

Case Study: Appin Community Co-operative

The village shop in many rural communities plays a vital role in sustaining the community, functioning as more than a place to buy food and groceries, and is often the social heart of the village. When the Appin Village Store came under threat in 1983, local people formed the Appin Community Co-operative to take collective ownership of the shop (shown in picture below).

Port Appin is a small and remote coastal community in the north-west of Scotland, whose isolated geography means that the village shop is an essential service for people to continue to live locally.



As a remote community, Port Appin has always been affected by limited public services and infrastructure. The community recognises a need for more self-sufficiency, and the village shop also operates as a post office, and a book exchange (shown in picture below).



The Community Co-operative manage the village stores, while the Appin Community Development Trust is the charitable arm of the organisation.

- The Development Trust is responsible for reinvesting the store profits into community activities and priorities.
- Local consultation was undertaken to identify needs, opportunities and community priorities for investment.
- One of the investment projects includes a Community Transport initiative, which was identified as a key priority for local residents.

With no public transport available, residents of Port Appin who do not have their own transport can struggle to travel to meet their everyday needs. This affects many elderly people, especially those with mobility issues.

In 2018, the Development Trust purchased a wheelchair accessible vehicle and recruited a group of local volunteer drivers, who now offer transport for shopping, appointments and social events across the Appin area to local centres such as Oban and Fort William.



Picture: The Appin Community Transport vehicle and residents of Port Appin.

You can read more about the Appin Community Co-operative here:

<https://www.appin.scot/community-coop/intro>