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Research Report- UHI CLAN Knowledge Exchange Strategy Project

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Research Report- UHI CLAN Knowledge Exchange Strategy Project

Research Team

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Introduction and Project Overview

This project sought to advance the work of the Community Landownership Academic Network (CLAN) through developing a Knowledge Exchange Strategy. The project incorporated representatives from across the UHI partnership (UHI Perth, UHI Outer Hebrides and UHI North Highland) active in the areas of land management, ownership and reform. We worked in partnership with industry body Community Land Scotland to ensure that the work was relevant, targeted and useful for both them and their membership.

In the original design of the project, the objectives were as follows:

1. To understand the experiences, needs and plans of asset-owning community organisations with regard to their interactions with the academic/research sector;
2. To develop a strategy for engagement and communication between UHI CLAN and asset-owning community organisations;
3. To initiate platforms/mechanisms through which to formalise ongoing dialogue between asset-owning community organisations and UHI CLAN beyond the length of the project.

Addressing these objectives would offer an insight into the past experiences of communities and researchers, the current state of this area of research, as well as inform a future Knowledge Exchange Strategy for CLAN. This would specifically include an initial research agenda and recommendations for communication mechanisms between researchers, community organisations and other stakeholders going forward. Tangible outputs from the project were to include a regular CLAN newsletter, a formal Knowledge Exchange Strategy and a peer-reviewed paper on the project.

This research report outlines the methods and findings of this project, followed by specific next steps in the development of CLAN's Knowledge Exchange Strategy.

Methods and sample

The project consisted of three sequenced phases of data collection: an online survey of Community Land Scotland members; a multisectoral workshop held at the Community Land Scotland Annual Conference; and targeted semi-structured interviews conducted with a range of stakeholders involved in conducting and/or using research in this area.

This study was granted ethical approval by the UHI Research Ethics Committee in March 2023.

Phase 1- Online survey

The survey (designed using Jisc Online Survey software) focused on the following areas:

- Past experience of engagement in research activity;
- Perspectives regarding the purpose and use of research;
- Opinions on how research could benefit organisations and/or broader communities, any specific research they would like carried out to address pertinent gaps in knowledge;

- Suggestions for ethical and sustainable engagement with research for the benefit of communities and organisations;
- Preferred methods and forms of ongoing communication between the community landowning sector and the research/academic sector.

It was distributed by Community Land Scotland via a range of communication channels with their members, including newsletters, direct emails and multiple posts on active social media groups. It was live throughout April 2023. A total of nine responses were received, which was considered disappointing and not fully representative of the wider sector. However, there was still considerable qualitative and quantitative data contributed which could still offer an insight into the experiences of organisations and respond to the previously outlined areas. Qualitative data was analysed using QSR NVivo, while quantitative data was analysed with MS Excel.

Phase 2- Collaborative Workshop

A collaborative workshop was held during the Community Land Scotland conference in June 2023. The workshop was scheduled during a parallel breakout session at the conference and lasted for around an hour. Ten participants, representing research, policy, practice and community organisations participated.

After introducing the work of CLAN, headline findings from the survey were presented, with feedback sought as to whether they were reflective of wider experiences. Subsequently, two specific discussion topics were focused upon: how research could benefit communities; and how research findings could best be communicated to a range of stakeholders. In addition, discussions moved into broader considerations of the how research could be conducted in a more collaborative manner with communities. During all of these discussions, data was recorded by participants on sticky notes and flip-chart paper, and later transcribed and analysed alongside other data.

Phase 3- Stakeholder interviews

Finally, key stakeholders in areas which either conduct or use research (for example, to inform policy or practice) were invited to be interviewed in order to consider the feasibility of implementing some of the suggestions emerging from the data into ongoing practice. Topic guides were kept relatively open and unstructured, but were informed by key themes in the data, tending to focus upon community engagement, mutual benefit and communication of research. Interviews were conducted online in June and July 2023, using MS Teams.

Eight stakeholders were invited to be interviewed, with one declining due to diary commitments. The resultant sample of seven respondents covered academia, policy and practice, with respondents often involved in more than one of these sectors. Interviews were transcribed and analysed thematically using QSR NVivo.

Findings

Experience of research activity

The findings indicate that there is considerable research activity focusing on community land ownership, but very little is known about its nature and findings. Between the nine respondent organisations to the survey (less than 10% of the total membership of Community Land Scotland), they had received over two hundred research requests over the preceding five year period, with over half of those having been accepted and contributed to. By far the most common type of research was undertaken by an academic institution, and the most common type of researcher was a Masters student, followed by undergraduate and doctoral students respectively. There was only one reported

instance of a professional/postdoctoral academic researcher having been involved in a research project.

While research focused on a wide range of topics concerning community landownership, on no occasion had the community been asked for input on research design or focus. Qualitative interview methodologies were criticised for having a large sample size (and thus taking up time from numerous members of the organisation/community), while surveys were often considered long, complicated and difficult to complete. Researchers were sometimes perceived as arrogant and/or uninformed, with respondents feeling they had to support them in their work. Research findings were hardly ever communicated back to the community, and when they were, it was not in a useful or digestible format. There was a common feeling that research was not of benefit to the community, and could be harmful in some circumstances. It may be worth considering at this point the potential for self-selection among the sample of respondents, and whether those with particularly negative experiences of research engagement may have been more likely to respond. This is of course possible, with the implication that these respondents are not representative of the community landowners more generally. However, having 'member-checked' these findings during phases 2 and 3 of the research, these findings were not contradicted or disputed by any subsequent respondents.

Researchers themselves worried that respondents were becoming less willing to participate, especially amid the large number of students seeking interviews. Researchers agreed that certain topics and case studies were over-researched, but also asserted that knowledge gaps were apparent elsewhere, limiting the claims that could be made about the impacts of community landownership more broadly. The sporadic and uncoordinated approach to research in the past was considered to be driven by the specific interests of funders, policy-focused bodies (such as the Scottish Government and Scottish Land Commission) and individual researchers. This was claimed to have led to an unsustainable research burden being placed on specific disciplines, sectors of society and geographical coverage. Researchers welcomed a strategic approach to spreading out the geographic and disciplinary focus of research activity in order to address both over- and under-research simultaneously.

Current approach and research evidence base

The evidence base around community landownership was considered to be underdeveloped, leaving large gaps in knowledge. For example, key strategic areas such as sector-wide and quantitative considerations of economic assessments, the nature of beneficiaries, and the consequences of the natural capital market and increasing land values, were considered largely absent. Some of those reporting these gaps were policy, practice and advocacy stakeholders desiring robust evidence to use for lobbying and policy design purposes, while others were researchers themselves. The latter were either not involved in these particular areas of focus, or otherwise felt unable to develop and pursue research in these areas.

While there were various papers, reports and case studies commissioned by advocacy or representative organisations which could give an illustration of the sector, these could be dismissed (rightly or otherwise) as biased or subjective. The academic evidence base which did exist was considered multidisciplinary but varying in quality and robustness, and tending to focus on a small number of case studies. Certain key studies were highlighted as significant, but overreliance on these indicates a narrow scope of verifiable knowledge. Complicating this further were the 'blurry' boundaries between research on community landownership and related areas including social enterprises, development trusts, broader land reform, community wealth-building and other related and overlapping concepts. While potentially useful and relevant for knowledge exchange involving

communities and other stakeholders, the lack of explicit focus on community landownership rendered such research less applicable to advocacy or policy-design in this field.

One of the consequences of this underdevelopment was the lack of recognition of this topic of research as a robust and cogent area of study. International awareness of, and interest in, the Scottish model is perceived to be held back by the lack of key academic sources and research continues to be both fragmented and piecemeal, while simultaneously concentrated and repetitive. Ultimately, it was felt that this area cannot develop sufficient maturity and progress to the next phase of critical consideration until such a time as this area can be better coordinated and professionalised. The practical consequence of this is that the community landowning sector lacks a robust evidence base with which to critically evaluate its own practices, where improvements can be made and how challenges can be overcome. Further, such an evidence base would contribute to the sector's sense of its own identity, as well as a positive case for its future expansion.

Further, participants questioned some of the assumptions and conventions around traditional researcher-participant relationships. The perceived hierarchy of value in different forms of research was considered potentially problematic, with locally-based research practice not being valued in its own right without 'top-down academic validation'. Such validation was associated with externally-defined priorities and research focus with overarching, non-specific and largely unhelpful questions being posed. However, it was recognised that researchers are bound by the structures of funding and methods for robust research which necessitate some assumptions and practices around evidence hierarchies and claims to knowledge.

The proposed solution to meeting the needs of both academic rigour and community benefit was an integration of skills and knowledge through cross-sectoral community-led research. An attempt to bridge the distinction between 'applied' and 'academic' research could draw on the relative benefits of robust yet relevant studies for the benefit of both communities and theory development within academia.

Future willingness to engage in research

Despite the issues identified above, no survey respondents ruled out engaging in research in the future. However, they caveated that the costs and benefits of research, in terms of time taken up and tangible benefits to the community, respectively, would need to be considered. Research findings were considered useful as evidence in funding applications, outlining the impacts that community landownership can make to their local area. Research outputs were considered beneficial in helping to tell the story of community landownership, and to showcase and celebrate what a community has achieved. Some respondents simply wanted to gain greater recognition of some of the challenges faced by the community, and encourage researchers to highlight them and work on solutions. While communities may wish to be able to conduct such research themselves, there was a recognition that many currently lack the knowledge and/or capacity to do so.

As well as seeking to learn more about their own community and the impact of the organisation within it, respondents were concerned with the potential broader effects on policy, and how this may affect the design, approach and communication of research, especially where it is being funded or used by advocacy organisations. The extent to which the community values this element of policy influence may vary, but it is important to understand whether they see this broader purpose for the community landownership movement as a direct benefit of the research.

In addition to conducting and communicating research, community-based researchers reported other benefits that researchers could bring to the community. Researchers can bring specific skills to

communities and could provide knowledge, capacity and practical help to existing projects of particular local interest. Long-term engagement with community members on a collaborative project was therefore considered to develop skills and techniques, as well as bringing local people together around a shared interest. Research can amplify lesser-heard voices and challenge biases and assumptions within communities. They can bring awareness of links and relevance to other communities, concepts and networks, and provide an outsider's perspective on the community, which was considered useful in the right circumstances.

There was encouragement from both researchers and communities for financially recognising the contribution made by respondents through paying a research incentive or covering costs, such as childcare or travel expenses. While covering costs was considered the minimum requirement, there were mixed feelings regarding the provision of financial recompense, and whether it should be provided on an equal basis to the valuing of researchers' time. While researchers broadly agreed with the need to value the time given to them, financial payments have the potential to affect the data collected, while creating difficulties with both ethics committees and funders.

Concurrently, researchers were keen to dispel misconceptions and assumptions regarding their role and purpose, and some of the pressures they find themselves under through creating a closer bond and shared understanding with communities. Beyond simply the focus of research, there was mention of further involvement that communities could have with research projects. While it was recognised that having an external perspective may be useful, there are also benefits to community-based researchers gathering and interpreting data in different ways. Furthermore, it was suggested that having members of case study communities on the advisory groups of research projects could contribute significantly more to their ongoing oversight and direction than the "largely disengaged senior academics" that were sometimes perceived to traditionally fill these roles.

Researcher conduct

The knowledge and conduct of the individual researcher was a factor which may affect willingness to engage. A lack of contextual knowledge of the topic or community and poor ethical conduct including the sharing of anonymised or confidential information, may lead to respondents rejecting future research requests or advising others against participating. However, if the researcher is embedded in the community for an extended period of time, engaging in activities and contributing to community life, this can have the opposite effect, enhancing acceptability of the researcher and subsequently increasing the quality and quantity of data gathered. Residing locally while undertaking fieldwork also contributes to the local economy through supporting local businesses.

In the first instance, prior to researchers even making contact with potential respondents or gatekeeper organisations, it was recommended that they first ensure that the research they are undertaking has not already been done, and that they are indeed addressing a specific gap in knowledge. In order to support researchers in this assessment, as well as to mitigate the risks of communities being repeatedly asked the same questions, it was suggested that a library of existing resources be created, including both outputs and data which could be used by researchers to reduce the need for new primary research (Recommendation 1- CLAN Library). This can be referred to by researchers to inform themselves of existing knowledge on this topic and ensure that their work is novel and valuable. Further, a 'cheat sheet' containing a curated list of the most useful resources may act as a short summary of this entire compendium of knowledge.

When approaching the community organisation, researchers should be honest regarding the limits of their research and its potential impact, without making false promises to potential respondents. Researchers should ask respondents/the community organisation what form(s) of outputs or

feedback would be most useful and interesting, and any other ways that they could benefit the community, and ensure that they are delivered in a timely manner. In addition to the accessible outputs highlighted above, communities should be directed to where further and more detailed information can be found. While some members of the community may be interested in read more academic outputs, others may wish to reference these works in funding applications or other documentation, or simply wish to read a compelling story about their community written from an external perspective.

It was proposed that the above should be compiled into a formal protocol for research engagement in order to set standards and expectations for researchers and communities (Recommendation 2-CLAN Research Protocol). The protocol should be freely available and state the specific procedures and requirements for engaging in research activity. This may not be especially onerous for researchers, but will guide them towards beneficial research activity. It was identified that this may be the first time that these researchers may be exposed to such ideas, even for those working at postgraduate level and beyond. While this guide may be of use to researchers, it can also be utilised by community organisations to set standards of behaviour and help them to understand what to expect regarding the research process. This may include requirements for communication and use of research findings (both for the community and the central repository of knowledge), and could act as somewhat of a conditional counter-offer when approached for research. It was encouraged that this protocol should be developed in collaboration with Community Land Scotland and reflect the needs of community organisations.

Research design

The ability for communities to help design the research was also a large factor in agreeing to future research activity. Respondents expressed a desire to audit and evaluate the impacts of their own work, considering external researchers crucial in doing so, due both to their skills and external positionality. The result of that work would allow for internal reflection on how to improve practice, learn from others, and have resource through which to evidence impact to funders and other stakeholders. This aspect of community-led research design requires early and ongoing collaboration to understand needs in terms of focus of study and communication of findings. Concurrently, this increased engagement would also enhance interest and willingness to engage in the research, so is considered mutually beneficial for researchers. Researchers also welcomed a less hierarchical approach to research and a shift in the power dynamics in order to create further impact through their practice. However, they noted the realities of funding streams and government contracts which dictate the research agenda as part of structures which are difficult to alter.

Specifically, it was suggested that an independently-hosted list of priority research topics could be contributed to by community groups, policymakers and representative bodies, and picked up by students and researchers as a way to undertake research in a beneficial way. In this sense, a form of 'Research Matching Service' (Recommendation 3) was proposed in order to deliver a strategic and coordinated approach to future research in this area. This agenda could be curated and strategically designed in order to address persistent knowledge gaps from a variety of perspectives, and identify which may be better suited to different forms and levels of research (e.g. Masters dissertations) and audiences (e.g. developing policy-facing outputs or plain-language community resources). This approach may help to address funding inequalities in enabling robust research to be commissioned and delivered despite not having the means to pay for it.

Suggestions to be added to a future research agenda included the following topics. It was recognised that these topics represent the views of a small snapshot of the sector and is thus not presented as a definitive research agenda, but an initial list of topics of future interest:

- The implications of the effects and responses to the climate and biodiversity emergencies, specifically:
 - The effects of climate change and how communities can mitigate them by becoming net-zero;
 - Boosting awareness and management of biodiversity;
 - Understanding the opportunities, risks and impacts of carbon sequestration, especially around peatland restoration;
- The development of community transport;
- Local archaeology and heritage studies;
- The practicalities and implications of applying Land Rights and Responsibilities legislation within community-owned land.

In addition, specific expert technical advice was sought on the feasibility and options around ongoing management of community-owned land, housing, water, energy and waste; uses and options for the 'Big House'. While developing research in line with the community's needs was the main focus of responses, it was also recognised that researchers could also identify further areas of potentially useful research not considered by local people, and make the case for its benefit.

Format and content of outputs

Respondents favoured outputs which were short and accessible, condensing and distilling all relevant information and key findings from the study into a plain-language, tangible output, tailored to the needs and use of the community. This may take the form akin to an executive summary of a larger output (whether that be a journal article or dissertation, etc.) and may include other forms of communication, such as videos and infographics. The format of this output should be consistent, with suggestions of a template which could be adapted for each study and useful to a range of different stakeholders (Recommendation 4- CLAN Briefing Paper).

This suggestion was welcomed by researchers who were happy to develop non-academic written outputs, so long as some infrastructure and guidance, in the form of such a template, was available. Indeed, a number of researchers expressed regret at the lack of effective plain language outputs produced in their work, and were enthused by a template and encouragement to improve practice in this area. However, potential barriers were identified in terms of the timescales involved in developing outputs, the willingness of some stakeholders to be associated with them, and how to communicate findings which may be critical of the organisation being focused on.

Researchers also welcomed a process, formal or informal, of checking emergent results with members of the community in order to consider the accuracy or validity of findings. This abductive approach may not be appropriate in all instances, but has been useful for grounding the research in reality, and better connecting researchers with their subjects.

Considerations for students and university-based researchers

There was a recognition that the confines of university-based research can sometimes mitigate against some of these suggestions, including around co-design, collaboration, timescales, communication of findings and other aspects of impact-focused research. Respondents expressed sympathy for the situation individual (often junior or inexperienced) researchers find themselves in, and the need to fundamentally alter the academic system to allow for a more mutually beneficial approach. This was especially present concerning students who may not have the power or knowledge to be able to challenge these confines, especially regarding outputs and feedback to the community. While Masters students sometimes attracted a negative reputation regarding their conduct and quality, it was also noted that, deployed and supported correctly on a relevant topic, the

capacity and enthusiasm they offer could be harnessed very effectively in developing the research base.

While there was an emphasis on encouraging good practice among individual researchers, there was a recognition that some of these aspects pervade academia and change must be made at all levels. For example, it was recommended that supervisors and grant-holders encourage active engagement with communities, ideally providing time and resource through which to undertake some of these suggestions. In turn, funders must incentivise such approaches and build in time and mechanisms for co-designed methods and fund incentives or other ways of recompensing communities for their time, as well as communicating findings back to the community in an accessible way. If these support structures are embedded prior to the project starting, the onus is no longer being placed on the student or researcher to drive change and convince their superiors of the need to behave differently. These elements relate to the concept of the 'civic university', challenging the role and purpose of the university in society to one which actively benefits its local area. This considers and challenges the extent to which universities and research institutions should be delivering impact within their vicinity, as opposed to educating a small sub-section of individuals, many of whom may not be from the local community.

A number of new models were proposed in order to challenge the traditional power structures involved in academic research. It was suggested that communities could hold the research funds and contract-in researchers to undertake a community-designed research project based on their needs. Alternatively, CLAN was suggested as a neutral facilitator of researcher-community relationships, while holding the research funds to offer such collaborations. In this way, communities can be empowered to be actors of change through helping to design and commission impactful action-based research, while researchers can claim instant, tautological 'impact' and likely receive a much warmer reception from the respondent community, likely benefitting sample size and data quality. For researchers, this met the three objectives of research funding, data quality and impactful research which will contribute to the standing of both the individual researcher, broader institution and academia as a whole.

It was conceded that researchers at an undergraduate or postgraduate level receive little advice and training in ethical or impact-focused research. While it was recognised that some universities, departments or individuals took great care to ensure that their students were adequately informed and acting in a manner that went beyond simply the baseline of ethical research, this was not considered to be widespread. One of the factors mitigating against this was the lack of support for this by university employers amid an ever-increasing number of students being supervised, and thus the often voluntary and unpaid nature of this added level of support which results in a scattered landscape of which students receive support.

It was suggested that a partnership could be established between universities (or specific departments within them) engaged in teaching and research in this area (Recommendation 5- CLAN Institutional Partnership). The first aim of this partnership will be to request that their students and researchers comply with the recommendations outlined in the CLAN Protocol, including: specific training in impact-focused community research and enhanced ethical practice; engagement with the CLAN Library and Research-Matching Service; and commitment to developing plain-language outputs, based on the CLAN Briefing Paper template.

[Summary of Recommendations and Next Steps](#)

This project has developed our understanding of the experiences of research in the area of community landownership, as well as a range of perspectives on how we can develop knowledge in

this area in a manner which is fair, relevant, impactful and beneficial to communities, researchers and other stakeholders. It has identified ways in which CLAN can continue to communicate with a range of stakeholders and serve a vital role as a key intermediary in this area.

A number of recommendations were made by respondents which will serve as the next steps beyond the end of this project:

Recommendation 1- CLAN Library

There is a need for a comprehensive compendium of knowledge on this topic. This will comprise an accessible hub of plain-language communication of research findings, potentially utilising student projects to 'curate' different topic areas and communicate them through standalone Briefing Papers. This resource will have multiple benefits: To better understand what is known on this topic and where research gaps persist; to support evidence-based policy and practice development; to support secondary data analysis and reduce the instances of research duplication.

Recommendation 2- CLAN Research Protocol

This guidance was recommended in order to ensure that communities are involved in the research process, and to encourage best practice regarding ethical, impact-focused research. This was felt necessary in order to bridge the gap between theoretical and applied research in order to fulfil the requirements of both academia and communities. The final protocol can be circulated around community organisations and researchers in order to set expectations and requirements around the planning, engagement, undertaking and communication of research.

While some recommendations were made regarding the detail of this protocol, it is vital that community organisations are fully involved in its development and approval. Further work is therefore necessary in order to coproduce this guidance alongside a range of stakeholders.

Recommendation 3- CLAN Research Matching Service

The original conception of this project included an aim to develop an initial research agenda in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. While a range of strategic research interests were identified, the relatively small sample size may mean that this list is not considered comprehensive or exhaustive, while topics of interest may be evolving and context-specific. Therefore, a static research agenda may not be an effective approach. Instead, a 'living' research agenda will be housed online with the ability for community organisations and other stakeholders to contribute to it, facilitating a more equitable and strategic approach to future research in this area. This list of research topics will be complemented by a directory of researchers in this area in order to facilitate an online 'research matching service' between communities and researchers. This service will serve as a base for ongoing collaboration in this area, offering access between all stakeholders.

Recommendation 4- CLAN Briefing Paper Template

There was demand for a standardised approach to communicating research findings through an accessible, plain-language format. This will facilitate the communication of research findings to a public audience, as well as the 'curation' of topics of interest within the CLAN Library. It was acknowledged that this form of communication is not a requirement of academic research and may add further work to researchers. Therefore, an easy-to-follow template should be developed in order to simplify this process as far as possible, and encourage its uptake.

While some suggestions were made regarding its format, these require further refinement and approval by stakeholders. Therefore, it is proposed that the development of this template is undertaken through a future project, the funding for which should be sought by a multisectoral collaboration, led by CLAN.

Recommendation 5- CLAN Institutional Partnership

It was recognised that, while direct contact and engagement with communities was often made by individual researchers, they were acting within the broader context, environment and constraints of the academic industry. Researchers were often relatively junior and inexperienced, lacking guidance and knowledge of ethical practice and previous research in this area. It was proposed that a broader approach to changing academic attitudes, supervision, guidance and funding in this area should be developed and encouraged between the main universities and research institutions working in this field. This would take the form of a CLAN Institutional Partnership. This body would seek to encourage a new approach within the academic sector which would filter through attitudes to funding, community engagement and communication of findings.

This partnership represents an ambitious attempt to alter practice across the sector, and requires sustained and deliberate effort and coordination. This is not suited to a one-off project and may instead form some of the ongoing core work of CLAN. Early conversations around its establishment will be held with the CLAN Advisory Group.

Outputs and Ongoing Communication

A number of outputs and platforms for ongoing communication were proposed within the original project conception:

- A regular newsletter has been established and is circulated quarterly. To date, it has consisted of summaries of presentations at online CLAN meetings, as well as relevant research publications, events, vacancies and other matters of interest. This newsletter will continue to develop and enhance its content and format on an ongoing basis.
- A multifunctional website is an immediate necessity for the future of CLAN. This will house specific functions detailed in Recommendations 1 and 3, as well as documentation related to Recommendations 2 and 4. It will also provide the public 'face' of CLAN and enhance its profile and recognition. Sourcing funding for the development of this website is a central priority.
- A Guiding Document for CLAN, detailing its role, aims, activities and future development will be finalised and published. This will incorporate CLAN's Knowledge Exchange Strategy, as well as a formal outline of CLAN's relationship and working practices with key stakeholders. It is anticipated that the accuracy and relevance of each component part of this document will be reviewed annually, ideally at the proposed in-person 'CLAN Gathering' events, or during the Community Land Scotland Conference, subject to discussions and funding.
- The results of this project will be developed into an academic article for submission to a relevant journal. This focus on sustainable, community-focused research is relevant to a wide range of fields beyond community landownership, and its implications and replicability will be a central area of focus within the paper. It is anticipated that this paper will be submitted to the Community Development Journal which specialises in this area. An informal approach has already been made to the journal's Editorial Board, and funding has already been secured for the paper's development.
- The approach proposed in this report will be developed into guidance to be used in other areas of research, teaching and knowledge exchange at the University of the Highlands and Islands. This will include the circulation of a project report around a range of internal audiences and the offer of specific materials on ethical research engagement to be promoted by the UHI Graduate School.

Conclusion

This was an ambitious and wide-ranging project which has the potential to fundamentally change academic engagement with community organisations in the area of community landownership and beyond. While the foundations of this effort have been established within the confines of time and resource available within this project, the recommendations outlined provide specific next steps beyond its completion. Some of these steps have already been initiated, in collaboration with key partners of CLAN. These efforts will continue in order to develop a more equitable, ethical and impact-focused approach to research, teaching and knowledge exchange in this field.

BM 13/10/23