriate venue for holding an evening function, with smaller and more intimate events perceived to be more suited to the private venue. Another case-study consultee voiced that competition with the bowling club could constrain increased private function hire:

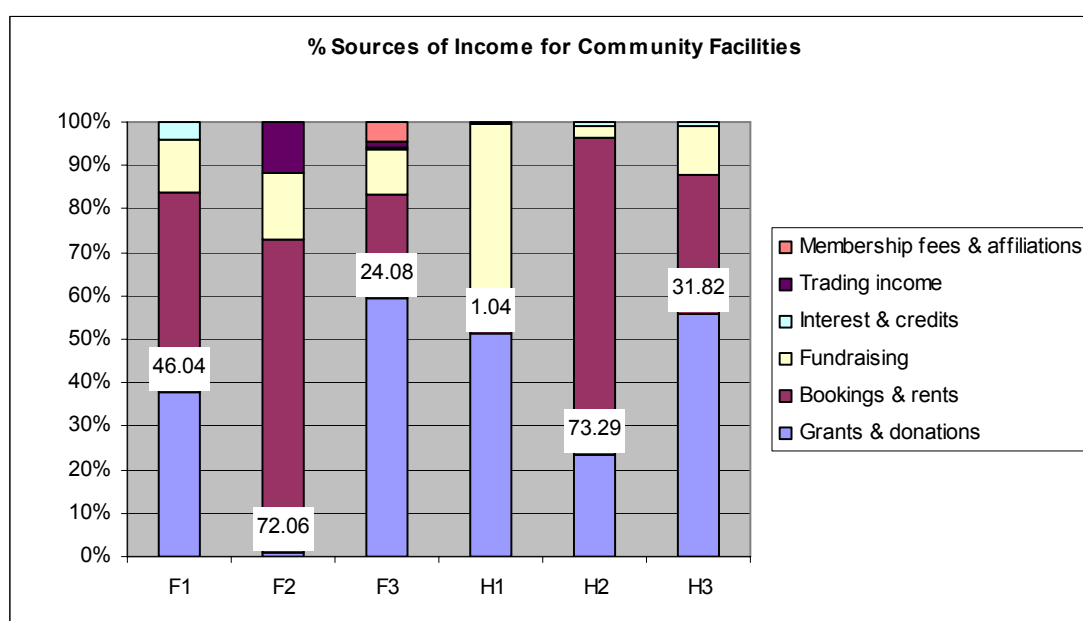
That's maybe one of our problems, because the bowling club has got a very modern building, and it's got a bar, and it's central. So it's an attractive function venue in competition with us. (F1 Public Hall)

2.69 Most management committees understood their role as managing the RCF for the community to use in the form of organised groups, and did not perceive themselves as being responsible for co-ordinating, instigating or managing any ongoing activities in the facility.

2.70 The common theme was a decline in the number of people willing to organise community activities, such as youth groups and sport groups, and a concomitant reduction in organised activities within the community. Factors thought to influence this trend were the increase in bureaucracy and legislation particularly with regards to youth groups, and wider social change which was described as resulting in reduced voluntarism and greater individualism.

2.71 The regular income from room and hall hire and lets was considered fundamental to the financial viability of most case-studies (see Fig. 2.4.), yet it was also subject to frequent change and fluctuations and therefore unpredictable. Remote rural facilities in particular were subject to seasonal fluctuations, with winter months being considerably busier than summer months. Weekly and monthly user-groups were valued for their regular income, however, such groups were themselves often subject to change in numbers with new groups forming and old groups disbanding within a five-year period.

Figure 2.4. Sources of case study income for community facilities (%)



2.72 Whilst most RCFs committees perceived their role as maintaining the facilities for community use and therefore hire, the most valued sources of income were derived from arrangements with public or quasi-public sector organisations, which three of the halls had: F1 had income from the Local Education Department for Primary School use for PE classes; H2 had office rental income from a publicly funded development trust and rental of their toilets to Highland Council; F3 had a Service Level Agreement with its Council to provide a range of community development outcomes.

2.73 The withdrawal of some services, such the public library from one hall, was regarded as a serious financial set-back. The proportion of income generated from regular lets and hire of facilities as a percentage of all income (excluding one-off capital grants) is illustrated in Figure 2.4. It brings into sharp focus the variability in the absolute level of RCF income from letting and activity. The Forth case-studies were all located in areas with a significantly higher catchment population relative to the Highland study areas.

2.74 Two of the Forth facilities generated over £6000 in rental income in the last financial year (Box 2.8.); F2 Hall Resource Centre generated less than £1000 (Box 2.9.). There was variability in the level of use between the Highland case-studies also: H2 Community Hall generated a comparatively similar level of rental income to those in Forth from a significantly smaller population (Box 2.10.), whereas an absence of public-sector usage led to comparatively less rental income in H2 Public Hall. H1 Village Hall generated only £20 of income from hall hire in 2007-8 financial year given the hall is largely unused at the present.

Box 2.8. The Rural Village Multiple Purpose Facility

F3 Community Centre is run in association with the Council. Until recently, a Council Education Worker occupied one room as an office but is now located in a dedicated Council building. The management committee organise four weekly activities through the centre: a girl's group; youth club run by paid Council staff; keep fit classes for the over 50s, and a craft group. The Centre generates income from a proportion of membership fees and only one of the group leaders is paid from the activity generated income. The Centre currently has three 'affiliated' groups: Mother and Toddlers, pre-school nursery and theatre group. The pre-nursery playgroup has a dedicated room in the building. Other weekly users include a lunch-club for the elderly, the local theatre group, and a quilters group. The centre space is hired less regularly by several local voluntary and public-sector led initiatives, including the Council Homecare project, and a drugs and alcohol support group. A small café, which was run by the centre and employed a member of staff, now operates as a profit-making franchise for a monthly fee. Whilst the profits from the café do not directly benefit the organisation, it is valued for "giving the kids somewhere to go". The management committee retain rights of access to the kitchen for any functions. There have not been any significant changes in usage in its recent history, "it seems to be bumbling on", with the exception of the relocation of one regular user-group to another venue. **(F3 Community Centre).**

Box 2.9. The 'Single Purpose' Hall

F2 is located in a community with several competing community halls and a community centre which offers meeting rooms free of charge to voluntary organisations. The hall itself is suited primarily to functions, concerts and ceilidhs, although its only weekly activity is a badminton club. All other weekly user-groups that have hired the building since it re-opened to the community have disbanded or relocated to nearby larger towns. A mother and toddlers group will shortly be running once a week from the hall generating a much-needed regular income to the hall committee. The majority of F2 Hall Resource Centre's rental income is generated by private hire for functions such as parties and birthdays (approximately eleven per year), and the hall committee runs fund-raising community events three times a year. These events are valued by the community, and typically sell out. The committee recognises, however, that they need to increase the range of regular user-groups, as one states, "Even one a couple of nights would make a difference". Currently the hall has little day-time use. Another says, however, "There's nothing we can do ourselves. You can't force people to come in." Increased use is also seen to have a time implication, "If we get people coming in and using the hall, we have to come down and open up and come back afterwards and clean up", thus leading to some types of uses being preferred over others. **(F2 Hall Resource Centre)**

Box 2.10. The Remote Rural 'Multiple Purpose' Facility

H2 Community Hall generates over 50 percent of its current letting income from hall rents. It currently has three rental agreements: (a) the local development trust hire the general purpose meeting room as their office five mornings week (b) the organisation has a agreement with the local authority to maintain the building toilets for public use March – October and (c) the local fellowship hire weekly use of the hall for a fixed amount on an annual basis. The main hall is used four-times weekly by the local primary school for PE classes. Currently, however, the organisation does not charge the local authority Education Department for this service. The hall is used on a weekly basis by four types of youth groups extending across all ages, in addition to several sports and fitness groups. The school uses the hall for its performances and events as do most other organisations who hire the hall for fund-raising activities. The hall is a venue for community concerts, ceilidhs and other art events. The building is hired occasionally for private functions, such as weddings, and has received block bookings from external groups in the summer months. The hall acts as a meeting space for most local interest groups – although the Community Council meets in the school as it clashes with another user group. The Council rent the hall for general elections. With only a main hall and meeting room available to let and many regular users evening and daytime, community events can take precedence over regular user-group slots or the Development Trust office space: "if there's a function on they're very fantastic. If I say to them, something's on, they're excellent." Whilst it is estimated that less than 40 percent of the community of c. 250 people use the hall on a regular basis, one committee member states "[I]n the space of two years, I would say everybody in the community would have stepped inside this hall." **(H2 Community Hall)**

Regional variation in survey findings

2.75 Following the same themes as outlined above, this section of the chapter highlights regional differences by RPAC in the survey findings. For each theme, a descriptive account of differences is given first, and then a list is provided of the statistically significant differences which could be seen for each region.

Rural community buildings

Descriptive observations of regional differences

2.76 The RPAC Regions within which RCFs showed the highest proportion (more than 90%) of being within 10 miles of a similar facility were Borders, Clyde Valley, Dumfries and Galloway and Forth. This may have implications for the sustainability of such RCFs, and the “local capacity” for, or “saturation” of, areas in terms of ongoing provision of RCF facilities. However, coupled with this is the observation that all RCFs provided a unique service to their locality, sometimes linked with other delivery (for example, the RCF acting as an indoor gym for a local primary school) such that, although it is the case that similar facilities may exist within several miles of each other, they could be serving quite different functions and reaching different parts of the population.

2.77 Survey findings showed that more than two-thirds of RCFs use electricity as the main source of fuel. RPAC Regions showing the highest proportion of electricity use in RCFs (more than 70%) were: Argyll, Grampian and Highland.

2.78 At least two-thirds of surveyed RCFs provide internal areas that are accessible for people with mobility problems, with Highland, Tayside and Western Isles showing the highest percentages (over 80%). All Regions showed over 90% provision of wheelchair-accessible entrances.

Statistically significant differences between RPAC Regions

2.79 On average, RCFs in Argyll, Ayrshire, Borders, Clyde Valley, Dumfries & Galloway, Forth, Grampian, Northern Isles and Tayside RPAC Regions are older than RCFs in Highland and Western Isles RPAC Regions.

2.80 On average, RCFs are located more than 30 minutes drive from a town of more than 10,000 people in Argyll, Borders, Highland, Northern Isles and Western Isles, and less than 30 minutes in Ayrshire, Clyde Valley, Dumfries & Galloway, Forth, Grampian and Tayside. This may suggest that in those “remote rural” regions the value of the RCFs in reducing long trips to a larger centre may be more important, in terms of local service provision, reduced travel costs, and benefits to the environment through reduced trips.

2.81 On average, RCFs in Argyll, Borders, Clyde Valley, Dumfries & Galloway, Forth, Grampian, Highland and Tayside have fewer indoor rooms and facilities from the list of 23, than those RCFs in Ayrshire, Northern Isles and Western Isles.

2.82 On average, RCFs in Clyde Valley and Dumfries & Galloway have the fewest energy efficiency measures. RCFs in Argyll, Ayrshire, Borders, Forth, Grampian, Highland, and Tayside have a greater number of energy efficiency measures than RCFs in Clyde Valley and Dumfries and Galloway. RCFs in Northern Isles and Western Isles have, on average, the greatest number of energy efficiency measures.

2.83 On average, RCFs in Ayrshire, Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, Forth, Grampian, Northern Isles and Western Isles are more likely to indicate that there is building/renovation work planned for the future of the building, than at those RCFs in Argyll, Clyde Valley, Highland and Tayside.

2.84 RCFs in Argyll, Ayrshire, Borders, Clyde Valley, Dumfries & Galloway, Forth, Grampian, Highland, Northern Isles and Western Isles, are more likely to say that they think some of the building facilities need improvements to make them 'fit for purpose' than RCFs in Tayside.

Governance and management of the RCFs

Descriptive observations of regional differences

2.85 RCFs in the Western Isles appear to show the highest proportion of community ownership, the Northern Isles through local Trusts, and Clyde Valley and Forth by local authority. RCFs in the Western Isles show an above average proportion of RCFs limited by guarantee, and both the Western Isles and Clyde Valley are Regions within which RCFs are 100% registered as charities.

2.86 RCFs in nine of the eleven RPAC Regions have a high proportion (more than 70%) of committees which meet at least quarterly; in contrast, Tayside has almost 40% of committees which meet irregularly. Recruiting new members to the RCF committees was reported as "Very difficult" by the highest proportion of surveyed RCFs in Grampian, Northern Isles, Western Isles and Tayside.

2.87 The highest percentages of RCF committees that are part of a Federation of Village Halls or an equivalent network are: Borders (100%), Dumfries and Galloway (82.9%), Grampian (79.2%), Northern Isles (70%) and Tayside (76.5%). RCF committees *not* being part of such networks are: Argyll (88.2%), Clyde Valley (88.9%) and Western Isles (88.9%).

Statistically significant differences between RPAC Regions

2.88 On average, surveyed RCFs in Ayrshire and Grampian have fewer written policies (from a list of 7) than RCFs in Argyll, Borders, Clyde Valley, Dumfries & Galloway, Forth, Highland, Northern Isles, Tayside and Western Isles RPAC regions.

2.89 On average, RCFs in Ayrshire and Northern Isles have fewer employees than those RCFs in Argyll, Borders, Clyde Valley, Dumfries & Galloway, Forth, Grampian, Highland, Tayside, and Western Isles RPAC regions.

2.90 On average, RCFs in Ayrshire have the lowest number of volunteers who are not on the committee. RCFs in Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, Forth, Grampian, Highland, and Tayside have a greater number of volunteers than RCFs in Ayrshire, but fewer than RCFs in Clyde Valley, Northern Isles and Western Isles. Further, RCFs in Dumfries & Galloway and Northern Isles use fewer staff hours per month than RCFs in Argyll, Borders, Clyde Valley, Forth, Grampian, Highland, Tayside and Western Isles. In terms of volunteer hours specifically, RCFs in Argyll, Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, Grampian, Highland and Tayside use fewer volunteer hours per month than RCFs in Ayrshire, Clyde Valley, Forth, and Northern Isles.

Economic viability of RCFs

Descriptive observations of regional differences

2.91 RCFs in the Western Isles appear to have a higher proportion of business plans (40%), together with annual budgets (60%). RCFs show the lowest proportion of business plans (less than 20%) in Argyll, Clyde Valley, Dumfries and Galloway, Grampian, Highland and Northern Isles. RCFs within Clyde Valley hold a lower proportion of contingency reserves. RCFs in Ayrshire and Western Isles have a higher proportion of surplus of less than £1,000, and higher proportions of facilities (10-14).

2.92 In terms of funding sources from which RCFs have received funds in the past five years, the lowest percentages for surveyed RCFs are in Tayside and Grampian RPAC Regions; conversely, the highest percentages for surveyed RCFs are in Borders, Forth and Highland.

Statistically significant differences between RPAC Regions

2.93 On average, the insurance value of surveyed RCFs in Argyll, Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, Forth, Highland and Tayside is lower than the insurance value of RCFs in Ayrshire, Clyde Valley, Grampian, Northern Isles and Western Isles (Q36; statistically significant).

Usage of RCFs

Descriptive observations of regional differences

2.94 When looking at the number of groups using the surveyed RCFs, those which report use by 4-15 groups per week appear to be highest in Argyll and the Western Isles. As highlighted in the findings relating to multi-service use by external service providers, the overall picture for the surveyed RCFs is of limited external use. In fact, in the RPAC Regions of Argyll, Borders (100%), Dumfries and Galloway, Grampian, Northern Isles and Tayside, more than 80% of surveyed RCFs report no external service provision in the RCFs.

2.95 Specifically in terms of usage of RCFs by health service providers, it is difficult to see a pattern when looking at the RPAC regions: Highland has highest reported

use, with 10 RCFs reporting use by service providers; no use by service providers is reported in Borders.

2.96 Grampian has the highest reported use for day-care, (five RCFs), with some RPAC Regions having higher use: Forth 77.8% (21) and Borders 51.9% (19). Similarly, 56.7% regularly host indoor sports and games.

2.97 Some of the more remote and rural regions have higher reporting of no access to outdoor facilities or spaces. In the Borders RPAC, 23.3% of respondents report no access; Highland RPAC report 35.3% with no access, Northern Isles 36.4% and Western Isles report 40.0%.

2.98 The majority of RCFs across Scotland report that there are seasonal fluctuations in usage of the RCFs, the main pattern being that winters are busier than summers. Those RPAC Regions within which the surveyed RCFs found this particularly to be the case are in Borders, Clyde Valley, Dumfries and Galloway, Forth and Northern Isles. The Western Isles show equal percentages of surveyed RCFs which report either that winter is busier than summer or vice versa.

Statistically significant differences between RPAC regions

2.99 On average, the percentage of local people who use RCFs monthly is lower in Dumfries & Galloway, Forth and Tayside than in Argyll, Ayrshire, Borders, Clyde Valley, Grampian, Highland, Northern Isles and Western Isles.

2.100 On average, there are fewer activities taking place on a weekly basis (from a list of 22) in RCFs in Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, Grampian, Highland, Northern Isles, and Tayside than there are in RCFs in Argyll, Ayrshire, Clyde Valley, Forth, and Western Isles RPAC Regions.

2.101 On average, fitness classes happen more regularly in RCFs in Argyll, Ayrshire, Borders and Forth, than in Clyde Valley, Dumfries & Galloway, Grampian, Highland, Northern Isles, Tayside and Western Isles.

3. FINDINGS: SUPPORT AND FUNDING FOR FACILITIES

Introduction

3.1 In this section of the report, the first part examines the findings from the postal survey, in relation to use of advice, support and training by the surveyed RCB committees. This is then followed by findings from the six case studies which explore processes by which the six RCB committees have sought advice and support for their plans.

3.2 The section then moves on to consider the advice and support services available, and then the current sources and levels of funding. In addition to an electronic database produced during the project, findings are also presented from a series of telephone and face-to-face interviews with a range of funders and advisers to RCBs in Scotland.

3.3 The purpose is not to give precise details of all funding schemes (this is provided in the electronic database). Rather, the approach is to examine issues, constraints, opportunities and changes within the funding and advice landscape, from the perspective of those providing funding and support, and from those in the RCB committees who have experience of navigating through the range of funding and support possibilities.

Committees' use and experience of support

Networking for information, advice and support

3.4 Survey respondents were asked to reflect on their use of sources, and types, of support in running their RCF over the previous twelve months. Table 3.1. shows the organisations from which the surveyed RCFs in Scotland had sought advice (Q61). Almost half the surveyed RCFs mentioned the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), and, given that four-fifths of surveyed RCF organisations/committees are registered charities, this is perhaps not a surprising figure. Federations of Village Halls, which operate actively in some parts of rural Scotland, had been approached by almost half of the surveyed RCFs. Findings from Q64 of the postal survey showed that 60.5% of RCF committees were "part of a Federation of Village Halls or equivalent network".

Table 3.1. Organisations from which surveyed RCFs have received advice

Source of guidance or advice	Percentage of RCFs receiving advice from this source in the last 12 months
Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator	49
Federation of Village Halls	45
Local Authority	39
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations	35
Local Council for Voluntary Service	27
Compliance Authority (e.g. Fire and Rescue Service)	26
Local Rural Partnership	11
Scottish Government	11
ACRE	3
Volunteer Development Scotland	3
Other sources	6

3.5 Local authorities had provided support and advice to 39% of RCFs. Approximately one quarter (26%) of RCFs had been in touch with compliance authorities; this low percentage could relate to the survey finding that 45.3% of surveyed RCFs do not have any written policies (such as health and safety, child protection); it could also reflect the fact that RCFs can access compliance information through SCVO, local CVSs, and Federations of Village Halls.

3.6 Respondents were asked to rate the “usefulness” of the information they received from these sources (on a scale of 1 [not useful] to 5 [very useful]). Looking only at the collective total for those who responded and who gave a score of “4” or “5”, that is, at the positive end of the scale, the results were as follows: SCVO (29%), OSCR (31.1%), local CVS (24%), ACRE (1.5%), local authority (31.6%), Scottish Government (6.2%), Federation of Village Halls (40%), Compliance Authority (25.8%).

3.7 When looking at the formats in which committees received their information relating to RCF management (Q60), respondents reported: on-line resources (11%), handbooks (7%), toolkits (6%) and information sheets (3%). Those who used on-line sources mentioned websites of local development partnerships, local authorities, local voluntary groups, SCVO, OSCR, the Scottish Government. Examples of handbooks included ones from the local Federation of Village Halls, Fire Safety, local authority and OSCR. Examples of toolkits used were those from development trusts and partnerships, OSCR and SCVO; for information sheets from ACRE, SCVO, Fire Protection Officer, local councils, OSCR and local CVS were mentioned. In all cases, respondents found these resources to be useful.

3.8 Just over one-fifth (21.3%) of surveyed RCFs reported using support and advice from a project officer, such as through a short-term development grant, with 95.1% of those saying that this had been useful. The types of support provided by a project officer included: advice about grant applications, references to grant funding, energy efficiency savings, village appraisal, background information from other RCFs, business planning, fundraising, attendance at RCF committee meetings, community animation support, signposting to relevant agencies, encouragement, planning and designing hall, and a skills and needs survey for the RCF committee

(both in terms of the wider community and what would be needed within the committee).

Training received by RCFs

3.9 Respondents were also asked about training received over the past 12 months by the respondent and/or any other member of the RCF committee (Q63, Table 5.2.). For almost a quarter of RCF committees training had been in the area of food hygiene, and almost one fifth in the area of first aid. However, a large percentage of RCF committees had received no training in a wide range of areas in the past 12 months. This was particularly the case in relation to business planning, meeting management, governance and overall RCF management. This finding may link with the finding that less than one fifth (18%) of the surveyed committees had prepared a business plan in the last five years, and two-thirds (65%) of those surveyed had no budget preparation year-on-year.

Table 3.2. Types of training reported by RCFs

Type of training	Percentage of RCF committees reported training received for committee members
Food hygiene	23
First aid	19
Funding-related	14
Legislation compliance	9
Event management	3
Governance	3
Meeting management	3
Business planning	2
Marketing-related	2
People management	2

3.10 Respondents were asked to indicate whether they or any others on the committee had attended a range of events (related in some way to RCFs) in the past twelve months (Q65): workshop/seminar (13%), conference (10%), information day/open day (7%) or networking event (2%). The types of events included: local village halls meeting, Federation of Village Halls, local authority, development partnership workshop, convention of community councils, alternative energy for halls event, eco-halls, book-keeping workshop, child protection training, finance and governance workshop, fire safety, funding workshop, OSCAR workshops (such as preparing accounts, e-communities), Lloyds TSB Partnership workshop, planning regulations, the Village Halls Summit (February 2008, Aviemore), and SRDP evening seminar.

3.11 In an open-ended question, respondents were asked to indicate whether they had any specific training, advice or support needs (Q66). Their textual responses are summarised in the Table 3.3.

Table 3.3. Types of training required by surveyed RCFs

Type of training need	Specific examples given by respondents
Building maintenance	Working out how to choose priorities in maintenance of our building
Funding	Availability of grants and how to apply
	Match-funding for Big Lottery application
Regulations, Legislation	On whether we are meeting all regulations, legislation (including licensing, public entertainment)
	Change in licensing laws
	First aid
	Health and Safety
	Risk assessing
	Event management and public liability
	Hygiene
Reducing ongoing costs	Securing cheaper insurance
	How to get extension from VAT without having to become a charity
	Reduction in heating costs
	Planning and architectural support
Getting more community involvement	Generating interest and support from community; how to encourage wider participation on committee, especially younger people.
	Marketing and promotion of events
Capacity-building of committees	Committee skills training, including how to manage meetings, paperwork and finances. Build capacity of management group
	Target planning
	How to build capacity of ageing management group, and how to encourage new blood into the committees
Others	How to persuade service providers to use our hall e.g. healthcare, Post Office, education etc.

3.12 One difficulty raised by survey respondents was that many of the training courses happen far from where they are based, and they struggle to find the time to attend them. This is coupled with project data which suggest that for most RCFs management is, necessarily, focused on maintaining the situation – financially, ensuring compliance and maintaining community interest. It appears that, if committees are fully occupied in just maintaining the situation, then governance can only be adequate, doing that which needs to be done. The time for training, or development planning or needs assessments is not there, nor the financial resources to undertake such work.

Six case study findings: advice and support for RCF committee plans

3.13 Most of the six RCF committees had obtained guidance and support from development officers on where to find the right funding, and found this support extremely useful. Three were members of the their local Council for Voluntary Services (CVSs) and two of the organisations in the Forth region had received support through a local authority funded 'village hall development officer'. The local CVSs had also provided advice on constitutional and governance matters, such as applying for charitable status.

3.14 The lack of experience on H1 Village Hall committee in securing external funding meant they had no such track record, and were unaware of the types of support that might be available to them for a new build (see Box 3.1.). The treasurer did not have access to a computer, or knowledge of how to use one, thus the secretary on the committee had taken responsibility for searching for funding programmes. Like all Highland case-studies this committee was aware of the new

Scottish Rural Development Programme which, along with the lottery, was seen to be critical to securing funds of the level required for a new build. Despite having attended a local information event, and seeking advice on how to apply to the LEADER and SRDP funds through Rural Direct, they remained unclear on which programme was most appropriate to their project and how to apply, "because it's new they don't know themselves". The committee had recently had their project outline to the 'Investing in Communities' programme declined on the grounds that they were seeking funding for a "meeting place", and apparently, had suggested considering other functions for their new building, such as an internet café. This model was seen, however, to be at variance with what the local community believed to be sustainable and functional: "If it's a community hall it should be a place where they could use it for *their* purpose, whatever that is" (P1). Rather than seek a larger multiple-roomed building which served a multitude of purposes, this community group believed that a smaller building in-keeping with traditional models was best suited to their community needs. The concern was, however, that they did not know where to seek advice or support from:

Box 3.1. Case study planning for a re-build

In 1996 H1 village hall committee arranged for plans to be drawn to upgrade the toilet and kitchen facilities. However, "nothing happened". Subsequently, the building condition got "worse and worse". Several individuals in the community, who recognized that "nothing was being done about the place", decided that the building needed to be brought back into community use: "it's here, it's ours, and we have to do something about it". Fund-raising commenced 'in earnest' one year ago but the committee was unsure about how to realise their vision. The committee had prioritised seeking a new access road to the site over plans for a new build, because as it stands, the access road is deemed unsafe. However, the committee member leading the plans states "we don't know what to do first" because "there's nobody there to guide you". Planning permission for the road has been submitted, and thereafter, the committee wish to pursue their plans: "once we get that...there's no point pushing for everything if we don't get that." One determined individual is driving these plans: "it's like every small community: everybody wants it [new hall] but nobody wants to do the work". The lack of skills on the committee for developing technical plans and submitting funding applications is a concern to them. The groups outline proposal was recently declined by the Big Lottery thus currently it is hoped that the 'Investing in Ideas' programme could assist them realise their ambition. The committee had registered to apply for the new Rural Priorities programme but a member commented, "it's all quite difficult. I don't know which category to apply for". Whilst the individual leading the plans said, "I'm willing to put the time and effort into it", it was thought to be a full-time job and require a project manager.

[H1 Village Hall]

Advice and support services available

3.15 This section reports on findings from telephone and face-to-face interviews carried out with individuals from the following organisations: The Big Lottery, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland, The Robertson Trust, Scottish Community Projects Fund, Community Energy Scotland, and local authorities (reflecting the case study selection). The questions focussed on provision of support and advice, capacity for this within the organisations, the objectives of this, and the perceived difference it makes for RCF committees and their projects.

3.16 The provision of advice for those applying for funds or support for their rural community building was varied. Much of the advice was in the context of funding

applications, although some related to, for example, compliance with regulations and legislation (such as disability access, public liability insurance, water rates, charitable status), or specific topics or areas such as renewable energy, management and governance, health and safety, and accounting and finance. Alongside the funding-specific advice, there was a range of advice available to RCFs through the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) and the local Voluntary Sector Centres (Council for Voluntary Services: CVS). SCVO operates a website which has information for village halls on a variety of topics, and the local offices also have access to, and can distribute, this information.

3.17 Although there were a small number of nationally available sources (such as through certain banks, the National Lottery, other Charitable Trusts, and SCVO), the remainder of the advice did not appear to be promoted coherently across rural Scotland. Rather, it was dependent on different levels of support, knowledge and information dissemination variously provided through, for example, Hall Federations (where they exist), local voluntary sector offices, local development groups and local authorities. Therefore, support, networking and knowledge can inevitably be “patchy” rather than consistent across the country.

Advice and support provided in relation to grant applications

3.18 Through this research, it has been possible to identify three extremely useful examples of processes in Scotland which provided an advice and mentoring service which moved and supported the applicant (such as an RCF committee) from their original idea through to their application for funding set within a planned, strategic context. The objectives of this approach have been summarised in Box 5.2. Broadly, they can be described as building and supporting the existing knowledge, capacity and skills-base of the local RCF committees.

Box 3.2. Summary of objectives of capacity-building through support to RCF committees

- Good practice examples => capacity-building:
 - **Step-by-step process**, from regional meetings through to full applications
 - **Practical help** with business planning, technical aspects, fundraising
 - **Networking and exchange** with other applicants, other success stories
 - **Governance**: moving towards/supporting good committee/Board functions
 - Mentoring towards **strategic** rather than **operational** mindsets, resulting in mission-setting, or goal-setting
 - Leading to **confident community ownership** of ideas and solutions
 - Break **dependency** cycle on short-term funding through wider income streams

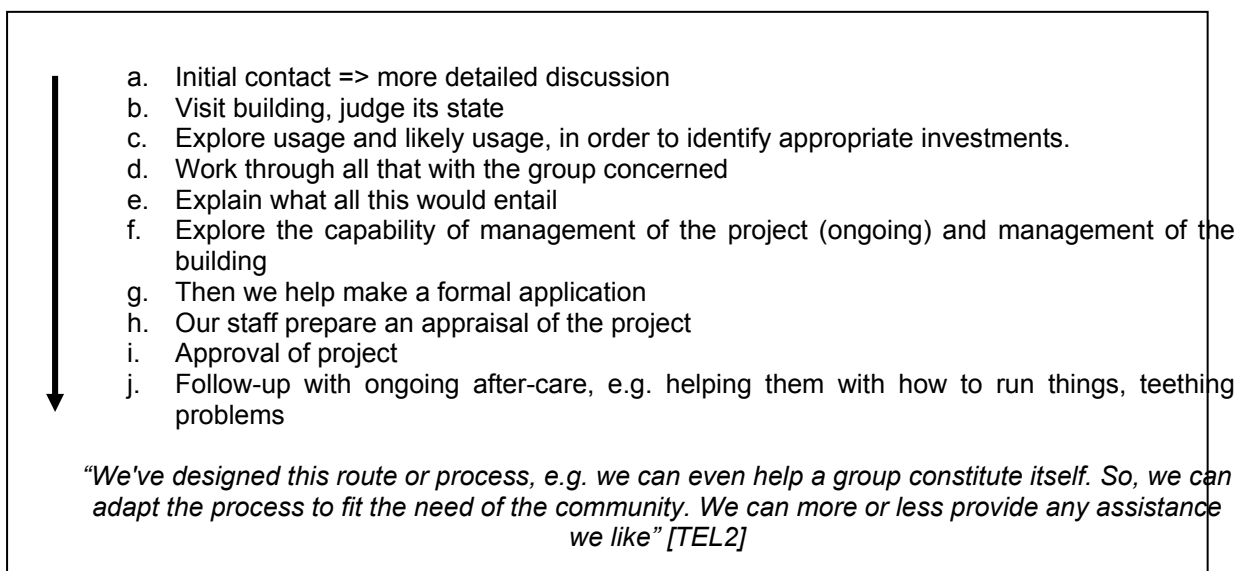
3.19 The three examples which were examined were, at the time of the research, available through the Big Lottery, Lloyds TSB *Foundation for Scotland* and Community Energy Scotland. Through a series of regional surgeries, national workshops alongside a consortium of regional delivery partners based in north, west, south and east Scotland, and a bespoke individual service as required, applicants could find a range of qualified individuals who could provide help through the application process, and give mentoring and direction in various ways for building a proposal based on community needs and a sustainable plan for the RCF. The emphasis on building capacity and confidence was outlined in the following quotes from provider-interviewees:

“We focus on building competence and capability at a community level... We are fundamentally involved in community development... So, assisting communities with their facilities is one part of the agenda.” [TEL2]

“Our purpose is to build confidence. We make it very easy for groups to get ideas and funding. We make sure there are no complex barriers, such as 25-page application forms. BUT we are NOT going to do it for them; they have to understand how the different options work, and make their decisions between alternatives that are appropriate for them” [TEL2]

3.20 Box 3.3. illustrates the process by which one of the funders manages or facilitates this capacity-building process, from initial contact to implementing project:

Box 3.3. Example of a process of ongoing mentoring during an application process



3.21 Interviewees stressed that one component of these capacity-building opportunities was that (in addition to a successful application) RCF committees gained knowledge about such issues as governance, business planning, technical specificities, accountancy or renewables. The following quotes are illustrative:

“We can help the management committee, the Board, we can offer coaching in roles and responsibilities, help them look at their strategic aims (rather than only focussing on operational issues), and also help with accounts/accounting and with fundraising.” [TEL1]

“We offer technical assistance, which can include very early funding for consultation, hire of meeting space for discussions, legal costs for setting up an organisation, business planning and feasibility studies; plus director training and courses for new groups about how to take on a community building” [TEL3]

3.22 Regional surgeries and local meetings allowed for applicants in even the earliest stages to present ideas in a relatively unformulated way, and to receive guidance on whether their ideas will fit with the funders' criteria, and if so, how to proceed through the various stages of their application. This was also where the variation in capacity became more evident:

"The events are attended by a mix of people, those who are more capable as well as those with less experience. Approximately 10% of those who come along have had funds from us before; the rest haven't necessarily heard of us before... Each participant gets a 45 minute slot to present their case, and we can give them a steer as to whether it would be an idea that we would be more or less likely to fund." [TEL1]

"We deal directly with hall committees and groups managing village halls; they vary from those which are extremely well organised and capable of taking forward significant projects, to those who can barely take their village hall forward" [TEL2]

"Capacity is a big issue for a lot of groups. A group may have a good idea but little capacity to develop it, so we sit down with them, and/or we put them in touch with others who can help" [TEL5]

3.23 More than one interviewee highlighted that the skills base of such committees was, naturally, dependent on the make-up of the local community:

"The skills levels depend on the make-up of the hall committee - in more affluent communities, you tend to have accountants, lawyers, architects etc... a switched on middle-class compared with, for example, a former industrial area, and some remoter areas. Overall I would say that if you can't access professional advice locally, then you will struggle, particularly for bigger applications - they require you to be some way along the professional curve.... [TEL6]

3.24 A point made by several of the interviewees, which they felt to be key, was the need to shift applicants' mindsets towards more strategic goals, thinking about where they want their RCF to be in five to ten years, rather than focussing only on the immediate needs of the community or building.

"We are helping them develop and strengthen their ways of operating, looking at their economic sustainability and their revenue-earning opportunities to make them more sustainable, for example, by providing (within village halls) local health facilities, letting space for medicine and/or alternative medicine, and letting space for business. It's about shifting people's mindset from the "now" to the longer-term sustainability, because the drip-feed of grants is not available to them..." [TEL3]

"There has been a bit of a shift towards people realising that they need a good committee, a good board, with good functions. There is a tendency towards more charities understanding this more, knowing they need some sort of business plan. They realise they cannot go on day by day applying for funds;

they need a mission, a vision, a strong business plan alongside strong management.” [TEL1]

“We have demanded more and more from applicants, e.g. architect’s plans. Our aim in doing this is to ask: do you have your head screwed on? Do you have your eyes wide open? This approach has definitely proved to be unpopular with applicants... We therefore ask applicants: How do you plan to deliver it? What is your longer-term perspective? What will you do when, in 10-15 years, the building needs refurbishing again? So, we are getting them to think in these ways.” [TEL4]

“Very often, communities have got ideas, but where village halls fall down is that they must have long-term viability... So, they have to look at ways of generating income... Before, we didn’t know if something would be viable for the longer term. By doing it this way, we are reducing the risk for them as well as for us through asking them to prepare business plans. It leads to more confident decision-making, for them and also for us.” [TEL5]

3.25 Some interviewees reported that, despite their conviction that this shift towards a strategic approach, and towards a centrality of capacity-building as part of the process, is critical, this view was not always widely held by applicants:

“Capacity-building is only “nice to do”. Organisations, nine out of ten times will say “oh definitely, it’s SO important”. And we then say to them “so why haven’t you applied yet?”. For these organisations, it’s on the back-burner; they’re running just to get the money in. Only 10% of our applications) are for capacity-building... It has to be sold in a practical way; it’s got to be highlighted as a benefit. As a strategy rather than simply fire-fighting. You have to prompt people.” [TEL1]

3.26 There are potentially two issues to highlight: (i) the apparent lack of priority placed on capacity-building by applicants, and (ii) the default view that capacity-building only takes place in relation to funding applications. This first point reflects the survey findings where the percentages of those taking training was fairly low and where respondents mentioned constraints on time to travel to training.

3.27 In addition to building the skills-base of local committees, it was felt that a capacity-building approach increases the sustainability of projects:

“The projects have been better planned and it would therefore make sense to suppose that they are more likely to be successful... Plus, evidence of need is part of our assessment process, again because projects are more likely to succeed if there is a need across the community for them - i.e. beyond the 5 or 6 people who run the hall” [TEL5]

3.28 In contrast to the capacity-building approaches, programmes and resources outlined above, many trusts or organisations offering smaller grants simply did not have the personnel and time to commit to such a programme. However, they were aware of the resources available from larger bodies and often point applicants in their direction:

“Here, there’s only a small number of assessors, so we don’t have the resources to do assessments as such. We’re only funding smaller amounts, typically contributing to a “pot” of funds that the village hall has pulled together... We usually wait until a bigger funder makes a decision on a proposal, and if they say yes, we then add ours... I think other smaller Trusts are the same; we/they don’t have the resources to screen or assess.” [TEL6]

“We have not done a huge amount of promotion as we have plenty of work already and do not want to get into a situation where we cannot service the additional calls...” [TEL2]

RCF funding landscape

3.29 External funding for RCFs can be sub-divided into: projects requiring up to £2000, up to £10,000, up to £50,000 and then up to one to three million pounds. Overall, such funds are directed at capital rather than revenue needs. Funding is typically assigned to RCF committees on a scale from initial exploration of ideas (see previous section on support and guidance) through to large capital investments such as new-builds.

3.30 In the “small capital” part of the scale, funding is available for activities such as: replacing windows, upgrading a kitchen, replacing lighting or flooring, making the building compliant with disability legislation, and putting in energy-saving features such as cavity wall insulation, roof insulation, double-glazing, replacing a boiler. As the funding amounts increase, so does the scale of the work, and in the larger projects, complete rebuilds are undertaken, for a new multi-purpose, multi-space community facility.

3.31 In addition to these types of funding, financial support is also available in the form of low-interest loans over variable pay-back timeframes, and designed specifically for social investment, community enterprises, charities, and initiatives promoting social inclusion and social justice. Some loans are targeted at specific geographical regions requiring regeneration, and others are available nationally.

Sources of funding

3.32 There is a range of sources, from The Big Lottery which operated a number of schemes or programmes such as *Investing in Ideas* and *Investing in Communities*, through to Banks which have development trust programmes, on to independent trusts and organisations giving smaller amounts. Funding is also available from organisations having a precise remit such as sports, the arts, heritage, health and wellbeing, community asset ownership, social inclusion, disability access, renewable energy and energy-efficiency through community ownership.

3.33 Most funds are available on a national basis, although a small number comprise funds or bequests for the benefit and regeneration of a particular geographical area.

3.34 In a number of instances, surveyed RCFs were still within the remit of local authorities. Each local authority appears to make provision in different ways, which may include all or some of the following: ongoing maintenance of the internal and external fabric of the building, funding to ensure the building is compliant with legislation, revenue stream for either staffing or to cover fixed costs such as heating or electricity. Box 3.4. shows one example of local authority practice. This picture, however, is not uniform across Scotland, with some communities experiencing considerable financial support from local authorities (as above) and others with very limited resources coming from this source. Further, some local authorities are in the process of divesting themselves of the RCFs, passing ownership on to local communities. This naturally raises issues of community desire, capacity and resources to own and manage such facilities.

Box 3.4. Example Local authority practice in relation to supporting RCFs

At the Council we have a Community Services Department, which has a number of functions, including Community Learning, Community Education and also Hall Development workers. For village halls, we have two types of grants: recurring and non-recurring grants to voluntary organisations, to halls and community centres.

Non-recurring capital grants, or one-off grants - that's where the Council put up 60% of the capital costs, up to a maximum of £6,000. Typically, the money goes to heating, DDA compliance (e.g. ramp for access, adapting toilets). If the hall needs more than that (e.g. £10,000) we still can only give up to a maximum of £6,000, and then we will point them in the direction of Lottery Awards for All, or Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland and others as appropriate. The fact that the Council has committed to a grant, the fact that we declare first, means that communities can then use that to lever more funds, and this brings more money into the area. So, by committing first, we enable more funds to be released into the community.

Our Hall Development workers have what we would call a capacity-building role. They provide management committee training, funding signposting, compliance advice, insurance information and so on. If the Hall Development workers couldn't answer it themselves, then they will point them to others within the Council who can answer; that's an in-kind contribution.

So, village halls have access to the recurring grants, the one-off grants, rate relief and other forms of support in kind – as well as the input from the development workers.

3.35 In addition to local government, there are some central government funding streams¹⁵, focusing for example on the Third Sector, enterprise, business support and management development, and on heritage and historical buildings' repair. Further, there is funding available under European programmes, some of which combine with complementary funds from national governments. Examples include the Scottish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (e.g. Rural Priorities and LEADER) and also the European Structural Funds (two new areas: H&I Convergence Objective Programme Area; Lowlands & Uplands Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective Programme Area).

¹⁵ The Local Capital Grants Scheme was run by central government until 2005; this provided funds into which Local Authorities bid on an annual basis, for capital investment in halls, up to a maximum of £200,000. Local communities would raise approximately 25% of the costs, with the remainder coming from local and central government.

3.36 The processes of applying for funds are varied, but typically the situation is that the larger the amount of money being applied for, the more forms and criteria are utilised in the application process. It could be argued that this is appropriate, particularly where upwards of £1-£2 million pounds is being sought. In these instances, detailed application forms, business plans, projections of income and sustainability, plus experts' drawings, plans and consultation on technical components are all required. Funders offer support in the development of these larger applications as it is recognised that they encompass a wide range of topics, and require expertise across a range of issues. At the other extreme, for some sources offering a relatively small amount of funds (for example under £1,000 and £2,000), a covering letter with one year of accounts and a statement of costs is sufficient to secure the funding. A short application form is also required in some instances, depending on the funder.

3.37 Some funders make awards only where match-funding has been secured, and this can lead to challenges for the applicants in juggling the criteria and processes of different funders, and also to operate within a range of different timeframes. Further, funders giving smaller grants realise that the need for RCF committees to secure matching funds from a number of sources can set up a chicken-and-egg situation:

"We usually wait until Lottery makes a decision on a proposal, and if they say yes, we then add our funds... This means, however, that if these halls don't get Lottery funding, this is the significant make or break. Because if they don't get Big Lottery funds, they don't get ours. With Big Lottery now closed for new applications, this could be an increasing problem." [TEL6]

"More joined-up funding is definitely required... There is so much artificial knot-tying to jump through hoops. It is unnecessarily convoluted. For one funder, you may have to pretend you have started in order for funds to be released, for another you have to ensure that you have NOT started – and that's just one example". [TEL6]

3.38 This finding is significant, particularly given that over three quarters (76.7%) of the surveyed committees had received funds from between one and five funding sources in the last five years. The second quote also raises the fact that, in many instances, RCF committees must carry out and pay for work before receiving the grant retrospectively; this is likely to result in difficulties for some applicants who do not have the financial reserves to under-write initial phases of projects. Thus, funder-interviewees recognised that RCF funding applicants have to be fairly "grant-literate" in their understanding of sources and processes to work their way through their funding options.

Scale of applications: appropriateness

3.39 Another issue in the interviews was that the increasing emphasis upon strategy-building, and mission or vision-setting, appears to be linked with a move towards supporting larger structures which provide many functions, rather than on supporting single-room buildings funded primarily through local rental income for classes. That is, sustainability is inextricably linked with larger scale, and with an associated capacity-building investment. For some funders, this appears necessary

in order to ensure the long-term survival of RCFs. For other funders, this implies that “one (big) size fits all”, and there is disagreement with this approach:

“The focus is increasingly on “enterprising examples”, on those which are self-sustaining, rather than the more basic needs of village halls. Not all halls want to be all-singing all-dancing. There is an enormous pressure to do all this even if it not appropriate. BUT you have very small halls serving some very small communities... There must be recognition that small communities want small halls. Not everyone needs the larger halls. It's going mad. I've got an issue with that” [TEL6]

“There's a place for all-singing all-dancing village halls, but many I talk to don't want that - they don't have the room or the capital for an office, a shop, etc, - they just need one room to meet... It's a lot about the capacity of communities to manage these multi-use facilities. More affluent communities can manage because they have professionals in the community; more rural ones don't have that sort of people. [TEL7]

3.40 Given that 44% of surveyed RCFs were being used by fewer than 50 people per week, and three-quarters of surveyed RCFs serve a catchment population of fewer than 1,000 people, issues of the appropriateness of the venue size for the ‘catchment population’ must be considered in terms of self-sustainability. As stated elsewhere in this report, larger multi-use centres may generate further revenue, but they also generate further costs, and thus care must be taken when considering the way forward.

3.41 Interviewees also stated that sometimes a more basic approach is required, for example, simply looking first to make small halls comfortable to be in, and thereafter looking beyond basic amenity to multiple income strands for their sustainability. One interviewee highlighted the downward spiral that occurs if the “basics” are not considered first:

“There is a cycle, a spiral: the village hall falls into disrepair, the heating costs are high, it is uncomfortable to use, less people are using it, the costs increase for using it, and so even less people use it.” [TEL2]

4. CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE FOR SCOTLAND'S RURAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Future needs and options

4.1 This chapter considers the future for the sustainability and changing role of community facilities across rural Scotland. The postal survey asked RCF contacts what changes, if any, they would like to see happen to their RCF and associated facilities in five years' time (Q67). The wide variety of responses that were generated offers a good illustration of the diverse needs of these buildings, the committees running them and the communities they serve. A full list of responses is given at Appendix 5, but they could largely be grouped under the following headings:

- external changes to the building (e.g. maintaining appearance, car-parking, a play area, recycling facilities);
- internal changes to the building (e.g. improved toilets - a recurrent theme, improved heating, insulation and storage);
- management (more young people on more robust committees appeared to be wide-spread desire);
- use and users (largely to widen and increase levels);
- general issues (such as less red tape, more favourable insurance arrangements, help with compliance and water rates exemption).

4.2 Open responses to Q67 highlighted a number of recurrent themes. Often, for instance, the RCF is the only community facility remaining in a village:

"Hopefully we can keep the building going – there's no Post Office, no shop, tea room or hotel or B&B left in the village..."

4.3 Some committees were clearly struggling and would continue in the future to face the challenge of the "spiral" (mentioned by a funding interviewee) of poor condition leading to less use which leads to poor condition:

"XX Hall was the focal point of our community. The Hall is very rarely used as the toilets need upgrading, the whole hall needs renovating. Lots of local groups have had to cease because of the condition of the hall. We are currently seeking funding to restore XX Hall which our community back wholeheartedly. The community needs a safe, secure environment to allow community activities to take place."

"It is a chicken and egg situation – we need improvements to the building and more people involved but we will not get more involved until there are improvements. We need recognition of the needs of small communities where nothing else exists and less talk of social enterprise which would be a non-starter here."

"We provide a community facility and would like to see some financial assistance from the government/local council to relieve the burden of fund-

raising to pay bills. The added incentive of being able to do something more beneficial than pay bills would encourage a more positive response from both fund raisers and sponsors.”

4.4 To face this, there was a desire to increase the strength of the committee whilst also wanting to keep its size manageable due to the limited number of people within a locality:

“Management needs to be kept to a minimum as all committee members also work on other committees et – this is a very small community so we all do several community volunteer roles...”

4.5 A key aspect of this, echoed elsewhere in the survey and case study findings, was the recruitment and retention of management committee members for the future:

“The current committee have run the hall for over twenty years. In the next five years all of us wish to stand down as all senior citizens. For many years we have had no support from the local community and no-one will volunteer for office. In order to avoid dissolution we continue as a caretaker committee for the benefit of the children’s groups... We hope that someone will come forward to continue the work we have put in for the last twenty years.”

4.6 Their “sense of the future” was explored also with the six case study committees, and some of the same themes emerged as in the postal survey. Common to all case-studies was a sense of uncertainty over the future financial viability of the facilities under their current organisational model.

4.7 There were three broad challenges. The first was related to the recruitment and retention of members for management bodies, and their capacity to negotiate what was perceived to be an increasingly complex funding and legislative context. This problem was believed to be one they had in common with many voluntary organisations. The second was related to the financial viability of facilities, particularly those facing a retraction in use, and the dependency upon external grant-aid to undertake large capital improvements, extensions, and in one case, a re-build. There was a shared feeling of fragility and dependency upon certain users and inadequate support from local authorities to meet increasing running costs, for water, electricity, gas, health and hygiene training, steward training, and to meet regulatory standards for electricity, fire protection and wheelchair and pushchair access. Third, was the increasingly complex regulatory framework which governs public buildings, and which also affects user-groups wishing to use the buildings. There was a shared concern that compliance with the regulatory framework affecting these buildings was difficult for volunteers to achieve.

4.8 Those consulted valued their community building and considered it to play a central social role, particularly in localities where no alternative facilities were open for community use. Indeed, in the Highland case-studies they were perceived as central to rural life and their current (and potential in the case of H1 Village Hall) diversity of uses was testimony to this. All management bodies and user groups felt that these facilities played an important social role in their community, but a common

theme was that local authorities, and central government, did not acknowledge this. The case-studies that exhibited a relatively wide level of community, public-sector and commercial use felt that the current maintenance grants from local authorities did not reflect the facilities' critical role:

P6: think we want the government to appreciate, or the local authority to appreciate, that these halls need to be funded. We don't want them to take over. We don't want Fife Council to run the hall. But we do want them to recognise that halls run at a loss. (F1 Public Hall)

4.9 Finally, greater dialogue between the government and those involved in running and using community facilities was called for, in order to progress a model of funding for community facilities that recognises: the particular circumstances of rural areas; the capacity for communities with differing social, demographic and geographical circumstances to be self-reliant and self-generating; and the need for a funding-regime that recognises the diverse needs of communities, and, therefore, the type of buildings which are appropriate to them.

Sustainability and community facilities in rural Scotland

4.10 In this context, the term 'sustainability' is used in two different senses. Firstly, what is the likelihood of Scottish RCFs enjoying longevity? In other words, do RCFs demonstrate characteristics that point towards their continuing to exist and to thrive well into the future? Secondly, how much of a contribution do the RCFs make to the 'sustainability' – in a broader social, economic and environmental sense – of the area in which they are located? Each of these is taken in turn.

The sustainability of RCFs

4.11 Table 4.1 focuses on various attributes which may be considered a 'good thing' when assessing whether an RCF is likely to thrive well into the future; for each attribute, the findings from the survey are highlighted together with some brief observations:

Table 4.1. Desirable attributes of RCFs

Desirable attributes for the the 'sustainability of an RCF'	Survey evidence	Observations from findings
Successfully draws on a diversity of funding sources	Only 8.4% of RCFs have secured funding from six or more funding sources in the last five years (Q48)	The majority of RCFs are quite limited in the variety of funding sources they draw upon. There seems heavy reliance on donations from individuals and local government
Successful in raising money locally: (‘Local people/ organisations clearly value the facility’)	(i) 20.3% have had funding from local businesses in last five years (ii) 67.0% funding from local government (iii) 19.6% funding from local charitable trusts (Q48)	The suggestion here seems to be that there is a very mixed picture of RCF 'embeddedness' in the local community as far as funding is concerned

Able to 'spread the burden' of RCF management	15.7% of RCFs have no more than 5 committee members. And only 31.1% of halls involve in management activities six or more volunteers who are not on the management committee (Q49)	The position seems to be that the management of the RCFs tends in many cases to fall on a small number of people (and this may endanger RCF longevity)
Able to replenish the pool of active volunteers	91.1% of RCFs find it 'quite or very difficult' to recruit new committee members. In all 42.7 % say it is 'very difficult'. (Q32)	This is a widespread problem; RCFs struggle to bring forward 'new blood' to help with the work surrounding running a village hall.
Local embeddedness: Committee is pro-active in informing the local community	(i) 82.9% of RCFs have public meetings (ii) 81% have 'community reps' on the committee (iii) 44.3% have or use a local newsletter (iii) 21.7% have a website (Q33)	Only a minority of RCFs <i>systematically</i> reach out to the whole community (e.g. via community newsletter) in informing them of developments. Links with finding that over half of RCFs are used by less than 20% of local population.
Local embeddedness: Committee is proactive in finding out what the community wants	(i) 75.5% of halls use public meetings (ii) 45.8% undertake user or community surveys (iii) 15.3% use their website	Only a minority of RCFs <i>systematically</i> reach out to the whole community (e.g. via community newsletter) in seeking the opinions of the whole community. Less than half do community surveys of need/opinion.
Systematic and relatively 'formal' in its treatment of key management issues	Almost half RCFs do not have written policies on: Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, environmental policy, volunteers, child protection, food hygiene and employment	Over 80% of halls have no written policies on key issues or have them on just a few such issues
Good linkage with wider support structures	60.4% of RCF committees are member of the Federation of Village Halls or equivalent network?	The picture is strong in some RPAC Regions and weaker in others; need for consistency nationally.
	Evidence of percentage of RCFs getting guidance or advice from key agencies in last 12 months. From OSCR (49%); Fed of VHS (45%) Their local authority (39%), SCVO (35%), local CVS (27%), 'compliance authority' (26%) (Q61)	This presents a variable picture, and means that more than half of RCFs have not received information and advice to help in the running, management and planning of their RCF.

The overall picture, in relation to attributes listed shows that, for the surveyed RCFs: there is fairly limited diversity of funding sources; management is falling on a small number of people, coupled with struggles to recruit and retain management bodies; there is the potential for increased systematic interaction and communication with the local community; and the strength of networks and knowledge exchange across the surveyed RCFs are highly variable.

The contribution of RCFs to 'local sustainability'

4.12 In several ways, RCFs can serve the cause of 'sustainability' in the broader sense by helping to conserve the environment and scarce resources, support the local economy, and underpin a viable local community. The following components in particular can be highlighted: energy conservation, employment and the local economy, promoting social inclusion, and the development of human and social capital. Pertinent findings are briefly discussed.

4.13 **Energy conservation:** findings presented in this report show the low percentage of energy conservation measures within surveyed RCFs and limited use of renewable energy (less than 5% of cases). The location of RCFs may reduce the need for community members to make lengthy trips to distant service-providing centres, journeys which would be made very largely by car. However, only a low percentage of RCFs reported being used by external service providers, although this could have an additional social or community benefits.

4.14 **Employment and the local economy:** many RCFs could be called "social enterprises" in that they "trade" and market their facilities to a wide range of users, whether individuals from the area or groups or service providers. They are a venue for a range of activities, some of which generate at least some income for the RCF and possibly for the local community and economy. Furthermore, the findings show that approximately 55% of RCFs employ at least one member of staff – albeit many working on very much a part-time basis. In a small village context, this employment role may not be inconsequential

4.15 **Promotion of social inclusion:** surveyed RCFs include in their management a diverse range of people (Q30) including many from groups who often may not be actively engaged in community participation. A high proportion are used by a wide range of people (young people in 77.7%; elderly people in 73.1%). Figures on use by other groups (e.g. BME or those with disabilities) were less informative.

4.16 **Development of human and social capital:** another potentially important product of the operation and use of RCFs is that in one way or another they develop local people as a potential resource for the community ('human capital') and cement and strengthen the links and the trust that bind communities together ('social capital'). How far is that the case for the surveyed RCFs? The responses to several questions give some indication of this.

4.17 First we may consider the involvement of people in RCF management as a 'developmental exercise' even if that is not deliberate. The median size of a management committee appears to be about nine (Q49) and about one-third of RCFs included in some aspect of their management at least six volunteers who are

not committee members. Another third included between one and five such people in that way.

4.18 Between 80% and 90% of RCFs have 'community representation' on the committee as a way of improving communication with the local community. Just what is understood to be 'community representation' may well have differed between respondents to the survey, but nevertheless a picture emerges from the answers to Question 33 and 49 that the management of RCFs does serve to develop quite a large number of people as 'community activists' of some sort, and to enhance interaction between people at the local level – a key element of the development of 'social capital'.

4.19 Looking further at the involvement of particular types of local people in RCF management, it is interesting (Q30) that a substantial proportion include on their committee at least one or two younger people – despite halls traditionally being managed by older, often retired, people. Thus, 28.6% of halls had at least one person under 25 years on the committee, and 54.4% had someone who has pre-school children. Such inclusion may constitute a 'training activity' for younger people who may go on and do other voluntary or community work in later life or use the experience of their involvement in development of their skills more generally.

4.20 Across the 322 RCFs for which data are available, an average committee size of nine people suggests that approximately 3,000 individuals are involved in managing a community facility.

4.21 Finally, another way in which the RCFs may be held to increase or sustain the social capital of rural Scotland is by providing a venue for community activities of one sort or another which themselves involve the fostering of social interaction and the cementing of trust between individuals.

Key policy and practice issues

4.22 This section summarises recurrent or particularly salient themes from findings across the project that suggest areas for particular attention and action for those involved in the use, management, administration, funding and support for rural community facilities, from the level of individual committee members up to national organisations.

4.23 **Advice and support for RCFs:** the findings suggest that committees would welcome and benefit from improved, more readily available support and advice, of a consistent standard, particularly in relation to: energy conservation and renewables; legislation and regulatory responsibilities; business and budget planning; and the evaluation of their potential to be multi-service outlets where appropriate.

4.24 **Age and condition of the buildings:** at least two-thirds of surveyed RCFs are more than 50 years old; a high proportion of buildings had unsatisfactory or unsuitable physical fabric, and high running costs associated with the energy forms used and poor energy efficiency were common. It is important for the structural implications to be understood and to explore strategic ways to address these. Rural

Direct provides advice on how to access funding from a variety of sources, including the SRDP, which can be used for this.

4.25 Location: as well as understanding local needs, committees need to be aware of their facility's proximity to other service venues and providers that could complement or compete with them and the implications this has for business planning and their longer-term sustainability. It would be interesting to investigate the significance of the relative location of venues, that is, how close to other similar ones, and their different functions.

4.26 Ownership and capacity: over 80% of surveyed RCFs are owned and managed by local communities, which has implications for their future, particularly given the difficulties that experienced in recruiting and retaining people to manage and run RCFs and the fact that in smaller communities there are simply less people to run such a resource. The data also demonstrate variations in the skills-base, confidence and knowledge levels of committees. Understanding how resources could be shared, at national, regional and local levels, to support those with less experience, or with less professionals in their locality with a willingness to be involved, would be valuable.

4.27 Management and business planning: there were varied models of RCF management. Almost one quarter of committees met only once or twice a year or even less regularly. Less than one fifth of surveyed committees had prepared a business plan in the past five years, and two-thirds had no annual business plan, which could have implications for the sustainability of individual facilities. Related to this, it would be helpful to better understand how RCFs have widened their range of funding sources even within the capacity and time constraints of the current committees.

4.28 Administration and compliance: some committees expressed concern at the 'amount of red tape' in relation to such requirements as risk assessments, energy audits and health and safety audits. Almost half did not have written policies on: health and safety, equal opportunities, environmental practice, volunteers, child protection, food hygiene or employment. It would seem to be beneficial for there to be some way to share assistance and guidance in terms of legislation and compliance, including the sharing of pro-forma templates.

4.29 Training: over 95% of committees had not received training in business planning, meeting management, governance or overall RCF management in the past year. In the same period, less than one-fifth had been to events such as workshops, seminars, conferences, open days or networking events. Distance and time were raised as constraining issues. It is important to understand the extent to which this finding disadvantages committees and an RCF's sustainability, and whether there could be ways to improve access to training and capacity-building.

4.30 Users: almost half the surveyed RCFs were used by fewer than 50 people a week; over three-quarters of surveyed RCFs served a catchment population of fewer than 1,000 people; and more than half were used by less than 20% of the local population. However, to identify understand the potential implications of these findings for the sustainability of RCFs, in terms of how vital they might be in their

communities and whether they could be used for service provision by external agencies, would require data on local demographics, needs and services and understandings of relations between these factors. Towards this, it would be beneficial to investigate how RCFs have already been successfully addressing the issue of a low and dispersed population base (for example, as multi-service outlets), and exchange this knowledge to enhance the RCF sector as a whole. It is therefore important for committees to assess how their existing “catchment” and positive social networking can be built upon, for example, through service delivery, for health or education or for governance.

4.31 Service delivery through RCFs: a principal purpose of surveyed RCFs was to provide a venue for activities generated by the local community, rather than being a provider of ‘services’ in a conventional sense. It is important to investigate whether there could or should be greater partnership working between public sector service providers and the existing resources or venues in rural areas, particularly in more remote locations. For example, RCFs could be “docking stations” for mobile services, where customers or patients wait in the warm, exchange news and views, and then use the mobile service. Multi-service outlets could provide a real contribution to the challenge of service delivery in rural Scotland, and could contribute to the achieving the SG Indicator and Target: *“Improve people’s perceptions of the quality of public services delivered”* (5)

4.32 Specifically, in the light of Healthier Scotland commitments, there could be increased use of RCFs for primary health services or GPs, as well as regular fitness classes. Given the Scottish Government’s 2008 report *Delivering for Remote & Rural Health*¹⁶ and 2007 Action Plan *Better Health, Better Care*,¹⁷ and findings from this research on current use, there may be scope for innovative ways of providing greater access to health services through these buildings. It may be worthwhile considering whether there could or should be greater partnership between public sector service providers and rural community facilities. Activities, exercise and social ‘getting together’ are potentially more difficult in rural areas due to transport needs, longer distances and poor access to a range of facilities and to other, like-minded and bodied people. Committees could explore whether they can optimise their potential for these.

The future for RCFs in Scotland

4.33 Despite the considerable challenges to their ongoing sustainability that many facilities are facing, there are plentiful (and often unrecognised) examples of good practice and imaginative approaches to finding solutions. Given this, it would seem fundamental to the continued sustainability of many facilities in rural communities that ways should be found to:

- share experiences and advice in relation to the facilities’ physical condition and maintenance;

¹⁶ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/05/06084423/0>

¹⁷ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/12/11103453/0>

- provide assistance, guidance, templates and experience in relation to administrative and regulatory responsibilities;
- share experiences of how management committees could be encouraged to build on their existing “catchments” through, perhaps, more diverse service delivery, for health, education or governance;
- share good practice on better engagement with the wider community;
- find leadership for the development and sharing of new and existing resources and opportunities.

4.34 This research illustrates the central role that community facilities - and the dedicated volunteers who manage them - play in the lives of many of rural Scottish communities, as hubs for local activity and service-provision and in the sustenance and development of social and human capital. There is a vast diversity of buildings and management models, of uses and users, of facilities and needs. Just as varied are the difficulties and challenges to their survival faced by individual facilities, but the research has also captured the opportunities for sharing lessons, expertise and skills between facilities across the country which will help them adapt to a changing funding landscape and the demands placed upon them.

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APPENDIX 1:

ACRONYMS

CCRI	Countryside and Community Research Institute, University of Gloucestershire
CPP	Community Planning Partnership
CVS	Councils for Voluntary Service
GES	Government Economic Strategy
MSO	Multi-Service Outlet
MSP	Member of Scottish Parliament
NPP	Northern Periphery Programme
OSCR	Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator
RCF	Rural community building
RPAC	Regional Proposal Assessment Committee
RSPA	Rural Service Priority Area
SAC	Scottish Agricultural College
SCVO	Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
SE	Scottish Executive
SEERAD	Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
SRDP	Scotland Rural Development Programme
UHI	University of the Highlands and Islands Millennium Institute

APPENDIX 2:

RESEARCH METHODS OVERVIEW

The project consisted of a number of separate but inter-related research activities.

Desk based research was undertaken to:

- review literature, policy documents and sources of advice and support for RCF management committees;
- update the SCVO's contacts database for RCFs;
- review funding sources and levels.

Primary research was conducted to:

- gather information on use, income, management, condition, energy;
- explore the importance of RCF to the delivery of a range of activities in a community, the economic sustainability of RCFs;
- and to investigate the value of multi-service facilities compared to single purpose ones.

The primary research consisted of:

- a postal survey (August-September 2008) of RCF contacts, completed by 322 respondents.
- stakeholder interviews with nine funders and advisers;
- detailed case studies of six facilities, which included in-depth interviews with committee and other community members.

Desk research

Literature review

This comprised a review of reports, commentaries and analyses concerning rural community facilities and buildings in the UK, including: the SCVO (2001) report, reports by ACRE, the Countryside Agency, research papers, reports from rural agencies, voluntary sector reports, and rural lobby groups. This part of the desk study was ongoing throughout the project, to ensure that new material could be incorporated and as findings emerged from the survey and case studies, relevant literature could be accessed. Publications provided by advice and funding agencies who were interviewed were summarised. Finally, the desk study review encompassed a brief policy review of the Scotland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (SRDP) in relation to funding of community facilities or buildings, LEADER as part of the SRDP, and the role of RPACs in determining funding for community facilities/buildings. The eleven RPAC Regional Plans were also briefly reviewed to provide background context for the case study component.

Contacts database of rural community facilities

The project team liaised closely with SCVO in order to update that organisation's existing database of village halls and other similar community facilities in rural areas. We also gathered information held by other organisations to complement the information held by SCVO. To do this we contacted the following and we received a

75% response rate to the emails, most including an up-to-date list or indicating someone else to be contacted:

- (i) 18 Federations of village halls
- (ii) 58 Councils for Voluntary Service
- (iii) 18 Local Rural partnerships
- (iv) 23 Scottish Agriculture Office (SAC) local area offices
- (v) 32 Local Authorities
- (vi) 46 Presbytery clerks

The SCVO database of community buildings/halls contained approximately 1,100 contacts. The newly received lists were cross-checked against the database, updating and looking for new entries. This extensive investigation, with the cooperation and support of those who responded to our queries, led to an increase in the database entries to a total of 1,190.

For the project, it was important to exclude “non-rural” community facilities as far as possible. Using the SEERAD 2006 Rural-Urban Classification¹⁸ and a database of the 40,000 rural postcodes (all of those in categories 5 and 6 of the urban-rural classification scheme), the team manually examined all entries in the community facilities database, to exclude non-rural instances. In addition, further cleaning-up of the database was carried out in order to:

- (i) remove those with non-rural postcodes;
- (ii) remove any entries that were apparently not halls
- (iii) remove those not linked to the management of an individual hall, e.g. Federations, Associations, Councils, Trusts etc;
- (iv) remove any entries that appeared to be duplications – eg XXXX Hall and XXXX Hall Committee;
- (v) remove any entries that had been included because the keyword search had picked up anything with ‘Hall’ in the name – so the Small Hall Band and the J Hall Trust Fund etc;
- (vi) and add county in order to allow for RPAC data extraction.

These stages were required to ensure that the data were ‘fit for purpose’ before beginning the postal survey. As a result, the number of unique rural entries was reduced from 1,190 to 861. Although it is not possible to state the absolute percentage of total rural community facilities (RCFs) represented by the figure of 861, we were confident that we had consulted a wide range of sources to check systematically and update the SCVO 2001 database – which also showed a similar number of facilities.

An inventory of current funding, advice and support

The information held by SCVO on their website listing funding sources and options (www.scvo.org.uk/villagehalls) was updated through a combination of routes –

¹⁸ This Classification has been updated by the Scottish Government in August 2008; however, this update took place after our construction of the database and mailing out of the pilot and main surveys, and we thus based our analysis on the 2006 Classification.

including those listed in the previous section, as well as the SRDP (through Axes 3 and 4) as a source of funding for community facilities.

As a result, an inventory of 88 funding programmes was compiled that provided capital grant support for community buildings in Scotland at the time of the research (summer 2008). The different funding-sources are categorised as (1) Local authority (2) European (3) Lottery (4) Grant Making Trusts (5) Non-departmental Public Bodies (6) Scottish Government. The database headings are:

- **General information:** Name of organisation, programme, category of funder, brief description
- **Eligibility:** Groups, costs, areas, target groups, ineligible costs
- **Funding:** Rate (%), maximum level, conditions, duration
- **Application process:** Type of application, time of year, support (yes/no)
- **Assessment process:** Criteria, assessment body
- **Awards:** Previous awards (if info available)
- **Further info:** contact details, further resources
- **Additional comments:** other contacts, business case

Postal survey of RCF contacts

A postal survey approach was selected because, given the nature of the data we wished to generate, our experience showed us that the types of questions required would be far more amenable to a postal rather than telephone survey, since the latter would require the respondent to listen to many different options, and also have information which they might not have to hand. Also, given that many of those working to support community facilities do so on a voluntary basis in their own time, we wished the surveys to be completed at a time to suit the respondent, which a postal survey allows.

Sample size

A key output from Phase 1 was the updated record of community buildings in rural Scotland. Based on previous estimates, we had anticipated that the total population of rural community facilities in the database would around 2,400 and had anticipated having the resources to select a sub-sample of approximately 50%. However, given that the revised database comprised just 861 unique rural entries, we decided to send the postal survey to 100% of the 861 cases.

Structure and content of questionnaire

In structuring the postal survey (see Appendix XX) our aim was to address the three-fold question central to the research project, that is: what is the current state, usage and provision of community buildings in rural Scotland? The five themes can be summarised as:

- The building
- Management of the building
- Economic viability
- Usage and users

- Advice, support, training

As preparation, we examined in detail the SCVO 2001 Survey, the ACRE 1988 and 1998 village hall surveys, the 2008 ACRE survey draft questionnaire, and the Defra 2006 Rural Community Buildings questionnaire. So, in addition to grounding the questionnaire in the project objectives and the early findings from the desk study we were also informed by previous, extensive studies into this topic.

- In addition, to assist with design of the questionnaire, there were four subject specialists within the project team, in the areas of building design, small businesses, rural health, and governance of community-owned facilities. Each of the specialists was asked to comment on and edit the relevant section of the draft survey questionnaire, that is, on building condition, economic sustainability, primary health care and health improvement action or overall rural community facilities usage and governance. The specialists were asked to devise questions which would give them the data they would need to be able to comment – for the sample as a whole, and on a regional basis – for their respective fields.

Pilot and main surveys

The questionnaire was then peer-reviewed internally and piloted, as required by SAC's Standard Operating Procedures for carrying out survey work. We also sought approval from the Scottish Government Research Advisory Group for the questionnaire content.

The pilot survey was posted out on 24th June 2008 with returns requested and received by 9th July 2008. Twenty-nine individuals had been randomly selected from a list of those who had participated in the Scottish Government-funded Village Halls Summit organised by SCVO in February 2008. It was felt that they would be the most willing to spend the time filling in the pilot survey and commenting on its content, format and length. We received 19 responses (a 66% response rate). As a result of the pilot, there were only very minor changes to the questionnaire, which meant that the findings from the pilot survey could be included with those of the main survey.

The main survey was issued on 25th July to the 861 unique entries in the project database of RCFs. We were aware that this survey was being carried out in the summer period, which had two direct implications: firstly, many people would be away on holidays, and secondly, many RCF committees do not meet in July and August, so we knew that in some instances it would be difficult for respondents to complete the questionnaire without talking with other committee members and that this could delay responses rates and levels. We therefore sent out a reminder letter and second questionnaire on 26th August to non-respondents. By 8th September (the extended deadline), we had received 303 responses which represented a 35% response rate. As stated, the 19 pilot responses were added to the main database, which gave an overall response of 322 (37%).

Data management and analysis

On receipt of completed surveys, the data were entered into an SPSS spreadsheet. After the (second) closing date the full dataset of 303 surveys was produced; the 19 pilot surveys were added to the dataset to give a working dataset of 322 returns. Data analysis then proceeded through a number of steps:

a) **Descriptive statistics:** were derived for all questions (numbers and percentages)

b) **Recoding and creating new variables:**

(i) After examination of the descriptive statistics, a number of variables were re-coded (for example, Q1, Q4, Q19, Q51 etc) in order to reduce the number of categories included in the variable.

(ii) A number of new variables were added. For example, an indicator variable was added to demonstrate the total number of indoor rooms/facilities – from Q6. The same process was followed for other questions, including Q16, Q37, Q38, Q55, and others.

(iii) There were a number of questions where the answers were numerical values and, again, it was necessary to create a new variable for the analysis. Thus, variables with categories (range of values) were added for Q36, Q49 and others.

(iv) A new variable was created for Q44 indicating income minus expenditure.

(v) Once these various exercises were complete, descriptive statistics were sent to the four project experts – in each case for a limited number of relevant questions that had been decided previously.

c) **Investigating multi-purpose versus single focus:**

(vi) Next, a number of variables were selected to indicate whether or not a building could be considered to be multi-service: Q6 (shop); Q37 (PO licence); Q52 (number of service providers); Q59 (GP); Q59 (other primary healthcare services); Q59 (day-care services); Q59 (support groups); Q59 (education and training); Q59 (PO services); Q59 (services – library, other LA services); Q59 (commercial activities).

d) **Identifying statistically significant differences in the data:**

(vii) Statistical analysis was conducted to investigate whether, for example, those surveyed buildings being used by more service providers were more likely to have a more diverse committee, more likely to have a better financial balance, and so on. Tests conducted were T-tests, ANOVA and Kruskal-Wallis, depending on the nature of the data.

(viii) These statistically-significant findings are reported at relevant places within the report.

e) **Regional differences:**

(ix) Next, we investigated the extent to which there were any regional differences between buildings in different RPACs. This was done, firstly through cross-tabulations to illustrate the nature of the data, and secondly, by testing whether differences were statistically significant (using the same statistical tests as above).

(x) Again, the results were divided between the four experts based on their areas of expertise and interest.

f) **Textual data:** Additionally, the few open questions that required respondents to provide open-ended answers (mainly Q66 and Q67) were recorded and used to add contextual detail to the analysis above.

Telephone interviews with funders and advisers

A key component of the project were interviews with a sample of stakeholders who provide or have provided: (i) advice and support services to rural community facilities (such as to village hall committees); and/or (ii) funding to rural community facilities. The two purposes of these interviews, were to verify the findings of the desk study and survey (that is, triangulation – providing information on similar topics from other sources in order to check its validity); and to investigate the issues of support, advice and external funding more thoroughly.

The sample for these interviewees was formed in close discussions with the SG Research Advisory Group. As a result, nine telephone interviews were carried out, with individuals from the following organisations: The Big Lottery, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland, The Robertson Trust, Scottish Community Projects Fund, Community Energy Scotland, and two local authorities (reflecting the case study selection).

The interview topics were e-mailed in advance to the interviewees:

a) Current advice and support:

- (i) Types and levels of support, and variations in this (spectrum/typology)
- (ii) Gaps in provision, from their perspective (e.g. training?)
- (iii) Difference that this support makes to committees (with examples)
- (iv) Support needs of committees (and how have these/will these change and why?)
- (v) Discrepancies between need and provision, including in terms of provider capacity

b) Current sources and level of funding for rural community facilities:

- (i) Funders that contribute to financially supporting community facilities
- (ii) Criteria that funders are asking communities to meet (and why are these important?)
- (iii) Level of funding provided (and reasons)
 - c) Possibilities for more joined-up funding, e.g. joint funding schemes (including barriers and opportunities)
 - d) Possibilities for (and challenges against) streamlining administrative processes associated with funding, e.g. common application criteria or shared application forms
 - e) Prospects for existing funders to continue their support, and challenges
 - f) Possible new sources of funding (and likely associated requirements, timeframes, levels etc)
 - g) Other pertinent issues from interviewee's perspective

Data management and analysis

Note-taking took place during the telephone interviews, with respondents being asked to clarify key points. Each interviewee file was stored as a Word document. These semi-structured interviews provided qualitative data, which were subject to Thematic Analysis, whereby the responses are grouped under the themes (Advice and Support; and Sources and Levels of Funding) and their sub-themes as they emerged. In addition, responses relating to themes suggested by interviewees were recorded and reported.

Presentation of findings

Responses are shown in the report, with the range of responses made clear. Due to this being a small sample, and also being a potentially emotive subject, confidentiality was guaranteed to the interviewees and thus, when reporting verbatim quotes, interviewee codes were used and all references which could “locate” them were removed.

Rural community facility case studies

The aims of the case studies of individual rural community facilities were:

- a) To generate findings (from interviews, observation and photographs on-site) which give the opportunity to write an in-depth commentary on the state, usage and provision of rural community buildings;
- b) To give an additional “flavour” to the survey findings, by allowing us to follow up on emerging aspects in more detail (such as health-care provision, or social enterprise models, governance, capacity for management and adaptation, and equalities); and
- c) To be able to verify some of the self-reporting findings of the postal survey (particularly in relation to condition of buildings, and economic viability).

The overall project was designed to draw on primary data from three sources: the postal survey, the case studies and interviews with funding agencies. The postal survey gave largely quantitative data (with a small number of open-ended questions); the case studies complement these findings by giving primarily qualitative information, through using a semi-structured approach.¹⁹ Together, these approaches built a more complete picture relating directly to the aims and objectives of the research project.

Further, the case studies gave the opportunity to examine in more detail those issues which were coming through from the postal survey. Finally, in two instances, a more detailed physical examination of the community buildings themselves took

¹⁹ This is where some of the structure is prescribed beforehand, through the identification of themes, in order to provide a core data set across cases for comparative purposes. However, interviewees are encouraged to develop their own thoughts and put forward their own information and concerns, some of which will be additional to the initial semi-structured list of themes.

place, to give an indication of the types of issues specifically relating to the condition and potential of such community resources in rural areas.

Selecting the two case study regions

A focus on “regions” was built into the research design, to offer some useful insights from the RCF project for subsequent RPAC Regional funding processes, Rural Priorities and LEADER.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2008) Report on Rural Policy in Scotland makes the following observation:

“There is still a significant divide between remote and accessible rural areas with regions facing serious challenges in terms of ageing, out-migration, poor economic performance and access to modern services... many remoter rural regions lag behind on some indicator and are qualitatively different because of their sparse population. Analysis of the Index of Multiple Deprivation reveals that within rural areas, there are very fragile areas, particularly in the periphery and islands which are deprived in several ways and suffering from inadequate infrastructure, higher costs of key inputs and lower access to services (30% of the areas with low provision of services are in remote rural regions)” (p.5).

This reflects the importance of relative “accessibility” on how rural livelihoods (including service provision) are experienced. Based on this, one RPAC Region with the average percentage of “remote rural” and one with the average percentage of “accessible rural” were selected. The following Table, adapted from Scottish Executive 2006 “Urban Rural Classification 2005-2006” and Scottish Government 2008: SRDP RPAC and Local Authority Boundaries, shows the data sources used for the selection of two RPAC Regions.

Table A2.1. Scottish Executive 6-Fold Urban Rural Classification by Local Authority and RPAC

RPAC Region	Local Authority	6-Fold Urban Rural Classification					
		Large Urban Areas	Other Urban Areas	Accessible Small Towns	Remote Small Towns	Accessible Rural	Remote Rural
Argyll	Argyll & Bute	0.0	18.0	0.0	29.9	7.9	44.1
Ayrshire	East Ayrshire	0.0	36.5	33.3	2.6	21.1	6.5
	North Ayrshire	0.0	70.6	17.3	0.0	7.3	4.8
	South Ayrshire	0.0	68.0	4.1	6.2	18.0	3.8
Borders	Scottish Borders	0.0	26.8	19.9	4.9	37.5	10.8
Clyde Valley	East Dunbartonshire	59.1	26.9	7.1	0.0	6.8	0.0
	East Renfrewshire	86.3	0.0	9.3	0.0	4.4	0.0
	Glasgow City	99.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0
	Inverclyde	0.0	87.7	4.8	0.0	7.6	0.0
	North Lanarkshire	65.4	16.3	10.9	0.0	7.4	0.0
	Renfrewshire	75.3	9.8	9.5	0.0	5.4	0.0

	South Lanarkshire	22.2	56.2	9.5	0.0	11.1	1.1
	West Dunbartonshire	49.6	49.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0
Dumfries & Galloway	Dumfries & Galloway	0.0	28.4	15.4	7.2	26.4	22.6
Forth	Clackmannanshire	0.0	53.7	31.3	0.0	15.0	0.0
	East Lothian	24.5	0.0	33.7	14.0	15.5	12.3
	Edinburgh, City of	95.9	0.0	2.8	0.0	1.4	0.0
	Falkirk	0.0	86.0	4.6	0.0	9.4	0.0
	Fife	0.0	65.7	16.4	0.0	17.9	0.0
	Midlothian	0.0	66.2	15.0	0.0	18.8	0.0
	Stirling	0.0	52.5	9.2	0.0	31.4	7.0
	West Lothian	0.0	70.8	17.6	0.0	11.6	0.0
Grampian	Aberdeen City	93.0	0.0	4.1	0.0	2.9	0.0
	Aberdeenshire	0.0	26.8	8.6	11.3	37.0	16.4
	Moray	0.0	23.8	18.1	14.4	29.9	13.7
Highland	Highland	0.0	21.2	3.7	24.4	11.3	39.4
Northern Isles	Orkney Islands	0.0	0.0	0.0	32.2	0.0	67.8
	Shetland Islands	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.6	0.0	69.4
Tayside	Angus	7.5	53.8	12.1	0.0	25.9	0.6
	Dundee City	99.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0
	Perth & Kinross	1.2	32.4	9.7	10.8	33.3	12.6
Western Isles	Eilean Siar	0.0	0.0	0.0	21.1	0.0	78.9
	Scotland	39.0	29.8	9.1	3.7	12.0	6.4

Source: Adapted by Leaza McSorley (SAC) from Scottish Executive 2006 "Urban Rural Classification 2005-2006" and Scottish Government 2008: SRDP RPAC and Local Authority Boundaries. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Rural/SRDP/RuralPriorities/WhatRegion> Accessed 29 July 2008

Average remote and accessible rural percentages for the RPACs were created.

Table A2.2. Average remote and accessible rural percentages for the RPACs

RPAC Region (alphabetical order)	Accessible rural % (average for RPAC where more than one LA)	Remote rural % (average for RPAC where more than one LA)
Argyll	7.9	44.1
Ayrshire	15.5	5.0
Borders	37.5	10.8
Clyde Valley	5.5	1.1
Dumfries & Galloway	26.4	22.6
Forth	15.1	2.8
Grampian	23.3	10.0
Highland	11.3	39.4
Northern Isles	0.0	68.6
Tayside	19.9	13.2
Western Isles	0.0	78.9
SCOTLAND	12.0	6.4

These percentages were re-ordered according to increasing percentage of accessible rural and increasing percentage of remote rural.

Table A2.3. Increasing percentage of accessible rural

RPAC Region, in order of INCREASING accessible rural %	Accessible rural % (average for RPAC where more than one LA)
Western Isles	0.0
Northern Isles	0.0
Clyde Valley	5.5
Argyll	7.9
Highland	11.3
Forth	15.1
Ayrshire	15.5
Tayside	19.9
Grampian	23.3
Dumfries & Galloway	26.4
Borders	37.5
AVERAGE FIG	14.8

Table A2.4. Increasing percentage of remote rural

RPAC Region, in order of INCREASING remote rural %	Remote rural % (average for RPAC where more than one LA)
Clyde Valley	1.1
Forth	2.8
Ayrshire	5.0
Grampian	10.0
Borders	10.8
Tayside	13.2
Dumfries & Galloway	22.6
Highland	39.4
Argyll	44.1
Northern Isles	68.6
Western Isles	78.9
AVERAGE FIG	27.0

If more extreme, particular cases had been selected, at either end of these scales, then it could be argued that the relevance of the findings to wider rural Scotland would be lessened. Given that the emphasis of this project was upon gaining a picture *across rural Scotland*, we therefore selected averages rather than extreme areas, that is, those having an average percentage of either remote or accessible rural for an RPAC region.

As a result, Forth and Highland RPAC Regions were identified for the case-studies. In addition to the rationale outlined above, these are also regions within the two Structural Fund Areas 2007-2103. Further, since Rural Direct (providing support and administering SRDP Axis 3, through which rural communities may apply for funds to assist with their community buildings) is sub-divided into Highlands and Islands and the rest of Scotland, the selection of one RPAC within Highland (where the Crofters' Commission operates Rural Direct) and Forth (where SCVO operates Rural Direct) could also prove useful for comparative purposes.

Selection of case studies within RPAC regions

Six case studies of RCFs within Forth and Highland RPAC region were selected from a sub-sample of the postal survey returns. By selecting three within a single region, we were able to take account of the region and its administrative, geographical opportunities, its constraints and challenges, and hold these as a “constant” backdrop to the three case studies. It therefore allowed us to see the community facilities in their context.

The sub-sample of returns was scrutinised to identify the extent of diversity according to two primary criteria: economic viability and multiple purpose. These criteria were important for one of the objectives of the project, to ‘critically review the economic sustainability and value of multi-service buildings compared to halls with a single purpose and focus’. The proxy variables used were:

- (i) Economic viability: surplus or deficit (income less expenditure) from Survey Question 44.
- (ii) Multiple purpose: the range of activities which take place at the facility (small - less than 7, medium - between 7 and 12, and high - 13 and over) from Survey Question 59.

The survey collected income and expenditure data for one year only, and therefore it was not possible to identify profit or loss trends. This limitation was acknowledged, and it was agreed that the issue of long-term trends needed to be further explored in the case-study visits. The range of activities that took place over the course of the year was considered to be a better indicator of multi-functionality than frequency of usage, which can be affected by population in the building catchment area.

Taking regional variations into account, six cases were selected.

Table A2.5. Case study overview

	Catchment population	Range of uses	Profit or loss	Date built	Building condition	Ownership
Highland H1	200	Small	Surplus	1932	Serious disrepair	Community group
Highland H2	250	Medium	Deficit	2004	Excellent	Community group
Highland H3	230	Wide	Surplus	1918	Reasonable	Community group
Forth F1	922	Medium	Deficit	1843	Reasonable	Community group
Forth F2	1320	Medium	Deficit	1896	Reasonable	Community group
Forth F3	2010	Medium	Surplus	Pre 1900	Reasonable	Local authority

Table A2.6 shows the key features of the RCFs that were selected for case study analysis:

Table A2.6. Summary description of case study RCFs

Case study	Summary description
H1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village hall located in dispersed village. • Local population 116, with wider catchment population of over 200. • Building owned by community and managed by voluntary organization.
H2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Hall. • Serving population of 260 people (including scattered communities). • Built in 2004 • Public Hall.
H3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves dispersed rural community with combined population of 230. • Main hall built in 1918, and extended during 1970s. • Managed by a voluntary organization. • Public hall built in 1984.
F1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community owned and managed. • Local population 922. • Locally-managed community hall. • Located in an expanding (commuter) village.
F2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local population 1320. • Built in 1896. • In 1993, managing organization constituted and manage it on 25-year lease from Local Authority.
F3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple purpose community centre. • Owned by Local Authority and leased since 1988 to an unincorporated voluntary organisation that manages the facility. • Village population 2010.

From these case studies, two facilities which were identified as likely to be in need of building improvement were selected for further analysis of their building condition by the building expert: one in Forth and one in Highland. One was a pre-WWII wooden building, with an asbestos cement sheeting roof, a cesspit, and needing improvement to make it both fit-for-purpose and compliant with legislation. The other was a pre-1900 stone building with a slate roof, and whilst compliant with legislation, needed improvement to be made ‘fit-for-purpose’.

Conduct of case studies

In the first instance, letters were sent to the management organisation of each facility requesting that their facility be used as a case-study for the project and outlining the research team’s wish to consult with both the management committee and user groups of the hall within a single visit. The actual process for consultation was determined on a case-by-case basis, as guided by the contact person and committee and the constraints and opportunities affecting availability of individuals. In one case, we were invited to join an already existing meeting; however, in all other cases the contact person convened a special meeting for the purposes of this research. In some instances further one-to-one consultations with users were conducted either by person or by follow-up telephone calls. The format for the meetings was governed by a standard ‘topic guide’ (Appendix 4) which ensured

consistency of topics between cases, but also allowed for flexibility dependent on the type of consultee (management committee, user-group representative, community representative, private sector representative) and enabled consultees to raise their own issues and concerns. In summary, the themes addressed were:

- (i) Introduction to interviewee and research project
- (ii) Background information – general
- (iii) The building and its history
- (iv) Management of the building
- (v) Usage and barriers to usage
- (vi) Financial viability
- (vii) Sense of the future
- (viii) Support, advice and funding

With one exception, all meetings were recorded to avoid copious note-taking and to ensure accurate reporting of the results. Further information was circulated to group members by way of an 'Information and Consent Form' (Appendix 4).

Building appraisal

Two of the case-studies were visited by a consultant from Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) Building Design Services and an appraisal of the building condition undertaken via a non-destructive visual inspection, accompanied in both cases by a representative of the management organisation. The inspection used measurements for the production of a building plan and involved appraisal of the building fabric, design, fixtures and fittings. Photographs and video footage were taken to support the visual inspection. The appraisal assessed the building's compliance with current legislation, the accuracy of survey responses, and sought to identify improvement necessary to maintain the building in good condition or to comply with current legislation.

Supporting documentation

Supporting documentation was collected, including copies of the management organisation's accounts, lists of user-groups, newsletters, annual reports, minutes of the last AGM and so forth. Photographs were taken at some facilities with the consent of those present.

Limitations of case-study methodology

The extent to which we were able to consult with community members, hall users and the management committee was to a large extent enabled by the main contact for the facility. The structure of the management committee was also a factor: in the Highland case-studies, committee members were also involved in one or more organisations that used the hall, whilst other committees adopted a management structure that had user-group representation on the committee.

Three of the group consultations comprised a range of interests, including community members (not belonging to any 'user-group'), committee members, and regular user-group representatives. Each group had between seven and eight

participants. The inter-dialogue between these groups generated insights for the research as well as being regarded as useful by the management committee. In the remaining three case-studies between one and three office-bearers were formally consulted, although informal discussions were held with people using the hall at the time of consultation in two cases, and employees. It is believed that all committee members had been invited to these meetings but other commitments were cited as prevented them attending. As it was, it was clear that those in attendance were the most involved in running the community facility, and therefore the numbers present are thought to have revealed something about the management structure of each building.

A limitation arising from the reliance on a single point of contact is that they can enable or limit access to individuals. A formal consultation with a wider range of user-groups, and in particular community members that did not use the facility, would have addressed this limitation. It was not, however, possible to arrange for greater consultation due to project resources.

APPENDIX 3:

POSTAL SURVEY

Postal survey covering letter

Dear

NOT JUST ANOTHER SURVEY....

A lot of attention is being paid to community halls and facilities, and their role in supporting aspirations shared by the SCVO and the Scottish Government for strong, resilient and supportive rural communities. Politicians and policymakers realise the importance of such facilities as a focus for community activity and a range of vital services, and know that many halls in Scotland face an uncertain future without improved access to funding and support for maintenance and development.

To understand the needs of those who use and manage such buildings, we need to have robust evidence about the current situation. That's where this survey comes in. This is a key part of a research project in which SCVO and the Scottish Government are collaborating. Funded by the Government, it is being undertaken by an independent team of researchers at SAC in Edinburgh and Aberdeen. The aim is to gather as much up-to-date information as possible about rural Scotland's community buildings, to help both policy-makers and SCVO develop a clearer picture of how they are used, what condition they are in, and what their needs are likely to be in future.

That's why we're asking you to take the time to complete this survey, and return it to Feedback Market Research in the FREEPOST envelope enclosed, by **XXXX July**. This survey has been sent to all rural community buildings listed on SCVO's community buildings database, and we need as many responses as possible for the findings to be useful. We assure you that all reported results will be completely anonymised and that responses will only be used for the purposes of this research.

I promise you one thing – this research is not an end in itself - its findings will help in recognising how best to meet the needs of rural communities. It is vital to improve our knowledge and understanding of the role of community buildings – and we need your help to do that.

Thank you very much for your help.

Kind regards
Norman MacAskill
Head of Rural Policy
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations

Postal survey questionnaire

NAME OF BUILDING	NAME OF MAIN CONTACT PERSON
ADDRESS OF BUILDING (including postcode)	ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTACT PERSON (IF DIFFERENT FROM BUILDING ADDRESS)
LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA	TELEPHONE NUMBER OF CONTACT PERSON
NAME OF ORGANISATION THAT MANAGES THE BUILDING	EMAIL ADDRESS OF CONTACT PERSON
WEB ADDRESS (IF ANY) OF ORGANISATION THAT MANAGES THE BUILDING	

SECTION ONE: The building

1. Approximately when was the building constructed?

Pre 1900 ☐1 1900-1914 ☐2 1915-1944 ☐3 1945-1959 ☐4
 1960-1979 ☐5 1980-1999 ☐6 2000 or later ☐7

2. What material covers the main roof?

Slate ☐1 Tile ☐2 Corrugated iron ☐3 Wooden shingles ☐4
 Thatch ☐5 Felt ☐6 Asbestos cement sheeting ☐7 Other ☐8

3. What material are the walls made of?

Brick ☐1 Concrete block ☐2 Corrugated iron ☐3 Wood ☐4
 Stone ☐5 Pre-cast concrete panels ☐6 Other ☐7

4. How many miles is it to another venue providing similar facilities?

Less than 3 ☐1 4-9 miles ☐2 10-19 miles ☐3 20-29 miles ☐4
 30-39 miles ☐5 40-49 miles ☐6 More than 50 miles ☐7

5. How long does it take to drive from the venue to a town of more than 10,000 people?

30 minutes or less ☐1 More than 30 minutes ☐2

6. Does the building have any of the following rooms / facilities (internally)?

Main hall	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Lounge	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Storage space	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Small hall	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Kitchen	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Showers	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Baby changing facilities	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Tea room/ dining area	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Changing rooms	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Office	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Toilets	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Meeting room	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Consulting room (health)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Accessible toilet	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Broadband connection	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Bar	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Shop	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Public IT	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Games room	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Training suite	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Stage	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Other	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2				Sport courts	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2

.....

7. What is the main fuel source for heating the building? (Please tick **ONLY ONE)**

Mains gas	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Electricity	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Oil	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Coal	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	LPG	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	Solar	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	Geothermal	<input type="checkbox"/> 8

8. What is the main type of heating appliance for the building? (Please tick **ONLY ONE)**

Boiler with radiators	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Boiler with underfloor heating	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Storage heaters	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Radiant heaters	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	Electric convector	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	Other	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

9. Does the building have any renewable energy installations (eg wind turbine, solar panels etc)

If so, what exactly?.....

10. Does the building have any...

Double glazing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Low energy lightbulbs	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Draught-proofing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Roof insulation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Cavity wall insulation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Waste recycling bins (inside)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2

11. What kind of drainage system serves the building?

Mains	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Cesspit	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Septic tank	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Other	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
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12. Are all internal areas accessible for people with mobility problems? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

13. Does the building have measures to assist the partially sighted? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

14. Are there measures to assist people with hearing impairment? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

15. Is there an accessible entrance for wheelchair users and pushchairs? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

16. Outside, does the building have...

Children's play area	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Community garden	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Picnic area	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Bowling green	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Sports field	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Other outdoor leisure space	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Community notice boards	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Visitor information notice boards	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Tennis court	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Multi-use games area	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Cycle rack or shelter	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Community waste recycling facilities	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2

17. Can the building be easily reached by public transport? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

18. Does a community minibus scheme or equivalent operate to the building? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

19. How many car parking spaces does the building have?

None	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Less than 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	10-19	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	20 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
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20. How many of these are reserved for people with disabilities?

1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	2-4	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	5 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	None	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
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21. Has the building had any renovation/improvement/ building work done in the last five years that is not part of routine maintenance? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

If yes, please provide brief details of the work that has been done

22. If there has been work on the building in the last five years, why was this necessary? (Please tick **ONLY ONE**, i.e. the main reason for doing the work)

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Structural repairs were needed | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | To comply with regulations | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| To modernise/improve kitchen/toilet/other facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | To extend the building | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| To maintain and/or increase bookings | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | To re-design internal space | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 | | |

.....
.....

23. Is there any (non-routine) work in progress on the building? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

24. Is there work planned for the future? (By “planned”, we mean ‘in the pipeline’ with at least some of the necessary funds in place) Yes ☐1 No ☐2

25. In your opinion, do any of the building facilities need improvements to make them “fit for purpose”? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

If yes, which facilities?
....

26. Do any of the facilities need improvements to comply with legislation? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

If yes, which facilities?
....

SECTION TWO: MANAGEMENT OF THE BUILDING

27. Who owns the building?

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Local trust | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Private individual | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Local Authority | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Local estate | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Local voluntary / community organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Other | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 |
| Local community | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | | |
| | | | |

28. Which of the following best describes the structure of the organisation that manages the building? (please tick only one)

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Trust | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Friends Provident Society | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Company limited by guarantee | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Co-operative | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Voluntary association (constituted voluntary organisation) | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Other | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| | | | |
| | | | |

29. Is the organisation that manages the building a registered charity? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

30. Does the committee include anyone who: (tick all that apply)

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Lives alone | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | No <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Is retired | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | No <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| Has pre-school children | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | No <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Has a disability | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | No <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| Has lived in the community all their life | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | No <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Moved to the community in the last five years | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | No <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| Is under 25 years old | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | No <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | | | |

31. How often does the committee meet?

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| Every week | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Every month | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Quarterly | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | 1 or 2 times/year | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | Irregularly | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
|------------|----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|

32. How difficult is it recruit new committee members?Very difficult ☐1Quite difficult ☐2Not difficult at all ☐3**33. Does the committee use any of the following for communication with the community?****a. To inform the community**

Public meetings Yes ☐1 No ☐2

Community representation on the committee Yes ☐1 No ☐2

Newsletter Yes ☐1 No ☐2

Every-day contact with people living in the area Yes ☐1 No ☐2

Website Yes ☐1 No ☐2

b. To find out what the community wants

Public meetings Yes ☐1 No ☐2

Community representation on the committee Yes ☐1 No ☐2

User/community surveys Yes ☐1 No ☐2

Every-day contact with people living in the area Yes ☐1 No ☐2

Website Yes ☐1 No ☐2

34. Have any of the following been carried out in the last 12 months?

Fire Risk Assessment	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Electrical circuitry test	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Crime prevention officer's visit	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Health and safety audit	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Disabled access audit	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Risk assessment	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Public Entertainment Licence inspection	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Environmental Health Inspection	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Energy Audit	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	PAT electrical appliance test	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Fire extinguisher test	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2			

35. Is the building or management committee insured for ...

Building reinstatement	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Employer's liability	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Contents	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Trustee liability	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Public liability	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2			

36. What is the current value of the building plus contents, for insurance purposes?.....**37. Does the committee hold any of the following for the building?**

Public Entertainment Licence	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Phonographic Performance licence	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Theatre Licence	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Liquor Licence (permanent)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Cinematographic Licence	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Liquor Licence (occasional)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Performing Right Society Licence	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Licence for operating Post Office facilities	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2

38. Does the committee have any of the following written policies?

A policy on health and safety	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	A policy on child protection	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
A policy on equal opportunities	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	A policy on food hygiene	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
An environmental policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	An employment policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2
A policy on volunteers	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 2			

39. Does the committee issue a hiring agreement to users?Yes ☐1 No ☐2**SECTION THREE: ECONOMIC VIABILITY****40. Has the committee prepared a business plan in the last five years?**Yes ☐1 No ☐2**41. Is the committee registered for VAT?**☐1 ☐2**42. Does the committee prepare a budget for each year?**☐1 ☐2**43. Does the committee hold financial reserves or a contingency fund to cover emergency repairs, etc?**☐1 ☐2

44. Please complete the simplified set of cash accounts for the last financial year

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Source	Amount	Source	Amount
Letting of building		Running costs (including heating, lighting, minor repairs, wages)	
Regular grants		Renovation, improvements	
Other one-off grants and donations		New building	
Interest		Interest	
Fund-raising events		Insurance	
Trading activity (eg café)		Governance costs (eg accounting/ meetings)	
Other		Other	
Total		Total	

- Yes No Don't know
- 45. Does the committee normally cover the running costs of the building (including minor repairs) from bookings and other income-generating activity?** ☐1 ☐2 ☐3
- 46. Does the building qualify for rate relief?** ☐1 ☐2 ☐3
- 47. Does the building qualify for water charges relief?** ☐1 ☐2 ☐3

48. Have you received funds from any of these sources in the last five years?

If so, please indicate approximate amount

Source	YES	NO	Amount £	Source	YES	NO	Amount £
Central government	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2		EU funding, eg LEADER	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	
Local government	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2		National Lottery	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	
Donations from individuals	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2		Charitable trust (national)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	
Quangos, eg Scottish Arts Council	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2		Charitable trust (local)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	
Local businesses	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2		Legacies	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	
National businesses	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2		Other	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	

- 49. How many people are involved in the management of the building, and what is the total number of hours per month spent by each group?** No. of people Hrs/ month
- Members of the building's main management committee
- Staff employed to run/manage the building

Volunteers (who are not members of the management committee)

SECTION FOUR: Usage and Users

50. How many people is the main part of the building licensed to accommodate?

Less than 100 ☐1 100-250 ☐2 More than 250 ☐3

51. During an average week (averaged out over the year) how many groups use the building?

None ☐1 1 ☐2 2 to 3 ☐3 4 to 8 ☐4
9 to 15 ☐5 16 to 30 ☐6 More than 30 ☐7

52. During an average week, how many service providers use the building? (by service we mean Post Office, Local Authority services, health services, banks etc)

None ☐1 1 or 2 ☐2 3 or 4 ☐3 5 or more ☐4

53. Combining all of these groups, and adding people who call in to use service providers (if any) how many individuals (approximately) use the building during an average week?

None ☐1 0 to 19 ☐2 20 to 49 ☐3 50 to 99 ☐4
100 to 199 ☐5 200 to 299 ☐6 300 or more ☐7

54. Does the level of use of the building fluctuate between seasons?

No ☐1 Summer is busier than winter ☐2 Winter is busier than summer ☐3

55. Do the following types of people regularly (i.e. at least once a month) use the building?

	YES	NO		YES	NO
Groups of young people	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Groups of women (only)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Groups of elderly people	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Groups of people with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Groups of parents and toddlers	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Groups of men (only)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Groups of people from particular ethnic minority backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Groups of people with particular religious beliefs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2

56. What percentage of the local community would you say regularly (i.e. at least once a month) use the building?

Up to 10% ☐1 10 to 19% ☐2 20 to 29% ☐3 30 to 39% ☐4
40 to 49% ☐5 50 to 59% ☐6 60 to 75% ☐7 75% + ☐8

57. What is the approximate size of the population in the area served by the building?

Less than 100 ☐1 100-499 ☐2 500-999 ☐3 1000-2999 ☐4 3000+ ☐5

58. What percentage of users of the building would you say are NOT from the local community?

Up to 10% ☐1 10 to 19% ☐2 20 to 29% ☐3 30 to 39% ☐4
40 to 49% ☐5 50 to 59% ☐6 60 to 75% ☐7 75% + ☐8

59. Please indicate how often each of the following activities take place at the building

	Every week	Every month	Less than monthly	Never
GP surgery	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Other primary health services (eg baby clinic, chiropody)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Fitness classes (eg aerobics, yoga, pilates)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Clubs for disabled/ infirm people	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Day-care services	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Support groups (eg smoking cessation, weight loss etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Indoor sports and games (eg badminton, snooker etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

Outdoor sports events	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Community/voluntary group meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Community events (eg festivals/ceilidhs/BBQs/fairs)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Kids groups (eg Brownies, Cubs, After School Clubs etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Arts events (eg music performances, photo exhibitions)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Education and training (e.g. evening classes)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Private functions (birthday parties etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Provision of Post Office services	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Services (eg library, other LA services)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Public consultations/public meetings about social/political issues	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Community Council meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Local business group meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
MP/local councillor surgery	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Commercial activities (eg shoe sales, antique fairs)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

SECTION FIVE: ADVICE, SUPPORT, TRAINING

60. In the last 12 months, has the committee used any of the following for help in running the facility? If so please provide details as indicated, and tick whether or not it was useful

	<i>Prepared / supplied by whom</i>	USEFUL?	
		YES	NO
On-line resources		<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Handbooks		<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Toolkits		<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Information sheets		<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Other.....		<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
.....			

61. In the last 12 months, has the committee received guidance or advice from any of the following organisations? If so, how useful was it?

	Not useful					Very useful →	
SCVO – Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
OSCR - Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
Local Council for Voluntary Service	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
ACRE – Action with Communities in Rural England	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
VDS – Volunteer Development Scotland	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
Scottish Government	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
Federation of Village Halls	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
Local Rural Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
Compliance Authority (eg Fire and Rescue Service)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99

62. Has the committee received support from a project officer/ development officer? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

If so, was it useful? Yes ☐1 No ☐2

What kind of support did they provide?.....

63. In the last 12 months, have you or any committee member received training in any of the following? If so, how useful was it in relation to the management of the building?

Not useful Very useful →

First Aid	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
Food hygiene	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
Good governance (eg training on the roles and work of management committees)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
Funding (eg training on identifying funding sources, accessing funding, applying for funds)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
Management of meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
People management	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
Event management	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
Legislation, regulation or compliance	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
Business planning	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> 99

64. Is the committee part of a Federation of Village Halls or equivalent network?

Yes ☐1

If so, is it useful?

65. In the last 12 months, have any committee members attended any of the following types of events (relating in some way to community buildings)? If so, was the event useful?

Brief details	USEFUL?	
	YES	NO
Workshop/ seminar	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Conference	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Information day/ open day	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Networking event	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2

66. Does the committee have any specific training, advice, support or funding needs? Please describe.

67. What changes (if any) would you like to see with regard to the building and associated facilities in five years time? (This could relate to usage, management, condition or anything else you consider important for the future of the building)


Thank you very much for completing the survey

Topic guide


1. **The building:** focussing on facilities including number of rooms, flexibility of usage, facilities for those with disabilities, heating, inside and outside spaces;
2. **History of how the building came to be in its current form/condition:** including key moments such as putting bids together, winning funds, changes in condition, repairs, building or installation of new indoor and outdoor facilities, who was involved, why were these changes seen as a priority, who do they serve) as well as planned improvements?
3. **Management and governance:** who owns and manages the building, how are decisions made, examples of specific decisions and how they were taken; who is on the committee(s), why/why not, how “representative” of the community is that committee felt to be; how has this changed; how will it change? We will also discuss the capacity of the current management committee e.g. what skills do they have/not have; does the committee feel it has sufficient time to commit to running the building; ease/difficulty in engaging volunteers and why; why people join the management committee and how long they have been serving on it. We might also wish to ascertain user-group views on how the building is managed, if this is possible during the visit.
4. **Usage, publicity and marketing within/outwith the community:** ask for lists of classes, any advertising or promotional material; other services provided, by whom and for whom; to what extent do they feel the “hard-to-reach” are making use of the facilities, and how might this be increased?
5. **Barriers to usage in this rural area:** e.g. access to private transport, opening hours; low numbers; seasonality; standard of facilities at community facility; costs; and how have some of these barriers been overcome (e.g. lift-sharing, community transport, marketing, other)? Again, if we are able to consult with non-users, we can ask their personal reasons for not e.g. using any of the building services or attending events held there.
6. **Financial viability:** specific challenges, solutions; plans for change, and constraints on those plans; other realistic opportunities; where they have come from (in financial terms) and where going to; seasonality issues? Links with other providers (such as health service, post office, mobile banks)? Links/competition with neighbouring community facilities? (e.g. schools, churches, other halls/venues)?
7. **Sense of the future:** (for the next five years) viability, needs, challenges, resources and concrete plans (why/why not), what needs to change in order to keep going (e.g. multiple usage, including other services)?
8. **Support/advice/funding:** ease or difficulty of obtaining advice; sense of going it alone or conversely of being part of a wider network of hall managers (e.g.

Federation of Halls)? Types of advice needed compared with types of advice can get? Does all advice necessarily come from outside the community or are there those in the community who have experience, knowledge etc which has been useful in the running of the community facility? Any input from a development officer? The postal survey will tell us if there has been an input from a development officer, but we can seek more information on the circumstances under which they had this input, along with additional information on satisfaction and support types?

Information and consent form



COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN RURAL SCOTLAND:
CASE-STUDY INFORMATION & CONSENT FORM



About this study
The Scottish Government has commissioned SAC to research the state and role of community facilities in rural Scotland. The first stage of this research used a postal survey of community facilities to collect factual data on usage, management and the physical condition of buildings. The second stage of this research uses six case-studies to explore in-depth issues affecting the usage, management and maintenance of rural community buildings. These local insights are considered to be crucial in order to understand better the patterns in the factual data. Your local community facility is one of six case-studies which we are using to illustrate our findings. This data will inform future strategies to support community facilities in Scotland.

Your contribution
In order to do this, we need to consult with members of the management committee of the building and a range of user-groups. Your views will be sought on the following topics:

- Discussion of the building itself, and how 'fit for purpose' you consider it to be
- History of the building and its function in the community
- How the building is managed
- Barriers and opportunities for usage of the building by the local community and externally
- Possible challenges to the future development of the building
- Plans and ambitions for the future & support, advice and funding needs.

This is an opportunity for you to make your views heard and to inform policy-makers and organisations as to how best provide advice and support to community facilities in the years ahead. This discussion is likely to take approximately one and a half hours of your time.

How the information will be used
The information collected from consultees will be analysed together with other case-study material. This analysis will form part of the Final Report that will be submitted to the Scottish Government in October 2009. A copy of the final report will be available in 2009. We will arrange for a complementary copy to be sent to you. The findings might also be used in academic publications.

Confidentiality
The identity of participants will not be disclosed in any research findings and the anonymity of the community facility will be protected. Any photographic material will ensure that neither people nor buildings can be identified. With your consent only, the consultation will be recorded. This would be to ensure that the data is recorded accurately, and to avoid copious note-taking on the part of the researcher.

Your consent to participate
I/We have read and understood the written details provided for me about the research, and agree to participate in the project.

Your signature:

On behalf of (name of organisation, if appropriate):

Date:

Full Screen
Close Full Screen

I/we agree/do not agree (delete as appropriate) that the consultation can be recorded for the purpose of this research.

Case study descriptions

F1 is a public hall located in a rural village. At the 2001 census the village had 385 households and a total population of 922. The main hall, which was built in 1984, was originally owned by the church. It was transferred to community use and ownership shortly after the First World War. The original building was badly damaged by fire during the 1950s. Fortunately, the building was well insured and the monies “got it reconstructed and a wee bit over!” An annex was included in the reconstruction which comprises a large meeting room, kitchen, hallway, storage and toilets. This is how the facility stands today. The main hall has a seating capacity of approximately 120 people, the small hall 50. All neighbouring villages have their own community halls and facilities, thus the managing organisation states they manage the hall for their community although some users of the hall attending classes and events travel from neighbouring communities. The village has a primary school, church, a hotel with public bar, and a range of retail and service outlets, including the village Bowling Club which has a function suite/bar. The secondary school is in a town located 10 miles to the east. The hall has undergone a programme of fixed improvements over the past decade. The hall is hired for use by a range of voluntary organisations, in addition to the Local Authority Education Department (primary school P.E classes), thus playing a central role in the community, however, increased revenue costs coupled with unpredictable usage by public service providers mean that the management committee are having to carefully plan their improvements and identify new users.

F2 is a locally managed community hall located in an expanding rural village. Once a mining village, the majority of its working-age population now commute to one of the two neighbouring towns, both of which are within an eight-mile radius. At the 2001 census the village had 576 occupied households, and a total population of 1320. The village has a primary school but local secondary school-age children travel to a school in the local town some five miles away. The hall has had a mixed history. Originally built in c.1896 by the Council as a community facility and functioning primarily as the local picture-house, in the late 50s it was transferred to commercial use. During the 1980s the commercial firm vacated the building and it lay unused for several years. The managing organisation was constituted in 1993 to take over the management of the building from the local authority on a 25-year lease. The facility is a very imposing single storey building with attic and basement in the Renaissance style and is considered of sufficient importance to be categorised with a ‘B’ listing from Historic Scotland for the Hall, Caretakers house (still in local authority management) and boundary walls. The building itself was re-opened in 1997 following refurbishment and comprises a large entrance, main hall, a grand stage, two side-rooms, male, female and disabled toilets, a kitchen, and a basement area that once housed the boiler. The basement has a small kitchen, a toilet, meeting room and is accessed via a rear entrance.

The two side-rooms are currently used as storage, thus the primary space for use by the public is the main hall which has a seating capacity of approximately 120 and a standing capacity of 200. The village has two other community facilities owned by the local authority education department, but managed by the one community group. One is a large community managed hall built in the 1980s prior to the commercial

vacation of the F2 Community Resource Centre and located in primary school. The second is a small community hall. Finally, there is a Local Authority-run Community Centre situated in the old library in which Council Community Project Workers are based. The centre has a large meeting room which is available free of charge to community groups during the day, and for projects involving Community Project Workers. Current users include the local Community Action Group, a youth group and a craft group. This general purpose room is also used by MSPs and Councillors for their surgeries. Another part of the building houses a health centre, which runs a baby clinic and has a visiting doctor. All three community facilities are located in the village main street within walking distance of one another. It is difficult, therefore, for F2 Hall Resource Centre to attract user groups and its main income is generated from their own community fund-raising events and private functions. The village has several churches, one general purposes store, a post-office, hairdressers, café, chip shop, bar and several other specialised retail outlets.

F3 is a multiple purpose community centre owned by the Local Authority, and leased since 1988 to an unincorporated voluntary organisation that manages the facility. At the 2001 census the village had 866 occupied households, and a total population of 2010. The organisation employs a part-time administrator who works three mornings a week at the reception of the building. The building is a diverse and flexible space occupying two levels. It comprises three small meeting rooms, one medium-sized meeting room with storage (e.g. used by the craft group), a mother and toddler group room with kitchen, four toilets, a kitchen, café, a 'sports' hall with a seating capacity of 80, in addition to storage space, a staff room, and the vestibule and reception area. The kitchen and café is currently franchised to a local entrepreneur. In addition to meeting space, the administrator provides office services to the public. Situated in a fairly central location, it is pavement accessible. There is no dedicated parking at the facility. The village has several other community facilities, including at Town Hall (WRI) and a second Local Authority Hall, both of which are available to hire by clubs and organisations. The local Bowling Club clubhouse is used by the community for some local events and other halls include the Guide Hall (girl guides, rainbows), Scout Hall (cubs, beavers and scouts) and Church Hall (Church Guild) of which all are available to hire by other organisations. The local primary school houses a nursery centre, out-of-school club and a community Adult Learning Centre. The Learning Centre is used by the school during the day and available for community use from 3pm onwards. The village has a health centre, dentist, library, post-office, bank, Council Local Services Centre, police station and a range of retail and hospitality outlets. The lease of the building is due for renewal in three years time and the committee are doubtful whether they will seek to renew this lease due to increased difficulties in covering running costs under their current model.

H1 Village Hall is located in a dispersed rural village. The village itself has only 40 households, with a population of 116. The hall, however, is also the nearest community facility for several other distributed villages and has an estimated catchment population of over 200. The hall was originally a Local Authority primary school but was bought from the Council by a local landowner and gifted to the community in 1958. Since this time the building has been managed by a voluntary organisation. The children of the village now travel to the neighbouring large village nine miles away to primary and secondary school. The village itself has no local services or facilities, other than a Church. The public hall consists of a main hall,

licensed to seat 60 people, and a partitioned area to the rear which houses a storage room and the kitchen, and an annex which houses the toilet block. The hall is situated immediately adjacent to a busy double-track road, thus can only be accessed by car. There is gravel road access, and a grassy area provides space for up to c. 20 cars. The external wooden fabric of the building is in poor condition, with wood-rot evident in the lower parts and, internally, the toilets are in serious disrepair and currently out of order. The dilapidated building has had little investment over the past decade and is rarely used, but traditionally was used primarily for community functions and events, and occasional voluntary group hire. The management committee is currently working towards replacing the hall, attracting external funding support, and raising funds through community effort. Community support is high for a facility to hold community events and for local groups to meet. The group is confident it can attract both old and new users, who currently use the range of facilities that include a village hall, community school with theatre, in the neighboring settlement.

H2 Community Hall is located centrally in a small village, serving a population of approximately 260 people extending ten miles to the neighbouring village to the south, and scattered communities ten miles to the east. The current hall was built in 2004 to replace the old Dorran structure hall that was no longer meeting the needs of the community and was in a state of disrepair. The new Community Hall comprises a main hall with a seating capacity of 80 and a standing capacity of 120, a large entrance hall (standing capacity 30), a kitchen, storage space, toilets, shower and a general purpose meeting room. The hall is situated off the pavement of the main-road, with hardcore car-parking spaces for c. 13 cars. It is adjacent to the local primary school. The village has a hotel, general purpose shop with post-office, several craft and specialized retail outlets, two seasonal cafes and is served by a mobile library and mobile bank. The nearest sizeable service settlement is 26 miles away and provides access to a health centre, dentist, library, swimming pool, secondary school and a range of retail outlets. It is seven miles to the secondary school. The primary school and Inn are the only other buildings open to the community, and as such, the majority of community events and clubs and organizations operate out of this community hall. Used on a daily basis, the hall is regarded as the 'hub' of the village but it is not considered 'fit-for-purpose' thus the management committee have developed plans to extend the building to accommodate more storage space and a dedicated office or meeting room.

H3 Public Hall serves a dispersed rural community, comprising some four settlements of which the location of the public hall is the largest, with a combined population of approximately 230. The main hall was built in 1918 by the men of the locality, and it was extended during the 1970s to its current form, which comprises a main hall with stage, meeting room, ladies, gents and disabled facilities, a small cleaning cupboard and vestibule. The hall is located close to the village primary school (school role of four), and elsewhere in the village is a shop and post office. The nearest sizeable service settlement is eight miles away, and has a Council Service Point, bank, library, doctor and visiting dentist. The children travel 26 miles to secondary school. The main hall is licensed to accommodate 100 people, but could hold significantly more. The hall has a hardcore car-park with spaces for between 10 and 19 cars. The facility is managed by a voluntary organisation and has a very wide range of community and voluntary group use, in addition to some

commercial use, which generates a reliable and regular income. The hall has undergone a series of improvements in the past 10 years, including improved disabled access and the new car park, and funding is currently being sought for modernisation of the toilets and kitchen area, in addition to several other improvements.

APPENDIX 5:

DESIRED CHANGES TO SURVEYED RCFS

Survey respondents' desired RCF changes in five years' time

Desired RCF changes in five years' time	
External to the building	Keeping building's appearance in good order
	Tarred car park with designated disabled spaces
	Replacement of windows
	Roofing material replaced/improved
	Children's play area
	Disabled access
	Outside seating/wildlife area
	Outside lighting for winter months
	Small wind turbine to reduce heating costs/save energy
	Recycling facilities
	External painting
	Notice boards
Internal to the building	More modernised entrance
	Modernised toilets and cloak room
	Acquisition of additional land to provide car park
	Accessible toilets
	Now boiler/heating system, with improved heating controls to save energy
	Improved/increased storage
	Improved toilets
	Sound systems, hearing loop and stage lights
	Improvements in energy efficiency, through a complete assessment of energy use and finding more efficient system. Use of sustainable energy resources, e.g. wind turbines, solar power.
	Better building insulation
	Disabled toilets
	Information displays on local heritage
	Sports equipment
	IT facilities; installation of public broadband
	Improved kitchen, allowing for on-site catering, to encourage new users and widen use, e.g. mothers with pre-school children, wedding receptions etc. This would improve future viability.
Management	Funding for a development officer for RCFs to be put in place
	A younger, enthusiastic committee; more younger people, i.e. under 40
	Getting younger people involved so that they can eventually replace older committee members whose average age is approximately 68 years old
	An increase in the number of volunteers/committee members to a more sustainable level which would help spread the day to day running activities
	Financial review to help with costs
	See half the committee changed with new local blood without a struggle
	A management committee with a plan to provide income to maintain the hall in a fit state for the future community
	A more robust committee. Increase in confidence, and increase in working relationships with other community bodies and local services.
	Transfer of ownership to community group
	Improvement in bookings
	Financial sustainability improved through new sources of income generated by community group
	Management needs to be kept to a minimum as all committee members work on other committees, particularly the case in very small rural communities
	Feasibility study to assess best ways forward
	A management structure to spread the workload and responsibilities more evenly; no succession is likely to be able or willing to do hours that the present older officers do.

Users and usage	Widen range of users, to include young people and elderly, drop-in centre.
	Use by public agencies
	Open facilities to the public, e.g. toilets
	Marketing the facility for weddings, classes, conferences, parties, art festivals, for example by using a website
	Marketing strategy and planning to encourage more use and attract new hall users
	Start a senior citizens club and also youth clubs
	Sporting/leisure/fitness facilities made available in centre
	More males using the centre
	Greater use of venue for local services, e.g. healthcare, education, post offices etc.
	Continued increase in use of hall for arts and entertainments
	More community use of hall during daytime
Fundraising	Bring new members onto the committee, for fundraising support
General	A fit for purpose facility that would serve all the communities' needs
	Less expensive red tape
	Less rules and regulations for small halls with a small turnover
	Exemption from water rates and waste
	Reduced insurance costs, and/or grouped insurance for local halls
	Expertise to help with compliance issues
	No charge for uplifting recycle bins

ISSN 0950 2254

ISBN 978 0 7559 7381 1

web only publication

www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch

RR Donnelley B58984



ISBN 978-0-7559-7381-1

