



# Callander Visitor Information Centre

## About the Project

When VisitScotland closed its Visitor Information Centre (VIC) in the town of Callander in 2019, a consortium comprising the Callander Community Development Trust, Community Council and the Sir Walter Scott Steamship Trust took over running the Centre on the ground floor of the National Park Offices in Main Street. In the pilot 2019 season and encouraging 20,000 visitor enquiries were handled.

The local Development Trust acted swiftly and imaginatively. By late 2020 the future use of the National Park building was uncertain – so the Development Trust bought a building which had previously been a bank on the ground floor, with offices above. (The Trust owns a company that built a Community Hydro Scheme, which had a surplus that could be used as a deposit. The Trust also distributes money donated by the scheme to a range of other projects.)

The VIC began operating from the ground floor in June 2021 with covid restrictions and dampened visitor numbers. It operated as a Development Trust project with one part-time member of staff and a rota of 23 volunteers. That year there were over 8,150 visitors to the Centre, with an average spend of £1.20. The main items sold were books, maps, insect repellent and a cuddly Highland Cow! The VIC did not develop sales of local crafts, because a group of artists, originally set up by the Development Trust, were doing that elsewhere in the town.

**“When the need for new Visitor Centre premises became clear, the Development Trust was able to make a swift and imaginative response, combining provision of the information service with the income stream of the upstairs accommodation.”**

**Sheila Winstone,  
Callander Visitor Information  
Centre Manager**

The VIC is seen locally as an essential part of a thriving town centre and busy tourist destination on an important strategic route to and from the west Highlands. It encourages people to stay longer in Callander and the wider Trossachs area, and use other town services such as shops and cafes.

Work is under way on transforming the upper floor from offices into visitor accommodation, which will be rented out. At present the VIC is funded largely by the Development Trust and its own sales. In future, however, the building as a whole may well generate a surplus for the Development Trust, which undertakes a range of projects in Callander.



**Location:** Callander, Stirling

**Type:** Find & Buy

**When Set Up:** Visitor Information Centre, 2021  
Callander Community Development Trust, 2003

**How Funded:** Callander Community Development Trust; income from retail sales.

**Beneficiaries:** Town economy boosted by visitors to the Centre, and because Centre encourages visitors to spend more time in and around Callander. Useful service for visitors. When accommodation rented out, likely to be a surplus for the Development Trust and its projects.

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