

LOCH CLASH PROJECT

BACKGROUND :

For many years, from post WW2 until the developments at Loch Bervie pier, the harbour at Loch Clash was the hub of the local economy, being a primary source of income for many, and a secondary source for many others.

The developments at Loch Bervie have, however, left the village with an area which has become derelict through a number of reasons.

At the time of writing this, July 9th 2004, the users of Loch Clash are;

Highland Council, on a sporadic basis, for the delivery of MGO, from sea tankers, which is then pumped to the bunkering tanks on the Headland adjacent to Loch Bervie harbour.

Kinlochbervie Fishselling Co.Ltd., who own two buildings, and the ground to the west of the tarred area. The buildings are used for storage purposes only.

There are three caravans on this area, one of which is a shell, and one used as a residential base by a creel fisherman, the other as a storage area by the same person.

There is also a small derelict building, which may have been a toilet block at one time.

Possible Future Uses;

There are a large number of possible future uses for the area, all of which would be subject to the current landowners being willing to sell the land.

There are two main avenues of development; Community or Private.

Should the favoured avenue, subject to community consultation, be to go down the Community avenue, then it might be possible to purchase the land through the Scottish Land Unit / Fund, and bring most or all of these projects to completion through a Community Trust or Enterprise, which would be run by the Community for the benefit of the Community. This option would require the setting up of a Trust, Should the private avenue be favoured then it would be subject to successful private negotiation.

Amongst the mooted future uses are;

- (1) Retail/Office Park
- (2) Backpacker/Youth Hostel
- (3) Café/Play-area/Community Garden
- (4) Diving/Boating Centre
- (5) Lobster Farm/Hatchery
- (6) Restaurant/Diner
- (7) Heritage Centre/Museum
- (8) Information Centre/TIC/Service Point
- (9) Camper & Caravan Stand-points
- (10) Etc.,

These were seen as not necessarily being individual projects in themselves, but as being factors in a combination of uses, thus attracting diverse visitors.

Notes on future uses;

(1) Retail/Office Park:

Initially, demand would have to be shown for this, which could come from a number of sources. These would include, local demand for retail outlets and office space; demand from external agencies looking to relocate (THC, Crofters Commission etc.) and requiring bespoke office accommodation/services. Given that the demand could be proved, then it would be necessary to approach THC and CASE, and or a private business, willing to speculate on future usage. It should be noted that local demand has been shown to some extent, and that this may duplicate some of the plans already made by Loch Clash Boat Club.

(2) Hostel/ Field Centre:

The Community consultation process envisaged a need for this type of facility in the area. It might be that SYHA are looking for a site for a new build, or that this would provide an opportunity for private speculation, or as a PPPI, such as a Field Centre for a University or other avenue of Further Education. An example of this might be UHI, through NHC, operating an Outreach Centre or

'Remote Campus' along the lines of their Dornoch and Alness Campuses, specialising in Geology and/or Archeology or other such subjects.

(3) Café /Play area/Community Garden:

This could be a community based project, and could also involve a community shop, selling Kinlochbervie 'branded' goods and local produce. The proposed garden area and play area would be more suited to the 'triangular' shaped area encountered on entering the harbour area, retaining the rest of the area for other developments. Needless to say, safety would be a major concern due to the proximity of the sea and the passing traffic, and would require the installation of safety fencing and barriers.

(4) Diving/Boating Centre:

This idea also partially duplicates ideas already proposed as part of the Boat Club's plans. Due to the financial costs implied in setting up such an operation this would necessarily be a private enterprise or as an off-shoot of a commercial operation (e.g. as a starting point for oil exploration off the west coast).

(5) Lobster Farm/Hatchery:

As with (4) above, the financial implications necessitate this being a commercial operation

(6) Restaurant/Diner:

This could be run as an adjunct to an existing local operation, such as one of the Hotels, or could also be run as an adjoining part of the Lobster Farm/Hatchery, specialising in Seafood, or could be an entirely separate individual enterprise. This could be run as a working establishment with a training facility incorporated into the running through NWTC and NHC, and involving a meeting room capability

(7) Heritage Centre/Museum:

There is a wealth of local history information, some of which has been gathered for the Mackay Country Project. I would imagine that it would be preferable to display and archive local information locally, rather than at a central location. There is also the possibility that this could be run alongside a genealogy unit, which could be done either on a community basis or as a private enterprise.

(8) Information Centre/TIC/Service Point:

These are all needed locally, and could be run as a joint enterprise along PPP lines. There would be a potential to link in with the Heritage Centre/Museum.

(9) Camper & Caravan Stand-points:

In the short term this proposal would be a 'quick fix', but may be costly due to restrictions placed by SEPA, and other bodies. A possible component of this project would be a laundry facility, coin fed, which would also be available to locals.

(10) Other possibilities:

In the immediate short term, this area is an eyesore and should be made more environmentally friendly, by carrying out a general tidy up. This could involve the landowners, environmental bodies, and school pupils and local adults.

