

Food and Footprint

Case Study



Supporting Highland's Rewilding's commitment to scalable community benefits



highlandsrewilding.co.uk/community-joint-ventures

Highlands Rewilding (HRL) works to restore nature and support rural communities through managing Scottish landscapes for natural capital uplift. With estates at Bunloit, Beldorney, and Tayvallich, HRL seeks to integrate nature restoration with sustainable business development, ensuring that the benefits of rewilding extend beyond the environment to create lasting community assets.

HRL secured a grant from the Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland (FIRNS, co-funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Scottish Government and NatureScot) to run the project, "Joint Ventures for Scalable Community Benefits from Rewilding." SAC Consulting were then invited to tender and HRL judged our response to represent the best quality and value for money to meet their needs.

The challenge

HRL needed expert support to develop robust, community-led business ventures—known as Community Joint Ventures (CJVs)—that would not only align with HRL's environmental mission, but also provide local economic opportunities. These CJVs had to be rooted in their local landscapes, financially sustainable, and structured to deliver tangible benefits to local residents.

To achieve this, HRL sought a partner who could provide in-depth market research, business and financial modelling, and strategic

guidance to give these entrepreneurial concepts a firm foundation from which to build.

Our solutions

CJV's were put forward by the community and then shortlisted – in many cases they were existing local businesses who wanted to integrate better into the estates and local community. The final shortlist of ventures that would receive support was only confirmed after the project start, therefore our project team needed to take an approach which provided robust outputs but with flexibility to be applied to a wide variety of enterprises.





The CJVs we worked with were:

Bunloit Community 'Let us Grow':

A not-for-profit venture which increases the provision of local food for communities in Glen Urquhart and provides residents with opportunities to connect with nature and each other. Through selling locally grown produce to locals and visitors to the area, this venture aims to reinvest in the community and provide high-quality food to community assets such as schools and care homes.

Bunloit Mindfulness in Nature: A partnership between Highland Mindfulness Group and Nature 4 Health to deliver nature-based mindfulness to residents of Glen Urquhart. Using guided mindfulness techniques, the aim of this venture is to improve mental health and sense of wellbeing within the community through deeper spiritual and emotional connection with nature.

Ally's Bike Hire in Tayvallich:

Offers a range of rental bikes to allow visitors and locals to explore the landscape and local nature in a fun, accessible and sustainable way.

Gu h-àrd is gu h-ìosal, Above and Below Foraging and Heritage Tours:

A new collaboration between a forager / mountain leader and wild swimming coach which immerses visitors in the landscape, waters, and flavours of the Tayvallich Estate.

To meet HRL's needs, SAC Consulting guided each of the CJVs through a four-phase approach:

1. **Understanding and defining the ventures:** Each CJV was assigned a dedicated SAC consultant who worked closely with the idea owners to define their mission, vision, and business values. Through in-depth engagement over the project timeline, we helped them articulate their goals, ensuring alignment with community involvement and deepening their connections to local landscapes and ecosystem services.
2. **Market research and analysis:** Conducting a detailed assessment of the local market, leveraging databases like the Scottish Tourism Observatory, as well as insights from our rural network. Each CJV's market potential was evaluated in terms of industry trends, customer demand, and competitive landscape.
3. **Business modelling and strategy:** Using the findings from our research, we worked collaboratively with the CJVs to build robust business models; defining unique value propositions, identifying growth opportunities, and designing pricing and operational strategies. Each business was given a roadmap for success, complete with governance structures, risk assessments, go-to-market strategies, and relevant funding opportunities.

- 4. Financial modelling and investment planning:** A key deliverable was a detailed financial model for each CJV, including revenue projections, expense forecasts, and break-even analyses. This provided clarity on funding requirements and business feasibility, equipping each venture with the tools needed for long-term financial sustainability.

Throughout the process, we facilitated structured engagement meetings with HRL and the CJV idea owners, ensuring a truly co-designed approach. Each business then received a tailored report capturing methodologies, insights, and actionable strategies for future development.

Added value for the customer

This project has contributed to laying the groundwork for a new approach to community wealth building in Scotland. By providing in-depth research and strategic business support, we helped turn ambitious community-driven concepts into actionable, investment-ready ventures. Beyond the immediate deliverables, this project has contributed to HRL's position as a national leader in responsible natural capital investment. Looking ahead, SAC Consulting is excited to explore future collaborations, including scaling these models across more communities and integrating further research into long-term funding mechanisms.

By blending technical expertise with a deep commitment to community empowerment, SAC Consulting delivered a project that not only met HRL's needs but set a new standard for inclusive, sustainable rewilding business models.

Testimonial

"Each of our CJV's had very different needs and ideas at a different stage of development. What SAC Consulting was able to bring was a range of solutions. From pitch decks to business development skills or go-to-market strategies, the solutions were tailored to individual needs – which is what we hoped for. Despite tight timelines, we received so much supporting material from the team and we know it has made a real difference."

Zofia Dziewanowska-Stefanczyk,
FIRNS Project Coordinator, Highlands
Rewilding