Flamingo Land â?? will the Loch Lomond South Community Development Trust bid for Balloch?

Description

After the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) had effectively excluded the local community from the planning process which led to Flamingo Land (see here and here), a Community Development Trust (CDT) provided an alternative means for people in Balloch to have a say over the future of the land in the village. By setting up a CDT to represent them, the local community could, in theory, use the Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) 2015 to ask Scottish Enterprise to transfer the land to them. That Act also gave other local representative organisations, including the Balloch and Haldane Council (BHCC), the right to lodge a â??participation requestâ??, for example by asking Scottish Enterprise to be involved in future decisions about the land they owned in the village.

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The Loch Lomond South Community Development Trust

A public meeting called by the BHCC in 2024 gave the go ahead to the creation of a local community development trust for Balloch and Haldane, although the name subsequently chosen suggested it represented a wider area.

A first company, the Loch Lomond South Community Development Trust, was incorporated on 27th August 2024. It was dissolved on 5th August 2025 after an application in May 2025 by two of the Directors for voluntary strike-off (see here). The explanation for this appears to be that the memorandum and articles of association for the company did not meet the requirements of CDTs as set out in Scottish legislation.

A second company, the Loch Lomond South CDT Ltd was incorporated on 8th October 2024 (see here) with the same three Directors, Lynne Somerville, Andrea Middleton and Pamela Scott Gibson. A further 4 Directors, Jim Bollan (co-opted), Adrienne McAulay, David Ross and Murdo MacSween were appointed on 20th September 2025 and it is that â??teamâ??, with the exception of Murdo MacSween â?? who is missing â?? which is still featured on the Loch Lomond South CDT website (see here):



Screenshot 22nd June 2026

Companies House shows that Jim Bollan, Andrea Middleton and Adrienne McAuley have all now resigned as Directors of the CDT and a new Director, George Taylor, was appointed in January 2026. There is no other information on Companies House (accounts are due by the 8th July) and very little information on the CDT website: there are no minutes of meetings, the most recent published blog is a newsletter for November 2024 and you would not know the Trust had held their first AGM on 27th February 2026 nor what was discussed and agreed at that meeting.

The Trust has, however, continued to send out some information to those that subscribe to their newsletters who appear to include both members â?? i.e local residents with a right to vote â?? and supporters who reside elsewhere..

The Loch Lomond South CDT and Scottish Enterprise

After Scottish Enterprise transferred the land they owned at the Pierhead to the LLTNPA in May 2025 (see here), I asked Lynne Somerville, Chair of the CDT, whether they had registered an interest in acquiring this parcel of land, which in my view was crucial to the proposed Flamingo Land development. Her reply on 17th June 2025 stated that the CDT Directors had decided not to do because â??it would not only stretch our already limited resources, but could also risk the Trust being perceived as obstructive without a clear and viable alternative in placeâ??.



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newsletter from the CDT in July 2025 (see here) then informed subscribers that the Directors had lodged a asset transfer request to takeover the former Tourist Information Centre near the railway station in Balloch (photo above). It also stated there had been complications because the building had been promised to Flamingo Land by Scottish Enterprise as part of their Exclusivity (see here)

A further newsletter in October 2025 then asked subscribers to write to Scottish Enterprise in support of the CDTâ??s registration of interest. This was followed by an email on 4th January 2026 asking for feedback on whether the Directors should proceed because of the terms offered by Scottish Enterprise:

From info@lochlomondscdt.co.uk <info@lochlomondscdt.co.uk> Reply Forward Arch

Subject **IMPORTANT UPDATE: Balloch Tourist Information Building - Feedback Required Sunday 11th January**

Dear Members,

We would like to update you on the current position regarding the potential community asset transfer of the Ballo Building.

As you may be aware, discussions have been ongoing around the community taking over the building. However, t proposed are being dictated by Flamingo Land, and the Board has significant concerns about these terms as they believe they adequately protect the interests of LLSCDT or the wider community.

For clarity, all negotiations are being led by Scottish Enterprise on behalf of the community and LLSCDT. At no stag directly with Flamingo Land.

No final decision has been made at this stage. The Board will be considering the matter carefully over the coming should return via Scottish Enterprise to seek improved and more appropriate terms that better reflect community sustainability.

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We would welcome any comments or feedback from members via email reply for the Board's consideration as pa process. Please submit any feedback by reply on email **midnight on Sunday 11th January 2026**.

Note to businesses, social enterprises and community groups:

It is vital that any potential transfer is supported by realistic and sustainable income generation. If there are any lo enterprises, or community groups interested in working with us, whether through leasing space on the upper floo building or external area by offering services that could generate revenue, please register your expression of inter Balloch Tourist Information Building – Fill out form by **midnight on 11th January 2026**. This information will help should we proceed.

We felt it was important to keep members informed of this position and will provide a further update once discus has been reached.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Lynne
On behalf of the Loch Lomond South Community Development Trust

Loch Lomond South
Community Development Trust

The winter newsletter sent to subscribers on 29th January contained no indication of what feedback had been received but did provide further information on the terms offered by Scottish Enterprise:



DEVELOPMENT TRUST WINTER NEWSLETTER

Old Railway Station Building / Tourist Information Building

Update on the Tourist Information Building Asset Transfer

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Members may wish to be aware of the current position regarding the Trust's asset transfer request for the former Tourist Information Building in Balloch. The Trust received the initial proposed terms from Scottish Enterprise in November, which were considered in detail by the Board at its meeting on 12 January.

The terms offered included a three-year licence to occupy with a six-month termination notice. After careful consideration, the Board agreed that this level of security does not provide sufficient confidence for the Trust, potential funders, or partners to invest time or resources in developing the building as a sustainable community asset. The condition of the building and the repair responsibilities are also key concerns as any future issues or repairs would fall on the Trust.

The Trust is therefore exercising its rights under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to seek terms that are more consistent with the purpose of the Act and with how community asset transfers are normally supported across Scotland. We have asked Scottish Enterprise to confirm the statutory timescales within which the Trust is required to respond, to ensure we act transparently and fully in line with the legislation.

Discussions with Scottish Enterprise are ongoing. While progress can feel slow, the Board is committed to acting in the best interests of the community and ensuring that any agreement reached genuinely enables long-term community benefit. Further updates will be shared with members as the process continues.

Extract from Winter newsletter sent out on 29th January which also advertised the AGM on 27th February

A three year licence was a lousy offer. It would allow Flamingo Land to take over the building should they successfully contest Scottish Ministers decision to refuse their application (see here), with the local community having to take on all responsibility for repairs and maintenance meantime.

Since January there has been one further email from the LLSCDT on 28th March, seeking a new chair, but no further updates on the Tourism Information Centre or what else the Directors have been doing. Given the CDT was set up to challenge how Scottish Enterprise was managing its assets in Balloch, it is somewhere ironic that they have published more information about what is going on than the CDT has on its own website, as I found out when I lodged an information request at the end of April.

The LLSCDTâ??s three requests to Scottish Enterprise under the Community Empowerment Act

On 29th May Scottish Enterprise responded to my information request (see here). This had asked what interests had been registered by the CDT in the land at Balloch and for section of SEâ??s conditional missives which showed their Exclusivity Agreement with Flamingo Land was still in force. SE declined to provide any evidence to show their agreement with Flamingo Land was still in force, probably because they knew that any appeal to the Information Commissioner would take even longer than the courts to reach a decision, but the rest of their response was far more helpful.

The most striking information they provided was that:

â??Earlier this week, Loch Lomond South CDT formally submitted a further Asset Transfer Request Form in respect of additional Scottish Enterprise-owned assets in Balloch, namely West Riverside, Drumkinnon Wood and the Gateway Centre. This new submission will now also be consideredâ??.

It seems quite a coincidence that the CDT registered an interest in the remainder of SEâ??s land at Balloch the same week SE responded to my request but perhaps their February AGM had mandated the Directors to do this? Whatever the explanation â?? one would have thought this news would be all over their website â?? this about turn by the directors of the CDT is very welcome.

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SE also helpfully pointed out that they proactively publish Asset Transfer Requests and their decisions about these on the Policies and Information section of their website (see here) under the obscure heading â??Owned Investment Property Assetsâ??. Unfortunately, a month later the CDTâ??s recent request has still not been published so it is not possible to understand the rationale behind it. However, the CDTâ??s full application for the former Tourism Information building is available (see here), along with Scottish Enterpriseâ??s decision. . These show the registration of interest was submitted on 24th December 2024, that Scottish Enterprise took 11 months before responding in November 2025 and much interesting information about the application and SEâ??s proposed license

The Owned Investment Property Assets section of SEâ??s website also reveals that the LLSCDT, along with the BHCC, lodged a Participation Request on 18th September 2025, asking to be involved in future decisions about land at Balloch. SE responded on 12th December stating that:

â??Flamingo Land Ltd.has given a contractual obligation to SE to comply with the provisions of the â??Lomond Promiseâ?•â??

and,

â??Scottish Enterprise requires full unfettered discretion regarding monitoring of this obligationâ??

so,

â??If the planning application is approved, then under this option Scottish Enterprise would propose that it will continue to engage regularly with BHCC & LLSCAT as the project progresses to satisfy the conditions of contractâ??.

This â??commitmentâ?? from Scottish Enterprise is completely meaningless and, together with its derisory offer of a temporary license to occupy the former information building, perhaps explains why the CDT Directors have now decided to register an interest in ALL the land SE owns at Balloch, including the existing development at Loch Lomond Shores and Drumkinnon Woods which Flamingo Land has used to â??offsetâ?? some of the adverse impacts of its proposed development.(see here).

In my view that is what the CDT should have done from the start to put pressure on Scottish Enterprise and the Scottish Government. While the recent attempt to register an interest is welcome â?? SE could still refuse it even if the Courts uphold the Scottish Governmentâ??s decision to refuse the Flamingo Land planning application â?? it will have no chance of success unless the public know about it and are involved in developing an alternative to Flamingo Land at Balloch. That means the LLSCDT being far more open, outward focused and accountable than it has been to date.

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Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. LLTNPA
2. Local communities
3. planning
4. Scottish Enterprise

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