



Lochview Rural Training

Impact Report 2025-26



Facts and figures



**372
YOUTH
SESSIONS**



Lochview's Young Person's steering group helps to shape projects and informs the way we work ensuring that training and activities are relevant and meet local need. The Youth Representative on Lochview's Board of Trustees ensures the voice of young people is heard at meetings and in the organisations development.

Adult sessions are shaped by consultation with local people and employers, feedback from participants - and respond to needs identified in local and area place plans and through discussions at forums and partnership meetings.

Projects support children, young people, families and adults of all ages and abilities through experiential hands-on learning which promotes positive mental well-being, confidence, peer and family relationships. New projects and training courses are always under development to meet local need. The skills, knowledge and expertise of staff and volunteers ensure that all participants can reach their full potential.

**304
ADULT
SESSIONS**

**2 NEW
STAFF
MEMBERS**



**NEW
ANIMALS
AND
GROWING
AREAS**

**154
1-1
SESSIONS**



**VISITORS
FROM ALL
OVER THE
WORLD**

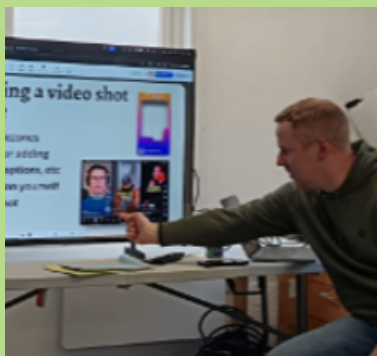


**NEW
COURSES
AND
EQUIPMENT**



Volunteering

Funded by



With support from HTSI and the Volunteer Academy this year staff at Lochview have undertaken an in depth Volunteering Research Fellowship. The research has seen staff visiting organisations with strong volunteering programmes in London, Edinburgh and Newcastle and meeting with staff and volunteers at a variety of not-for-profit organisations in Arizona, USA.

Host organisations have shared information and good practice that is working well for them, and staff, trustees and volunteers will now work on how the learning can be put in to practice to enhance the way we support volunteers at Lochview.

A big thank you to all the organisations that have supported this research.



Awards and Recognition

It's been an amazing year for Lochview Rural Training with nominations, recognition and awards for the training centre, staff and volunteers.

LVRT appreciates everyone that contributes to the work at the training centre, and for others to recognise this hard work is an acknowledgement of how far LVRT has come in the last 5 years.



HTSI Awards

In September 2025 LVRT were honoured to receive the HTSI Collaboration Award for our work with NHS Highland and Brora Learning Centre on our Acre of Knowledge Project which supports adults with long-term mental and physical health conditions.

Grace who we proudly nominated for her hard work as a volunteer deservedly won a Youth Award, so it became a joint celebration.

It was fantastic for LVRT staff to be able to celebrate together, and to receive recognition for their work on this project and in all that they do for Lochview Rural Training.



National Women in Agriculture Awards

In May this year Cara attended the National Women in Agriculture Awards in London, where she was shortlisted for Training & Education Woman of the Year.

To be recognised as one of just five finalists from across the UK is a remarkable achievement and a true reflection of Cara's passion, dedication, and commitment to sharing skills and knowledge within the rural sector.

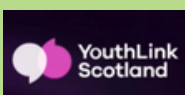
While she didn't take home the award this time, being surrounded by some of the most inspiring and influential women in agriculture was an unforgettable experience. The room was filled with those shaping the future of the agricultural industry, and Cara's place among them speaks volumes.



National YouthLink Awards

In June 2026 Lochview Rural Training were proud to announce that they were winners of the Outdoor Learning and Environment Award at the National YouthLink Awards in Glasgow.

This was much more than winning an award. As a small grassroots charity, youth work has always been at the heart of everything Lochview Rural Training does. Our belief that every young person deserves the chance to learn, grow and succeed in a safe, supportive and nurturing environment is at the centre of all that we do. A place where everyone is given equal opportunities, where strengths are celebrated, and where no one is told that their dreams are out of reach.

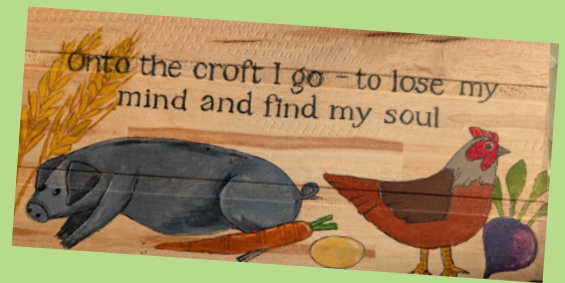


The award is a reflection of every young person who has walked through our gates, every member of staff who goes above and beyond, every volunteer, supporter, partner and friend who has believed in what we are building in Sutherland.

The passion, dedication and commitment of the team, and the inspiration that our young people give us each day is making youth work real. The difference that we are making to people of all ages and abilities is being valued

Growing Well Together

Funded by



Funded by



Acre of Knowledge



Each week on Thursdays and Fridays an amazing group of adults come together (along with their support workers) to work on projects and to help around the croft. The participants all have long-term health conditions, and the Growing Well Together and Acre of Knowledge programmes support their mental and physical wellbeing.



Activities include:

- Arts and Crafts
- Growing / horticultural projects
- Cooking (and eating together)
- Manual tasks around the croft
- Animal care
- Using IT and camera equipment
- And much, much more



Participants tell us:

- They leave their troubles behind on the journey to the croft
- They leave sessions feeling more positive
- They look forward to the sessions
- There is peace on the croft
- That there is always something new to learn



NHS Highland say:

- We save lives
- There is nowhere else that they can take their clients that would meet so many of the criteria that they are working towards



The group activities support understanding about nutrition and self care; team building and peer relationships; numeracy and literacy through hands on practical tasks; and empower participants to make decisions in a supportive, therapeutic outdoor learning environment.

Places on these projects are in high demand and make a real difference to local people. The positive impact of sessions lasts much longer than the time that participants are at the croft.

Roots and Resilience

Funded by



Roots & Resilience
PROJECT

Lochview Rural Training are the lead partner in the Roots and Resilience project - a 2 year collaborative adult mental health and wellbeing project that will be delivered in partnership with Assynt Leisure, Coigach Community Hall and Scourie Development Company.

The project began in April 2026 and will provide group activities and support specifically targeted at men, and to rurally isolated adults living in central and west Sutherland and in Coigach. Communities are particularly keen to see Men's Sheds and Men's Shed style activities delivered in local communities.

Once groups are established mental health support services will be invited to attend sessions and Mental Health First Aid training will be delivered by RSABI / MikeysLine in turn supporting socially isolated individuals and promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all. MikeysLine will also be invited to attend group sessions with their 'Hive on the Road' where 1-1 support and information around mental health and wellbeing can be provided. NHS Highland and other support organisations will also be invited to be involved in sessions or will provide information where appropriate.

Whilst the overall theme of promoting positive mental health will remain constant throughout the project, the way activities, support and training is delivered in each of the communities will be different and will respond to the needs and interests of local people.



Lochview Rural Training already have close links to RSABI, MikeysLine and other mental health support agencies in Highland. Alongside this, our experience of supporting participants with long term conditions and additional support needs will be integral to the project development and delivery.

Monthly sessions at Lochview will bring men together on the 2nd Wednesday of every month from 12pm-3pm for informal, hands-on sessions designed to build skills, friendships and stronger community connections.

For a variety of reasons many men find it difficult to make new friends, especially in rural areas where opportunities to meet others can be limited. Our sessions provide a welcoming space where men can come together, share experiences, enjoy practical activities and build genuine friendships over time.

In October RSABI will be delivering Mental Health First Aid Awareness Training at community venues across the project area. The one day training will be delivered by former Royal Marines from IED Training, and will be free and open to adults across central / west Sutherland and Coigach. Sessions will be advertised on social media and in local communities. Further training will be available in 2027. The training provides participants with the skills to identify a range of mental health conditions and to be able to provide practical support to people and to direct them to appropriate professional help.

Delivered in partnership with



Children and Young People

Funded by



Children and young people are at the heart of activities and projects at Lochview Rural Training. Whether it's providing 1-1 tailored support to children and young people with additional support needs, small group outdoor activities or Lochview's fortnightly Junior Crofters (7-11yr olds) and Young Crofters (11-19yr olds) there's always lots of smiles during sessions.

The children and young people gain confidence and skills through experiential learning activities overseen by supportive staff and volunteers.

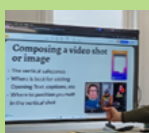
School groups come to the croft for weekly and one-off visits, and Lochview's knowledgeable staff run outreach sessions in local primary schools.



Some of the young people that attend sessions at Lochview Rural Training have disengaged from formal learning and / or have additional support needs and are unlikely to achieve qualifications in a school setting - yet have completed formal and vocational qualifications through experiential learning opportunities at Lochview.

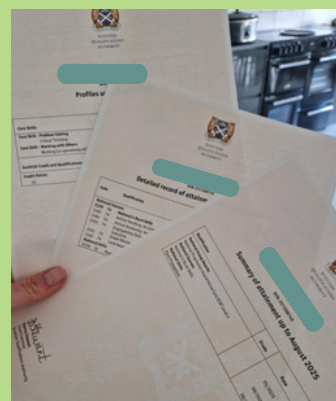


Young people tell us that they love coming to Lochview, their parent's tell us that they can see a positive difference in their children after sessions, and that their children are achieving things that they didn't think would be possible.



The Highland Council Community Regeneration Fund provided funding for ATVs to support Lochview Rural Training's ATV safety courses which promotes safe use of machinery and aims to reduce accidents on crofts.

The same fund allowed the purchase of a new smart TV, laptops and printers to support student learning and course facilitation.



Rural Skills and Heritage Crafts



Participants travel to Lochview Rural Training from all over the Highlands (and beyond) to learn new skills and gain experience to add to their CVs, for their own satisfaction or to help them in their own rural enterprises.

Specialist tutors work with small groups of adults to ensure that participants can develop the skills they need for future success through hands-on experiential learning.



The list of courses offered is vast and range from 'Introduction to Sheep', to basket weaving. This year, with support from Lantra, Lochview have also been able to offer Tractor Driving courses for young people and adults.

Consultation with local people at events / during sessions and with local employers drives the type of courses offered, and Lochview are always open to suggestions for new courses. Next year will see the introduction of further new courses, plus some online courses open to people across the world!

As part of our Roots and Resilience and Land to Livelihoods projects some places on our rural and heritage skills courses are free for people living within the project areas, building skills, reducing isolation and developing peer support networks.



Crofting is an integral part of life in the Highlands, and many people move to the area to run crofts, and develop rural enterprises - without these courses many would not have the skills to succeed. But the support and training



offered by the Lochview team isn't just for people new to crofting. Established crofters also attend specialist training sessions to learn animal husbandry, dry stone walling, fencing and other crofting skills. Participants know that the support offered goes well beyond the courses themselves, and that mentoring / support are just a phone call away.



Land to Livelihoods

Funded by:



Lochview's Land to Livelihoods project is a free programme designed to support adults (16+) particularly those in rural communities or not currently in education, employment or training to gain practical rural skills and explore enterprise opportunities.

Staff are working with people at various stages of their enterprise journey, supporting participants to start thinking about their next steps, building confidence, developing a new idea, or turning a skill into a business.

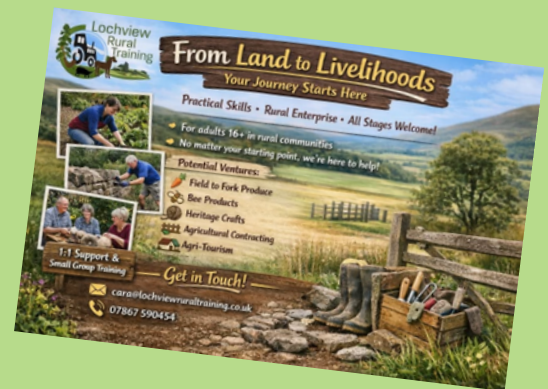
Support is offered :

- On a 1:1 basis tailored to individual goals
- In small group settings for shared learning and peer support
- With practical, hands-on rural skills
- In planning, producing and marketing goods and skills
- Linking you to organisations such as Business Gateway, HIE and the Social Enterprise Academy

The project supports participants to develop confidence and entrepreneurial skills, empowering them to create sustainable rural livelihoods.

Current participants are working towards becoming:

- A shepherd
- Agricultural contracting
- Horticultural contracting
- Agrigucutural fencing instructor
- Horticulture / land Photography



Introduction to the land-based sector

Funded by:



The Introduction to the Land-Based Sector Course, is an 8 week intensive course for young people to gain knowledge and hands-on skills and experience in various aspects of local land-based industries. Visits to local employers alongside practical craft based learning support participants to identify career opportunities, meet potential employers and gain valuable rural skills.

Each week sees participants learning something new, including: dry stone walling, fencing, farm machinery maintenance and safety, animal husbandry, soil science, peatland management and much more. 1-1 and small group employability support is also delivered through a combination of regular weekly sessions and flexible drop-in provision.



Alongside this Lochview are matching young people with older generational crofters for an exchange of skills and knowledge.

Tech savvy young people share their own skills with the crofters, as well as gaining practical crofting, animal and growing experience from the crofters.

Feedback on this project has been very positive and Lochview hope to continue this skills exchange in the future.

Lochview on the Road

Staff and volunteers from Lochview Rural Training regularly attend local events to promote the work of the training centre and to consult with local people about the courses, projects and activities that they would like to see developed. Feedback is always positive, and it's great to listen to the needs and experiences of children, young people, families and adults.



Cara Cameron represents Lochview at NW2045 meetings which bring together a wide range of perspectives about land issues in our area. At the most recent meeting the NW2045 RLUP shared findings of recent 'Land+ Snapshot' research: exploring land-related issues across the whole NW2045 area. The group identified ways to overcome challenges and make the most of opportunities identified by the Land+ Snapshot work and explored how the collaboration can be supported across the area to achieve positive change for people and land.

Cara and Angela have also been involved in the Social Enterprise Academy's (SEA) Towards a Thriving Sector programme which offered support to heritage organisation across Scotland to become impactful and sustainable. The project provided opportunities to meet with similar organisations, hear of inspirational projects, and gain valuable information and skills in finance, organisational resilience, project development and how to have 'difficult conversations'. Alongside the learning, SEA will also be supporting our new Crofting Memoirs project through the purchase of photography, video and recording equipment.

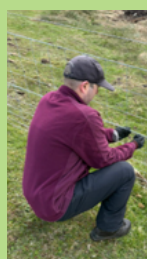


Training and projects regularly take participants to visit different environments, employers and organisations. Students on the Introduction to the Land-based Sector course visit large land estates, farms, rivers, forestry and peatland areas. Meeting with organisations such as Forestry and Land Scotland, NatureScot and with farmers / estate managers provide participants with opportunities to meet with employers and to see first hand the type of employment available in their local area. Participants on these courses regularly go on to secure employment or decide to continue with further learning and training.



This summer our Acre and Knowledge and Growing Well Together groups have been out and about visiting new places and organisations. The visit to The Men's Shed in Dornoch was particularly popular, and several of the participants are keen to become involved with the project.

Arts and craft activities in Brora brought out the participants creative side and garden visits provided inspiration for growing projects back at the croft.



Participants have also been able to get involved with repairing fences and maintenance tasks in other areas of the croft.

Next year, more outreach, events and visits are planned ensuring that participants across Sutherland are able to access training and support in community venues in new areas.

What's next for Lochview

Lochview Rural Training is now 5 years old - and is busier than ever! The number of courses, workshops, projects, staff, volunteers and participants continues to grow year on year. In fact demand far out weighs capacity, and as a result two new buildings are planned at the training centre, and outreach and partnership working in central / west Sutherland and Coigach is under development.



Partial funding for a new outdoor learning area was secured through HTSI's Community Mental Health and Wellbeing fund for Adults, and with the help of SSE and The Murphy Group building work is now underway. The new covered learning area will be used by groups of all ages, freeing up the learning cabin for larger groups.

Funding has also been secured from the Highland Council's Community Regeneration Fund for a multi-use building which will be used for 1-1 support, small group sessions and as an office. This will be an important addition to aid learning.

Support and activities for families is a priority for the coming months, with 'Flock Together' a therapeutic programme for children and their parents, and 'Families on the Croft' are starting soon. We're also keen to engage 'Volunteering Families'.



Outreach to communities and school visits is also set to expand with new schools already signed up.

This year the training centre offered opportunities to volunteer at lambing

time, as well as hosting a veterinary student wishing to gain lambing experience.

Lochview Rural Training are also working with specialists at HIE to develop online learning courses that will be available through our website to people all over the UK. Filming has already taken place for some courses, with Cara's expertise shining through on the training videos. The online courses alongside our new YouTube channel will ensure that crofting and Lochview Rural Training will be recognised worldwide!

