



# Lochview Rural Training

## Impact Report 2024-25



A massive thank you to our funders - your support means that we're able to deliver impactful projects throughout the year to children, young people and adults of all ages and abilities

The weekly programme of activities continues to expand, and there are waiting lists for many activities / workshops / training sessions

### Weekly activities

- Junior and Young Crofters
- 1 to 1 employability
- School groups
- ASN 1-1
- ASN groups
- Acre of Knowledge (adults)
- Family sessions
- Outreach

Experience

Self-Confidence

Skills

34

EMPLOYABILITY

44

JUNIOR & YOUNG CROFTERS

26

YOUNG CARERS / HOLIDAY CLUB

14

ADULT WORKSHOPS

87

1:1 SESSIONS

162

SCHOOLSESSIONS

52

ADULT MHW

16

YP LANDBASED

10

FAMILIES

# Children and Young People

Funding from the Anne Duchess of Westminster Foundation has supported our direct work with children and young people

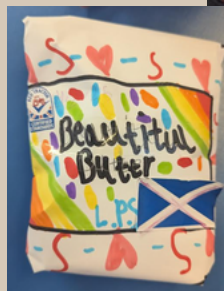


This year we have been developing our outreach work in schools and communities using the NFU Education Programme which focuses on STEM and enterprise

As part of the project children are tasked to set up their own rural enterprise (a farm shop) and to design, develop, make and market a brand new food product - here children in Lochinver are making their own butter, and have designed the packaging for it.

The project supports STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Maths); helps children understand where their food comes from, and promotes entrepreneurship.

Other outreach sessions have involved planting and growing and looking at the life cycle of plants.



# Children and Young People with Additional Support Needs



Funding from the Highland Council is supporting our work with children and young people who have additional support needs who attend sessions at Lochview Rural Training with their support workers / care givers



Hands on experiential learning promotes positive mental wellbeing, improves mobility and cognition, and provides opportunities for learning about the importance of self-care, nutrition, routine, and how to manage emotions.

Children and young people are able to help with tasks on the croft, some are studying for qualifications and others are working towards becoming part of a group.

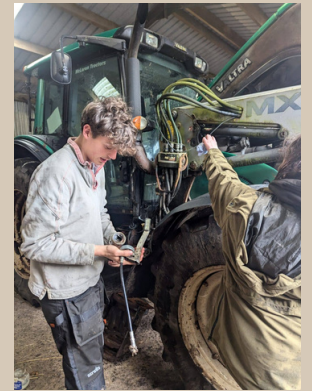


# Introduction to Land-based skills



Funding from CABWI allowed Lochview Rural Training to devise and pilot an 8 week 'Introduction to Land-based Skills' course for young people in Autumn 2024

Subjects included:  
Peatland Management  
Machinery Safety  
Forestry  
Estate Management  
Soils, Conservation and Biodiversity  
Dry Stone Walling  
Fencing  
Animal Husbandry  
Record keeping  
First Aid



The course was delivered in association with NatureScot, Forestry and Land Scotland, local land owners and specialist tutors. Young people gained hands-on experience of different land-based sector employment options, gained qualifications and experience to add to their CVs, and met and spoke directly to local employers.

Feed back from participants was very positive and the young people themselves suggested that the course should be expanded and run 3 times a year, focusing on seasonality. Funding has now been secured from the National Lottery Young Start programme and 12 week Introduction to Land-based Skills courses will be starting soon.

It's like the real world!

You can get qualifications, but also experience which helps with my CV

There's such a broad variety of doors that can open from just 8 weeks

# Adult Workshops in Rural and Heritage Skills

Using products from the craft

As a social enterprise income generated from our adult workshops and training courses supports our projects for children and young people, and allows us to offer reduced rates on some courses for people facing financial barriers. Adult courses are very popular and there is a waiting list for many of our courses.



Positive outcomes



Courses include :  
Introduction to Crofting  
Introduction to Wool  
Dry stone walling  
Fencing  
Lambing  
Willow weaving  
Rug making  
Felting  
Knitting



New friends



Small group sizes

Expert tutors

New Skills

Low impact on the land

Supports biodiversity

Heritage skills

Positive environmental practice



# Mental Health and Wellbeing

Following a successful pilot in 2024, NHS Highland funding has been secured for 3 years for our Acre of Knowledge project which provides activities and training for adults with long term mental and physical health conditions. Weekly sessions focus on crafts, arts, rural skills and enterprise (CARE) taking inspiration from the croft and local environment.

In addition, funding has been secured from HTSIs Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing fund for a 10 month project where participants focus on outdoor projects on the croft.

Feedback from participants and support workers has been very positive, with everyone looking forward to the weekly sessions.

For some participants this is the first time they have taken part in a group activity, and for some, attending the Acre of Knowledge Project is the only time that they go out each week.

Activities support positive mental health, improve mobility, provide opportunities to make new friends, build confidence and learn new skills.

A place where the animals and staff don't judge me

The journey to the croft feels like I'm leaving my problems behind

There's peace on the croft



# Volunteering for Adults and Young People

Lochview Rural Training continues to grow its volunteer base - with a successful drive to attract more adult volunteers in 2025. Our amazing volunteers have diverse backgrounds and unique skills which supports participants of all ages and abilities to reach their full potential.

Young volunteers continue to carry out tasks on the croft, gaining hands on experience, developing peer to peer networks and working towards their Saltire Awards.



In June we held a successful Volunteer Information Day for adults to find out about volunteer opportunities at Lochview Rural Training. There was lots of interest and everyone enjoyed the guided tours of the croft and training centre - a number of people signed up to become volunteers some of whom had never been to the training centre before!



Our new volunteers will now undertake a programme of induction and training, and we will take time to match volunteers with the tasks and projects that interest them - on growing projects, working with the animals or supporting participants on courses.



# PUBLICITY

This year we've had visits from two film crews! BBC Landward came to meet and interview Cara and some of our amazing young people about the training available at Lochview and to find out why young people are interested in a career on the land; and Reporting Scotland filmed a special feature highlighting the craftsmanship of our incredible dry stone walling tutor Dave Goulder, BEM. Both episodes are available to view on BBCiPlayer.

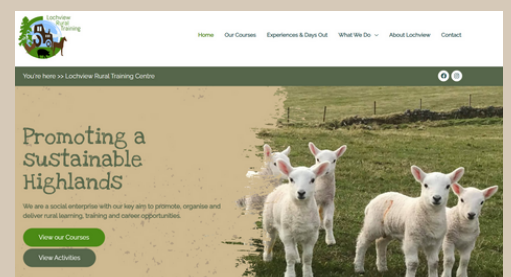


We've been working on our 3 year strategic plan, and as a result we are updating the website, and we've also launched our first ever newsletter.

The website gives an overview of the aims and objectives of the training centre, as well as details of staff and trustees.

The newsletter gives an update on what's been happening, upcoming activities and will have input from children, young people and adult participants.

The Lochview Rural Training Eventbrite page is the place to go to book on to upcoming training / workshops / activities.



# Spotlight on Ruth Hinsley - Tutor



Living on the beautiful west coast near Lochinver, Ruth is a crofter, contract shepherd, and tutor with Lochview Rural Training. Although not from a farming background, Ruth has a deep passion for the rural way of life.

Ruth studied agriculture at SRUC and is committed to encouraging others, especially those without an agricultural background, to get involved in rural and outdoor activities.

With a keen interest in animal behaviour, she loves training sheepdogs and horses. When not working, Ruth enjoys exploring the hills or spending time at the beach with her horse.



Ruth currently runs the outreach programme in Lochinver Primary School, and delivers the 8 week Introduction to Equine Skills course which has proved very popular, as well as supporting students on the Introduction to Land-based Skills course.

Ruth first came to Lochview to take part in a two day dry stone walling course with Dave Goulder, BEM. She'd found out about the training centre when she completed a survey on social media about potential courses before Lochview opened, and remembers being interested in the equine courses. At that time Ruth hadn't decided which career route to take and was concerned about the lack of training opportunities in the local area, so finding out that Lochview Rural Training was about to open was fantastic - she never imagined that she would go on to be a tutor for courses.



I love encouraging interest in rural life and crofting for the next generation

Cara has helped me see that there's a bright future for young people going in to the rural sectors

Lochview has really improved my confidence and I've found a new passion for working with young people

# Additional Funding

**Essentia /  
NHI - Junior  
and Young  
Cofters**

**Arnold Clark and  
the Edinburgh  
Sutherland  
Society -  
Resources Boxes**

**Highland  
Council -  
Young Carer  
sessions**

**SSE / RWE  
Windfarm  
Funds -  
Development  
Officer**

**People's  
Postcode  
Lottery -  
Unrestricted**

**Highland  
Council -  
Parent /  
Family  
activities**

**Robertson  
Trust -  
Unrestricted**

Securing funding for projects, resources and activities means that Lochview Rural Training has been able to expand the services and training that we are able to offer to children, young people, adults and families.

All our projects are delivered in response to local need, and provide positive experiences and outcomes for participants. By running pilot projects we are able to evidence the need for new services / training and this wouldn't be possible without the support of funders.



# Additional Outcomes from our work



## NEXT STEPS

Develop and expand courses and services for children, young people and adults

Further develop outreach in schools and communities

Increase partnership working with other local organisations and support agencies

Develop Volunteer base through recruitment, training and support

Lochview Rural Training was established in April 2021 to promote, organise and deliver rural learning, training and career opportunities by improving awareness, knowledge and access to our rural landscape and to promote an understanding of the value of rural life for social wellbeing for all.