



Regenerative Community Tourism Case Study: GALE Action Forum, Gairloch, Scotland

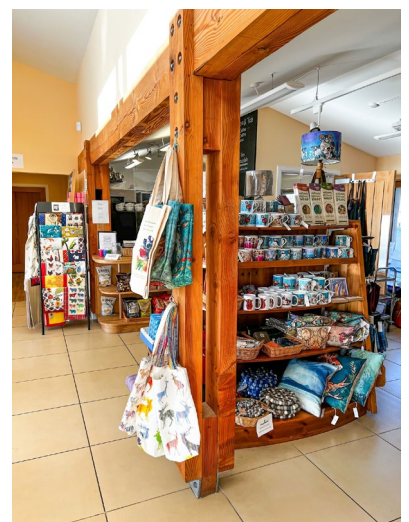
The Gairloch and Loch Ewe (GALE) Action Forum is a great example of an innovative community organisation servicing the parish of Gairloch.

A remote location in Wester Ross, in the northwest Highlands of Scotland. It has a café, shop and tourist information centre all housed within the GALE Centre- a purpose-built, community-owned building with a minimal carbon footprint.

The GALE Centre uses tourism to generate funds and resources to support wider community projects and services. This includes mental health initiatives, warm spaces, work experience, and volunteer opportunities. It also provides a socially-inclusive hub, vital employment and a multi-use community space.

Its innovative business model looks to support and include the local community, for example via tailoring opportunities to the needs of the volunteer rather than the business, or by supporting 20 local bakers by procuring and selling their baking in the café. It is also a just and ethical employer providing permanent year-round contracts and paying the living wage.

They have developed 'GALE in Numbers', a unique set of key performance indicators which go beyond monetary measures. These indicators enable the enterprise to monitor its progress towards the chosen goal of building the wealth of the community. They are also a creative way of demonstrating the impact of the enterprise to the community and wider stakeholders. Example indicators include volunteering hours, hours of counselling accessed, opening hours/days, employee numbers, local bakers and overall financial contribution back into the local economy.



www.galeactionforum.co.uk

This 2023 project, funded by the Royal Irish Academy and carried out by Munster Technological University and the University of the Highlands and Islands, aimed to explore a regenerative tourism approach to rural community development in Scotland and Ireland. For more details contact kendra.turnbull@uhi.ac.uk

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A community development trust

- Using tourism as a tool and a resource for the community (funding community projects/services)
- Volunteering opportunities that match the need of the volunteer (work experience, social needs)
- A just and fair employer (year-round contracts, living wage, employee development)
- Leading by example in how everyday community members can instigate change



COMMUNITY

- Operating in a manner which reduces its environmental footprint (passive building built with native wood, composting waste, using home grown or locally sourced produce first, wood fired heating)
- Trying to encourage slower travel experiences



NATURE

Best
practice
examples

PLACE

- Providing a service open all year round
- Having a long-term vision for community benefit
- Creating valuable community-owned assets and inspiring others to do the same
- Innovative business model to include and encourage local contributors (e.g. over 20 local bakers providing cake for the café)
- GALE in numbers, a unique set of key performance indicators



VISITOR

- Creating a space where visitors and locals can have meaningful interactions
- Visible cues that supporting this enterprise is contributing to the community (volunteers/ growing beds/ notices of health and wellbeing projects/ able-bodied and disabled staff)
- Option to add a donation to the charity when paying the bill

