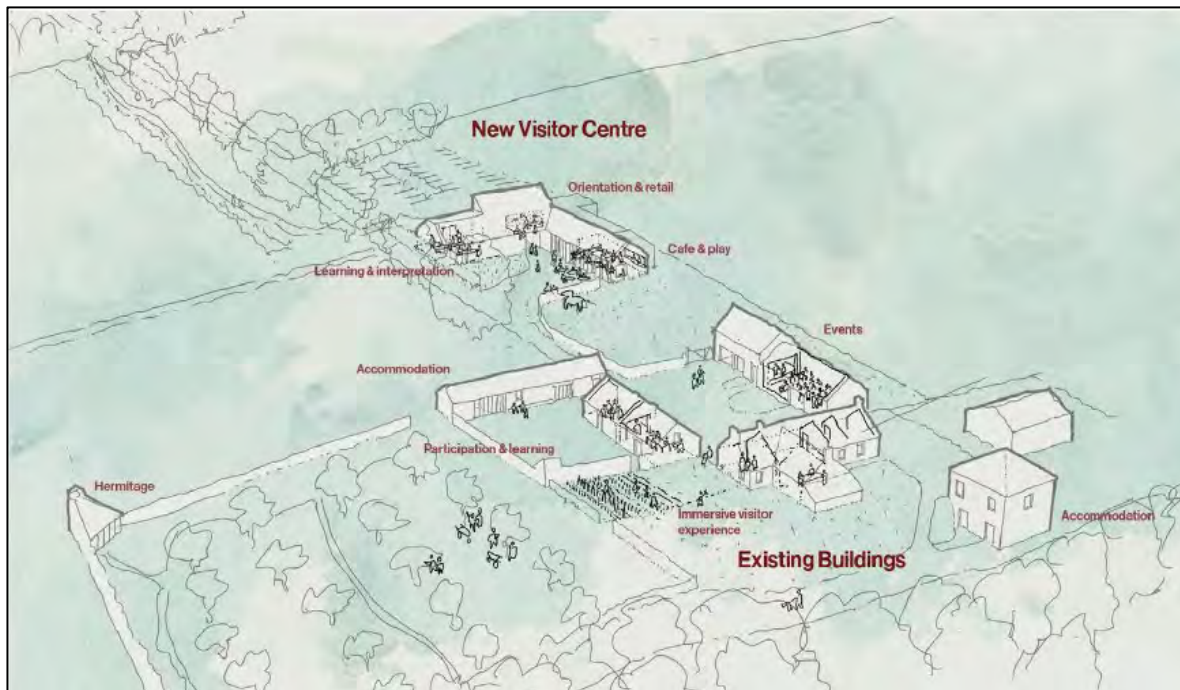


Ellisland Farm FutureVision



Business Plan

Prepared for Robert Burns Ellisland Trust
March 2023



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1 Executive Summary

The Robert Burns Ellisland Trust (RBET) safeguards the farm designed and built by the poet Robert Burns on the banks of the Nith near Dumfries. The A-listed steading is the best preserved of all the poet's homes, the only one he built and the place he wrote a quarter of his musical output, including Auld Lang Syne. A recent Conservation Study funded by Historic Environment Scotland concluded the site was of exceptional significance - historically and culturally - and emphasised the importance of its relatively unchanged rural setting.

However, the study also said the site was at risk because of the poor state of the buildings. RBET is committed to conserving and promoting the site as one of the most significant locations in the life of Robert Burns, and as a cultural heritage asset of national and international repute. Robert Burns described Ellisland as "Sweet poetic ground". Using this as a starting point, the FutureVision of RBET is to:

Increase understanding of Ellisland as central to Burns' artistic development, where he wrote over 130 pieces identified as treasures in Scotland's national canon of song and poetry, including Auld Lang Syne and Tam o' Shanter;

Spotlight the environmental importance of the estate as the best place to see the natural world through the poet's eyes;

Increase appreciation of Ellisland as one of the foundational sites for European Romantic song through a vibrant festivals and events programme;

Foreground the important role and contribution of Jean Armour, 'I see her in the dewy flowers, / I see her sweet and fair: / I hear her in the tunefu' birds, / I hear her charm the air'¹

Celebrate Scots writing and music, and the ways in which our national identities continue to be shaped and defined by an evolving indigenous language;

Contribute to the Scottish Government's cultural outcome in the national performance framework.

The FutureVision aims to secure the short, medium and long term future of Ellisland by engaging new audiences in new activities and providing an exciting immersive experience that interprets life at the farm in the time of Burns. By improving accessibility throughout Ellisland, this is an inclusive vision which invites all parties into Ellisland which, through the invaluable work of volunteers, already acts as a centre for wellbeing in the community.

Using the principle of 'conservation through use' the existing buildings will be enlivened with a wider programme of events, creative workshops and artist residencies. A new visitor centre will act as a hub with permanent and temporary exhibition spaces, archive space, staff facilities, a shop and café.

The site is more than the farm steading. The landscape, the river, the plants, the animals, the courtyards, the buildings and the people form an ensemble. It is an environment that was largely organised by the field enclosures from Burns' time and has evolved since. The existing buildings act as

¹ *I Love My Jean*, song by Robert Burns (1788)

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a focal point for the care of the surrounding 170 acres, which has required the buildings to expand and contract over time, reacting to the needs of the landscape and the inhabitants, human and animal.

Key to the development of the vision has been the study of both the historic iterations of Ellisland and the current state of the buildings and landscape, with an aim to find out how best to create an experience which will help visitors to enjoy the landscape as Burns did before he built the house. The new building and landscape interventions, improved accessibility and staff / volunteer facilities will enable the continuation of Ellisland as a hub of wellbeing and learning, the latest in the many iterations of Ellisland.

Immersing visitors in the landscape, using walks, audio playlists, seating areas and selected artistic interventions, can offer interpretations to further understand the relationship between Burns and his family, his works and the landscape. 'New Hermitage' structures, which can be used for residencies, will allow people to immerse themselves deeply in the environment as Burns did at the Friar's Carse Hermitage. Whilst Burns was deeply inspired by the romance of the landscape he was also confronted by the daily difficulties of farm life. Ellisland therefore presents as both Idyll and a place of Toil, and the interpretation of these aspects shapes the visitor experience at Ellisland.

The new building will allow us to store and exhibit the existing collection in a secure environment and open up the existing buildings to be used in creative ways. Showcasing the life of Burns and the family in an immersive environment, the existing buildings will also be used for events, residencies and workshops.

There has always been a tension between presenting the farmhouse as Burns' home versus the display of cased artefacts. RBET will return the farmhouse to an immersive experience with a 'homely' feel and move the storage of collections and presentation of cased exhibition displays to the new building.

The farmhouse will allow the visitor to:

- Experience Burns' domestic (family) life
- Be immersed in the period
- Learn about Jean Armour and their children
- Discover the family's daily rhythms of eating, working and sleeping

A further programme of residencies and events throughout the year will take place within the other existing buildings of Ellisland. The threshing barn and the wee byre, set across from each other in the farmyard, will be used for a wide range of events and workshops, and the long byre and granary will be used for accommodation and residencies that will support those events and workshops. This environment will enable the community to celebrate the traditions of Burns as well as contemporary Scottish music and culture. Events will include live music and ceilidhs as well as artist workshops and creative residencies. This will build on Ellisland's existing strength as a place where the intangible cultural heritage of Scotland is kept alive.

Central to the vision of the new Ellisland experience is the care, collection and exhibition of the existing collection. The main introductory exhibition will tell the story of how Burns came to Ellisland, his time there, and why and when he left. This is where the star items of the Ellisland Collection will be displayed and will cover:

- Burns' work at Ellisland; his creative output and the Scots Musical Museum.
- The library, and his beliefs and values around society and education.
- His friendships, socialising and letter writing.

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- Encouraging visitors to visit the farmhouse to experience his personal life at Ellisland.

Along with the permanent exhibition space, there will be an audio-visual and temporary exhibition space to allow for a changing programme of related exhibitions, more rotation of artefacts for conservation reasons and opportunities for co-production and co-creation. A new collection and archive space will also be included to enable the long-term preservation of the existing collection.

Engagement with key stakeholders, current and potential partners, schools, young people’s groups and the local community has supported and influence this vision for learning, engaging and celebrating Burns, his life, and his cultural legacy. Through engagement and market research, RBET propose a calendar of activities which will encourage people to visit and stay at the site, increasing outreach and ensuring a wider range of people will be involved in heritage:

- 18 community and outreach events per year, and a summer programme for at young people;
- 21 creative retreats a year, bringing musicians, poets, and writers to be inspired by Ellisland;
- 4 festivals or events, celebrating Burns’ legacy, including music, poetry, and food;
- 22 accommodation places in a mix of the existing holiday cottage, new pods, the converted byre, and the converted granary to provide artistic residencies and to support income.

The enhancements to the interpretation, buildings, and site, together with these planned activities, will attract over 40,000 visitors are year to this unique site.

The development cost for this project is forecast at circa £12,895,000 plus £2,460,000 VAT totalling £15,355,000. The fundraising timeline shows a funding requirement of £760,000 by April 2024 and the remaining £14,595,00 by April 2025.

RBET plan to raise this money by a combination of grant and fundraising from the diaspora of Burns enthusiasts.

	Total
Fundraising	150,000
Procurement fees	20,000
Learning and Activity Plan	200,000
Project management	200,000
Financial and grant management	150,000
Core staff costs	250,000
Total project management and other costs	970,000
Design team fees	1,586,425
Statutory fees	10,000
legal fees	10,000
Specialist surveys	84,000
Construction costs	9,326,400
Interpretation costs	908,600
Project construction costs	11,925,425
Total costs excl VAT	12,895,425
VAT	2,459,085
Total costs incl VAT	15,354,510

Detailed financial projections are included in this business plan. The projections show that while Ellisland grows the activities and enterprise after completion, it will require additional income from

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fundraising, but that it will break even by year 3, as below. The Trustees will develop the platform and the reserves for ongoing fundraising as part of the strategy for the capital costs.

Total income and costs, first five years

Year ending Dec	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Revenue					
Core income and costs	150,000	150,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Retreats	90,000	117,000	186,667	221,667	281,750
Residencies & accommodation	173,687	170,002	166,318	162,634	160,945
Events and festivals	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Weddings, private dining, hire	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Café	228,662	242,437	264,890	287,839	311,036
Retail	82,999	87,999	96,149	104,479	112,899
Museum entries	322,000	322,000	338,100	355,120	372,600
Total Revenue	1,087,348	1,229,438	1,192,123	1,271,738	1,379,229
Total Cost of Goods Sold	(208,102)	(233,053)	(262,615)	(292,441)	(316,569)
Gross Margin	879,246	896,386	929,508	979,297	1,062,660
Salaries & Wages	(602,145)	(603,706)	(615,132)	(626,811)	(638,615)
Operating Expenditure	(273,883)	(279,506)	(294,319)	(302,974)	(317,001)
Total Operating Expenses	(875,978)	(883,212)	(909,451)	(929,785)	(955,616)
Net Profit	3,267	13,173	20,058	49,512	107,044

As a result of these activities, Ellisland will enable the following Full Time Equivalent jobs:

- Permanent positions: 13.0 FTE
- Seasonal positions (café, retail, museum): up to 9.5 FTE in peak (summer) season.

In addition, activities at Ellisland will support local enterprises through festivals, events, and catering; and local jobs in housekeeping.

The regeneration and reimagining of the Ellisland site will create a regional, national and international destination for a wide range of visitors, informing and educating people about Burns, Jean Armour, and their cultural legacy; and boosting the economy of the South of Scotland.

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2 Introduction and background

During 2022 Robert Burns Ellisland Trust (RBET) commissioned a Future Vision Plan and accompanying Business Plan to develop a vision and viable model for development and operation of the historic Ellisland Farm and wider site. This our Future Vision for Ellisland.

This report is the Business Plan, one of two reports, the other being the Architectural Plan for the site, and should be read in conjunction with Architectural Plan. The focus of this report is the business planning and financial implications for delivery of RBET's vision and aspirations for the site.

The aim of this report is to set out the proposed activities and uses, financial viability and high-level funding strategy for the Future Vision Plan.

3 The vision for Ellisland

3.1 RBET vision

'The banks of the Nith are as sweet poetic ground as any I ever saw'

Robert Burns, a letter to Patrick Miller (20 October, 1788)

The Robert Burns Ellisland Trust safeguards the farm designed and built by the poet Robert Burns on the banks of the Nith near Dumfries. The A-listed steading is the best preserved of all the poet's homes, the only one he built and the place he wrote a quarter of his musical output, including Auld Lang Syne. A recent Conservation Management Plan funded by Historic Environment Scotland concluded the site was of exceptional significance - historically and culturally - and emphasised the importance of its relatively unchanged rural setting. However, the study also explained that the site was at risk because of the poor state of the buildings.

The Robert Burns Ellisland Trust (RBET) is committed to conserving and promoting the site as one of the most significant locations in the life of Robert Burns, and as a cultural heritage asset of national and international repute. Taking its cue from the 'sweet poetic ground', the vision of RBET is to:

Increase understanding of Ellisland as central to Burns' artistic development, where he wrote over 130 pieces identified as treasures in Scotland's national canon of song and poetry, including Auld Lang Syne and Tam o' Shanter;

Spotlight the environmental importance of the estate as the best place to see the natural world through the poet's eyes;

Increase appreciation of Ellisland as one of the foundational sites for European Romantic song through a vibrant festivals and events programme;

Foreground the important role and contribution of Jean Armour, 'I see her in the dewy flowers, / I see her sweet and fair: / I hear her in the tunefu' birds, / I hear her charm the air'²

Celebrate Scots writing and music, and the ways in which our national identities continue to be shaped and defined by an evolving indigenous language;

² *I Love My Jean*, song by Robert Burns (1788)

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Contribute to the Scottish Government's cultural outcome in the national performance framework.

This vision aims to secure the short, medium and long term future of Ellisland by engaging new audiences in new activities and providing an exciting immersive experience that interprets life at the farm in the time of Burns. By improving accessibility throughout Ellisland, this is an inclusive vision which invites all parties into Ellisland which, through the invaluable work of volunteers, already acts as a centre for wellbeing in the community.

This business plan sets out how RBET will develop Ellisland as:

A first-rate visitor attraction, through ongoing partnerships with tourism sector businesses and agencies, and supporting prosperity through the ambitions of the Scottish Government's *A Culture Strategy for Scotland* and The South of Scotland Destination Alliance;

A vibrant hub of learning, through engaging local schools and formal and informal adult education providers;

A welcoming space and sanctuary for wellbeing, through maintaining a public garden, and providing guided and self-guided outdoor walks on the estate;

An inspiring place for artists to develop their creative practice and perform, through a lively and entertaining programme of in-person and online events, and residential opportunities;

A well maintained and preserved heritage asset of exceptional significant, both in terms of its associations with Burns and its landscape setting.

Using the principle of 'conservation through use' the existing buildings will be enlivened with a wider programme of events, creative workshops and artist residencies. A new exhibition and visitor centre will act as a hub with permanent and temporary exhibition spaces, archive space, staff facilities, a shop and café.

3.2 Stakeholder vision: delivering national priorities

Key policies and strategic drivers framing our business plan include:

National

- Scottish Government: A Culture Strategy for Scotland
- Scottish Government: National Outcomes Framework (includes culture and health)
- Scottish Government: Working Group on Tourism Recovery
- Scottish Government: Scotland CAN DO action framework: building on our vision to become a world-leading entrepreneurial and innovative nation
- Scotland's Economic Strategy (205) (including the development of Inclusive Growth)
- VisitScotland: Scotland Outlook 2030
- Museum Galleries Scotland: *Going Further* a National Strategy
- Creative Scotland: 10-Year Plan 2014-2024: Unlocking Potential, Embracing Ambition
- An Economic model to value Robert Burns as a Brand: Robert Burns and the Scottish Economy, Professor Murray Pittock, University of Glasgow

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Regional

- Dumfries & Galloway Cultural Strategy for the region
- Dumfries & Galloway's corporate priorities and commitments
- South of Scotland Social Enterprise: Investment Plan for The South of Scotland
- Poverty and Deprivation in Dumfries and Galloway

A summary of how the RBET vision and activities will meet key stakeholder priorities is provided at Appendix 1.

Further detail on activities in this Plan and how they deliver to key funder outcomes is set out at Section 11 and Figure xiv.

3.3 Identifying Critical Success Factors

The Critical Success Factors which require to be met to deliver these outcomes include:

- Achieving social investment capital through a range of grants and fundraising;
- Ensuring financial sustainability;
- Partnering with others to deliver outreach and diversity;
- Working closely with specialists to ensure historic authenticity;
- Engaging with the local community including with neighbours to strengthen community benefits
- Working with stakeholders to link Ellisland Farm as a key Dumfries destination
- Understanding risk appetite - of funders, stakeholders, community – and mitigating risk.

This business plan encompasses these success factors for the Future Vision Plan.

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4 Understanding the Place

The site is more than just the house. The landscape, the river, the plants, the animals, the courtyards, the buildings and the people form an ensemble. When Burns arrived at this site, it was wild and undeveloped; what we see today is an environment that was largely organised by the field enclosures from Burns' time and has evolved over time.

Key to the development of the vision has been the study of both the historic iterations of Ellisland and the current state of the buildings and landscape, with an aim to find out how best to create an experience which will help visitors to experience the landscape as Burns did before he built the house. The new building and landscape interventions, improved accessibility and volunteer facilities will enable the continuation of Ellisland as a hub of wellbeing and learning, the latest in the many iterations of Ellisland.

4.1 History and buildings

The existing buildings act as a focal point for the care of the surrounding 170 acres; this has required the buildings to expand and contract over time; reacting to the needs of the landscape and the inhabitants; human and animal. The buildings that Burns built – the farmhouse, the wee byre and the threshing barn – remain largely in their original external form, with additional structures including the cart barn, the long byre and the granary having been added from the 1790s to the 1820s. Please see Figure v.

4.2 Landscape and nature

Whilst Burns was deeply inspired by the romance of the landscape he was also confronted by the daily difficulties of farm life. Ellisland therefore presents as both an Idyll and a place of Toil. Burns was an 'improving farmer', who toiled to improve the fields and to implement the latest agricultural practices of his day, but his poem 'To a Mouse' shows he was at odds with the effect of farming practice on the nature he saw around him.

The farm was hard physical work, with poor and unimproved soil, requiring hard labour to plough, sow and harvest. Burns' romantic idyll of farming life was disrupted by the harsh realities of the labour involved, in all weathers. He eventually switched from crops to cattle and sheep farming, leaving Jean Armour to run the business while he worked as an Excise Officer.

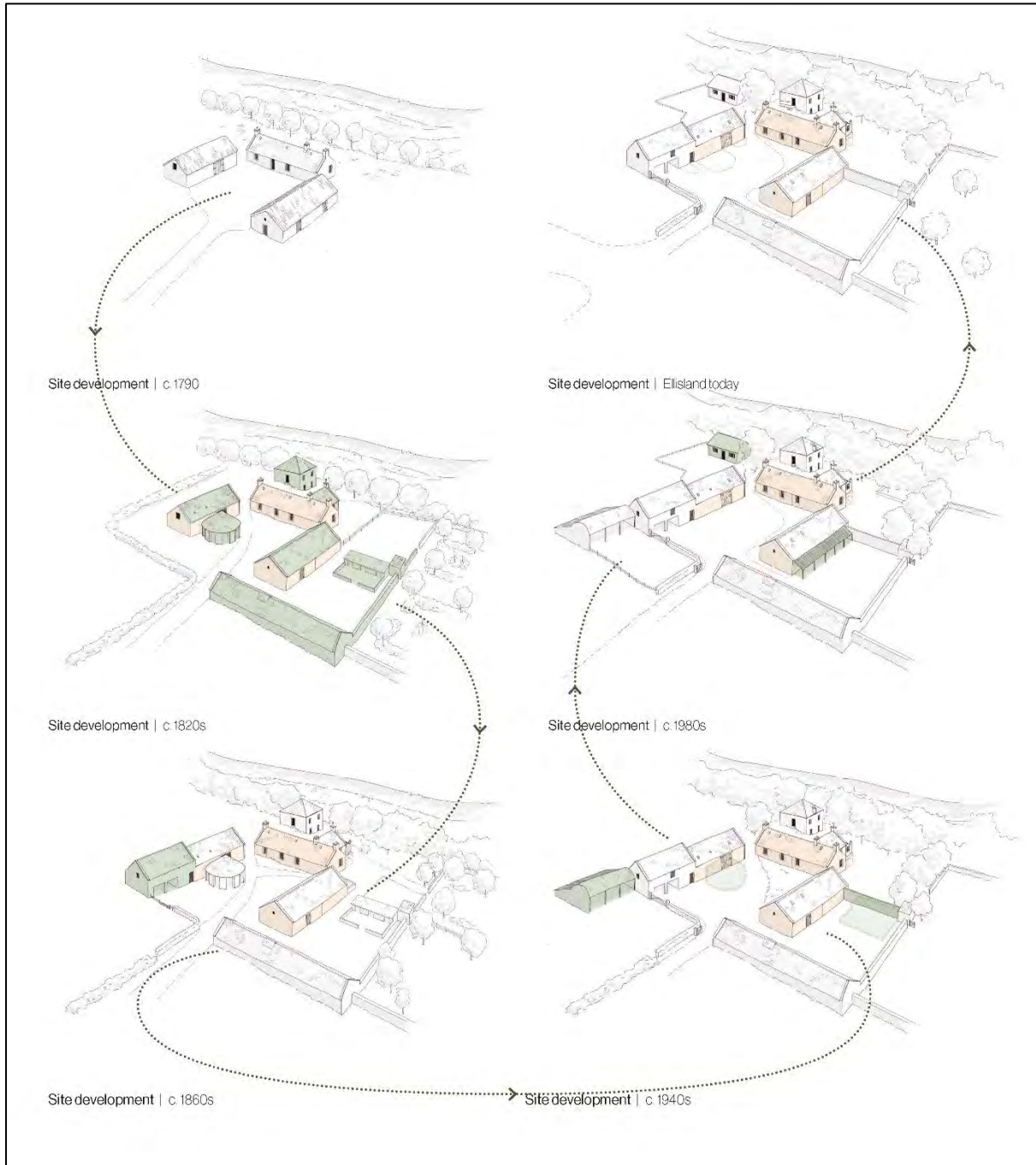
The farm buildings are adjacent to a garden and to an orchard, replanted in the 1990s.

The wider site is formed from agricultural fields with woodland edges and sparse hedgerows, and retains a range of biodiverse habitats. The riparian boundary is of mixed deciduous trees; sycamore, beech, ash and birch. The main access road is through a stand of wet woodland; willow, birch and alder and is lined on the south side with over-mature and diseased ash trees.

The surrounding fields are cropped for grass by a local farmer. The underlying geology of gravels make the ground stony and unsuitable for arable crops.

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Figure i. Development of the farm buildings



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5 Interpretation strategy

The Interpretation Strategy focusses on building meaningful relationships between places and people, focusing on the visitors and their experience. Activities at the site are focussed on delivering:

- Connection between the activity and the visitor
- Understanding of the place – its history, its present, the future
- Enjoyment of the visit.

Following the principle of “conservation through use” for the whole site, an investigation was undertaken to determine which buildings could be used to store and present collections items, which were suitable for telling the story of Burns’ time at Ellisland and how these could be used.

As a starting point, the vision of the Robert Burns Ellisland Trust but also the origins of the site as a visitor attraction were considered:

*‘The chief purpose of this trust was the maintaining and preserving [of] the property entrusted to them as closely as possible to the state in which it existed in the time of Burns’.*³

There has been a clear tension evident, almost since the earliest days of the site, between creating an immersive ‘homely’ feel and presenting the collection of artefacts in their required protective cases. In the 1940s and in the early 1950s there was some dissatisfaction with the museum-like nature of the parlour. In a particularly cutting newspaper article it was noted:

*‘It might be more in keeping with public taste if it were furnished as a farm parlour of Burns’s time, with a few good pieces rather than too many, and a discreet display of engravings and objects. The low grate, upon which the rain rattles down the straight-built chimney, two wooden armchairs, and the well-fitted bookcase make the beginnings of a homely room’.*⁴

Further to this long-standing tension, the current conditions of the buildings on the site prove an even greater tension between the buildings themselves in their current state and the storage and display of important artefacts.

5.1 Collections care

Good collections care requires provision of an environment secure from theft, stable and favourable environmental conditions and opportunities for display and access.

The Robert Burns Ellisland Trust is already in the process of applying for formal Museum Accreditation through Museums Galleries Scotland⁵. Museum Accreditation is the UK industry standard for museums and galleries. To achieve Accreditation, a museum must meet published requirements on:

- how it is governed and managed
- how it cares for and manages its collections
- the information and services it offers to museum users

³ RBET Archive. ‘Ellisland Trustees: Minutes of Meetings 1928–1950’. Minute, 16th Oct 1940.

⁴ RBET Archive. ‘Ellisland’s Appeal: Need for Improvement at Nithsdale Farm Museum’. Np, 1951.

ELARC2020.2a ‘Various newspaper reports re. Ellisland development 1895–1979’.

⁵ <https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/museum-accreditation/>

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Accreditation can lead to greater funding opportunities and thereafter to recognition as part of a nationally important collection of Burns artefacts and the related support⁶.

The next steps for RBET after achieving Accreditation should be to progress the work already underway on focusing the collection. Disposal and dispersal of any part of the collection requires extensive research in terms of the items' provenances. Qualified and experienced curatorship costs money but there can be support from Museum channels for this which would be opened up by achieving accreditation. National Museums Scotland and the Scottish Rural Museums Network can support in disposal of unwanted farming collections unrelated to Burns/Ellisland, which is already in train.

A number of sites were studied which face similar tensions to Ellisland in terms of the historic buildings and collections care. These included; Robert Burns Birthplace Museum and Cottage, Abbotsford House, Wordsworth Grasmere, Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum and Robert Burns House Dumfries.

The requirements of caring for an accredited collection of important Burns artefacts, and study of comparators have fed into the recommendations of the Architectural Report to create a new building to complement the existing historic buildings.

5.2 Interpretation

The activities at this site all centre on enabling visitors to be part of the passing on of tradition, particularly through music and culture. The aim is that any visitor to the site, for whatever purpose, builds a connection with the site, enjoys an experience that meets their needs, and leaves with a greater understanding Burns' life and legacy.

The overall interpretive aims are for each visitor to

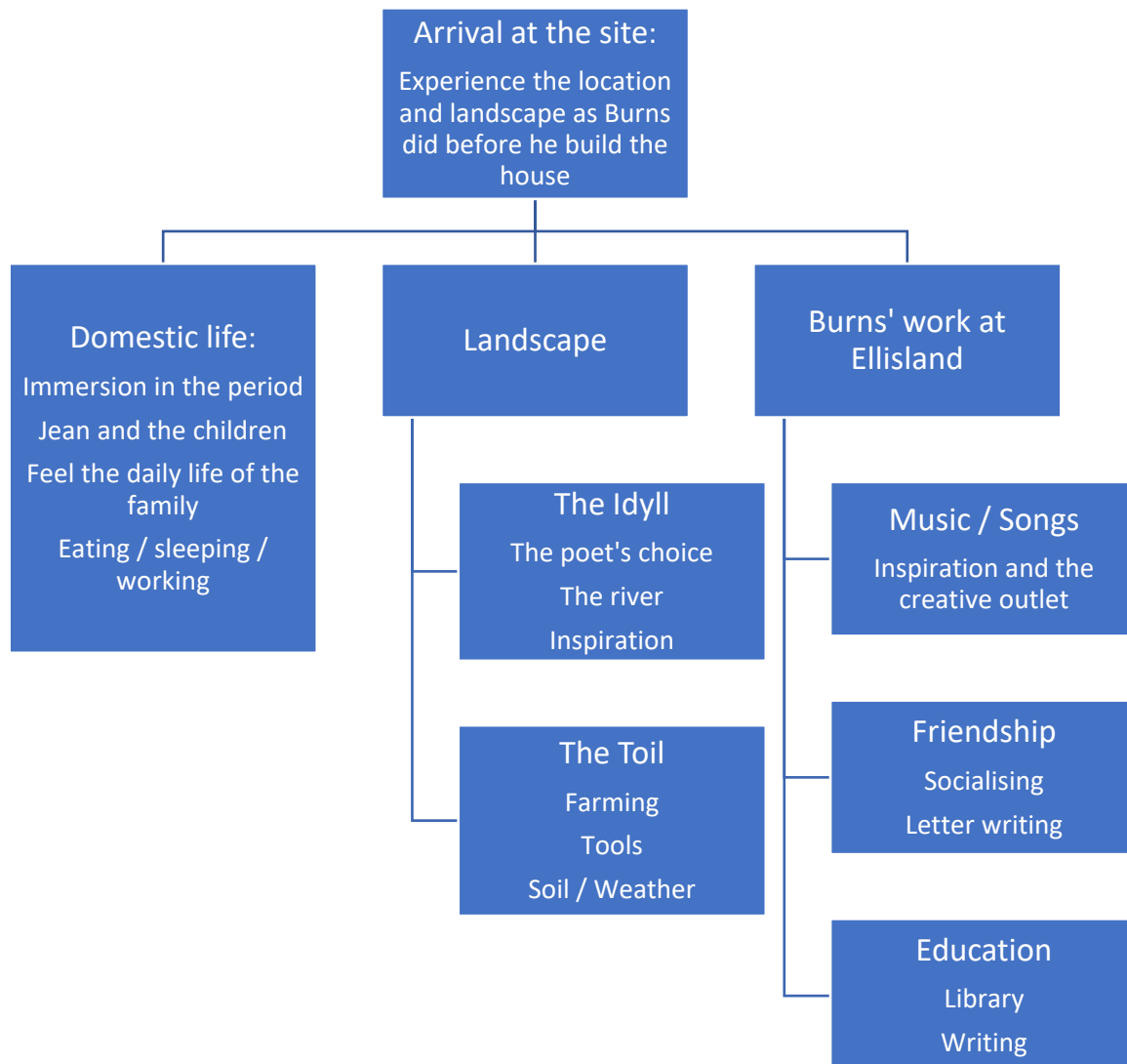
- Discover Burns' life at Ellisland Farm
- Discover the work Burns created at Ellisland
- Experience the inspiration of Ellisland for themselves.

The visitor journey on the site, should reflect a conceptual journey where visitors explore the key themes of the site. The conceptual journey is summarised in Figure ii.

⁶ <https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/recognition/recognised-collections/>

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Figure ii. Conceptual Visitor Journey



To take visitors on this conceptual journey, we have carefully designed a physical journey where the layout of spaces and places leads them through the site.

The journey will begin with a “reveal”, as visitors leave the main road, continue up the hill into a rural landscape, and see the site only as they reach the crest of the hill. Their first view will be of the site within the context of its landscape, before **arrival** at the new “welcome point” of the exhibition and café building.

The welcome building also provides a suitable secure environment for the permanent display of artefacts and archives relating to the core story of **Burns’ time and work at Ellisland**.

Space is also created for temporary, changing displays of artefacts. This allows a changing offer of thematic displays to attract repeat visitors, partnership and co-curation with creative practitioners and groups and rotation of items on display vs. in safe storage.

Domestic life will be explored in the farmhouse. This will be an immersive experience where the farmhouse will be restored to a full re-creation as it was in Burns’ time. It should be as evocative as

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possible, peopled by **Jean Armour**, the family and workers not just Burns himself. The farmhouse will be entered from the ‘front’ as Burns would have. It will contain collection items that can be on open display – entirely avoiding glass showcases if possible. Interpretation of the farmhouse will be by guided tours, digital (probably own mobile device) audio tours, and self-exploration.

The landscape will be explored and interpreted through immersion in the landscape. Visitors can choose to access the land for recreation and leisure. There will be waymarked walks, carefully designed ‘pausing’ places, destinations within the landscape, select use of artwork and seating and places to sit outside near the steading / café. Additional layers of interpretation can be included using digital technology primarily in audio, providing guided tours, poetry and song playlists to listen to while walking or sitting. This reflects the inspiration and **idyll** of the site. If funding allows, a bridge would cross the Nith to allow people to access the established path network on the other bank leading to the Dalswinton Estate with its close connections to Burns' time at Ellisland. In contrast, **the toil** of farming the site will be shown through a small quantity of farming exhibits to encourage people to understand Burns’ great labour and struggles in establishing the farm. There will be external exhibits and further interpretation in the exhibition space. RBET also aspire to partner with others to showcase elements of sustainable agriculture - as Burns used the latest techniques at this farm, part of his legacy is showcasing new developments that seek to mitigate biodiversity loss and climate change.

The themes of **Friendship, Socialising and Communication** will permeate throughout the site, with accessible walks, a children’s activity space, and a “feel” of a hospitable venue with the new café. Artefacts in the farmhouse and curated exhibitions will explain the importance of friendships and socialising to Burns, including his composition of “Auld Lang Syne” at Ellisland Farm

Education, one of Burns’ passions, will be built into the ethos, with opportunities for people to learn about Burns, his inspiration, his work and his legacy through the landscape interpretation, the artefacts in the farmhouse, and curated exhibits.

These concepts were developed through further consultation – please see Section 6.

5.3 Audiences

There is a continuing fascination with the life and legacy of Burns. For example, the discovery in January 2023 of papers dating from Burns’ time of plans and costs for building Ellisland garnered national and international interest. In considering current and future audiences for visits to the site, we distinguish between “drop in” visitors, and “pre-booked” visitors.

“Drop-in” visitors will choose to visit for their own purposes, at a time of their own choosing. These visitors can be categorised as:

- Tourists, deciding during or as part of their trip to visit a cultural tourism destination;
- Travellers, who know more of the cultural destination and will identify with, appreciate and understand the place prior to their visit
- Pilgrims, who are profoundly acquainted with Burns life and work and whose main purpose is replicating and engaging with Burns’ experience.

These “drop in” visitors will visit the permanent and temporary exhibitions, the farmhouse and explore the landscape over the course of a couple of hours to a half day, using the cafe and toilet facilities.

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In addition, and possibly the bigger audience, “pre-booked” visitors will be attracted to the site for a planned experience, with varying durations:

- Retreats (including teaching), residencies, community events, young people’s events, and festivals will allow participants to take forward the Burns' legacy of poetry, music and prose in a place where his presence is felt. This will strengthen the intangible cultural heritage of Burns and Scotland which Ellisland celebrates and enables. These communal occasions will focus on socialising, bringing people – including the local community and young people – together to forge connections and friendships in this creative space
- Income-generating activities, including festivals, weddings, and holiday accommodation will promote the “Idyll”, recalling Burns’ Romantic interpretation of the landscape, his inspiration, and the opportunity for these visitors to reflect and enjoy that legacy.
- Agriculture will continue at the Farm; the orchard will be expanded to increase community activity and food production, maintaining and expanding existing links and explicitly linking to Burns’ farming livelihood. Event and festival themes will include celebrating local food production. The farm buildings, including the threshing barn, were used as working agricultural buildings until the 1990s; this continuity of use back to Burns’ time should be celebrated perhaps through agricultural events. Ploughing competitions with traditional horse-drawn ploughs were held on the farm as late as 2009.
- RBET plan to develop their education and outreach offer to schools and youth programmes; existing connections and activities will be enhanced and expanded through a proposed education and outreach officer. This officer will build partnerships across the region to ensure that targeted programmes of activity align with local priorities and offer high quality creative experiences for children and young people.

These concepts were developed through further consultation – please see Section 6.

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6 Reaching out – wider engagement

To establish the possible uses and demand for activities on this site, we undertook research and discussions with a wide range of organisations, and considered existing similar offerings elsewhere in Scotland and wider in the UK. We consulted with organisations already delivering youth development, culture, and arts offerings in the Dumfries and Galloway area. A list of consultees is provided at Appendix 1.

6.1 Schools and young people

Our consultation with learning providers and teachers set out in this Section gives weight to our unique potential for becoming a vibrant hub of learning both regionally and nationally. In this way the five development goals listed on page 6 are threaded throughout the plan, and our approach and assumptions are then evidenced by the stakeholder conversations and consultations.

Feedback on current provision by RBET was overwhelming positive, with a strong desire to work with RBET to continue to expand activities. RBET has a programme of free school visits for 2022/23, and continues to engage young people more widely, for example recreating Robert Burns Ellisland Museum and Farm in the virtual world as part of Minecraft.

Educators noted that visits and activities were currently inspired by Burns but also Scots Language and Poetry; Health and Well-being; From Field to Fork; Outdoor Learning; Story and Song; and local history. This would be enabled by the Curriculum for Excellence which allows teachers to look at wider topics around Burns, and to spread them across the year.

School heads suggested that RBET invite Teachers to an in-service day to survey the site and gain interest, noting the beautiful landscape/situation for outdoor learning and the potential for an added value of a musician/artist/Scots Language specialist as part of the visit. Transport remains an issue for schools in pupil visits; outreach visits to schools were suggested by teachers to help overcome this barrier, acknowledging that this would not provide the same immersive educational experience for the pupils.

Further, Ellisland could be used as a national resourcing centre to inspire and teach teachers in the arts. The buildings lend themselves to small ‘breakout’ rooms with space in the barn for intimate performances.

Consultees also suggested the possibility of providing places to deliver vocational and other training at Ellisland. Examples included:

- SVQs in a non-traditional setting, Modern Apprenticeship; Dynamic Youth Awards
- SVQs in Housekeeping and café
- Work placements in the café, front of house, and shop.

Partnerships with employability organisations would enable RBET to support people of all ages and a range of socio-economic backgrounds to be involved and to learn new skills.

The Usual Place, a social enterprise which employs people with additional support needs in its café in Dumfries, would be keen support opportunities for its client base, including young people, at Ellisland. This would be delivered in partnership with The Usual Place, given the specialist support required to enable these service users to reach their full potential.

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Dewar Arts Awards support disadvantaged young artists lacking the resources to reach their full potential and are keen to reach more young people in areas such as Dumfries and Galloway, which is currently under-represented in their activities.

Organisations also noted the difficulty arising from RBET's location 6 miles out of Dumfries, with poor public transport links.

It may be that for RBET to be able to fully explore and deliver these educational, skilling, and employment opportunities it will need access to a minibus service. This could be a partnership with an existing community minibus service (although there is not one in Dumfries) or use of local transport providers, with these costs included in all funding applications.

6.2 Community

RBET is building links with its local communities, including community participation in the orchard and gardens. Consultees emphasised the opportunity for Ellisland Farm to be strongly rooted and connected in the area; that Burns has a strong resonance with people in Dumfries and Galloway, and this was an opportunity to connect and re-connect people with that heritage.

Hollywood Trust and Museums and Galleries Scotland funding enabled RBET to employ two young people to act as a Museum Development Officer and a Site Officer in September 2022. These additional staff have worked to programme and organise the museum's 2022/23 free school visits scheme.

Community events in the last year include family events, celebratory events, and opportunities for local and young musicians to perform e.g.:

- a Harvest Supper concert, timed to allow young families to attend, with national trad performers headlining and local performers supporting;
- a traditional Halloween Fun Day, including traditional Scottish Halloween games, competitions for adults, live entertainment from young traditional performers, and a special performance of Tam O Shanter, which was written at Ellisland Farm;
- a Young Trad Christmas Concert headlining the Scots Trad Singer of the Year Siobhan Miller with performances by local young musicians;
- a traditional, friendly, Hogmanay event with people of all ages getting to experience the spirit of Burns, and a traditional New Year, in the place he wrote Auld Lang Syne
- a Family Burns Brunch to celebrate Burns Day, attended by 63 people including families
- a program of events for school half-term focussed around Jean Armour and celebrating her birthday.

**Half-Term Activities
At Ellisland Museum & Farm
22nd -26th of February 2023**

MUSIC WORKSHOP BY EMILY SMITH
Learn about traditional scottish music in this workshop by scots trad artist Emily Smith
AGES: 5-12yrs DATE: 22nd Feb 11am & 1pm ADMISSION: FREE

BUTTER MAKING
Make you own butter using traditional techniques.
AGES: 5-12yrs DATE: 23rd Feb 11:30am ADMISSION: FREE

SCOTS LANGUAGE
Learn about the scots language in the home of scottish poet Robert Burns.
AGES: 5-12yrs DATE: 23rd Feb 2 pm ADMISSION: FREE

SPINNING DISPLAY
Display by members of the Spinners Guild
AGES: All Ages DATE: 23rd Feb All-day ADMISSION: FREE

ALSO:
Special Jean Armour Exhibit, Self-led trails, teas and coffees served, FREE admission for these days only!
Open from 11am-4pm

The Holywood Trust
Museums Galleries Scotland
Supporting Scotland's Museums
Ellisland Farm

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE -
WWW.ELLISLANDFARM.CO.UK

Consultees welcomed these events and encouraged RBET to continue to expand its programme, and increase opportunities for people to volunteer at the site. A resource such as a Volunteer Coordinator

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would help expand and organise such opportunities and enable RBET to engage with an “invisible workforce”.

Consultees noted that promoting accessibility at the site would help ensure inclusion of people with disabilities, including learning disabilities. A report, “The Purple Pound - the spending power of People of disabled households” concluded that businesses lose approximately £2 billion a month by ignoring the needs of disabled people. <https://wearepurple.org.uk/the-purple-pound-infographic/>

Provision such as Changing Places toilets would open access to people with disabilities and their families; over a 1/4 million people in the UK need Changing Places Toilets to enable them to get out and about.

6.3 Culture

The promotion of Burns is enormously important, building on Dumfriesshire’s link with Scotland’s national poet. Consultees suggested that Ellisland should become part of a “Burns Corridor”, linking with other Burns and Scots Language venues in South West Scotland.

Ellisland Farm is unique in combining both arts performance and heritage, and this should continue to develop within the site, providing the link from the past to the future. Consultees suggested that RBET could have a role in an advocacy context for arts in the region, perhaps as part of DG Unlimited, whose vision is to “make Dumfries and Galloway the destination place, where all artists and arts organisations want to live, work and make a living” – a vision that sits well with the vision for Ellisland Farm.

Ellisland also provides a link between the creative arts and landscape, which could be strengthened and interpreted; also providing the potential for work to support mental health and wellbeing programmes.

Consultees suggested that future activities at Ellisland could:

- Focus on Song writing and traditional music Scots language
- Become a creative placemaking hub network
- Provide a contemporary response to storytelling through song and music
- Demonstrate the connection between art and landscape
- Retain the charm and ethos of this very special place.

Other potential events could include:

- Outdoor events – linking with Eden Court Theatre’s summer season “under canvas”
- Literature and book festivals
- Multi-faceted events, providing a range of offerings for multiple audiences over a weekend

Consultees also suggested that RBET could join with existing festivals and events locally, linking into established networks, and adding their unique offering to strengthen the attraction of these events to regional and national visitors, for example:

- The Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festival
- The “Spring Fling” for visual arts
- Dumfries and District Music Festival
- Eden Festival, held near Moffat
- The Dumfries International Food Festival

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- The Wigtown Book Festival

Adding a Burnsian / Scots language input to these established festivals, or hosting related events at Ellisland Farm, would add to the audience and the attraction for visitors both nationally and internationally.

6.4 Artists' Residencies

Consultees noted that Ellisland offers a unique opportunity for artists to immerse themselves in “The Idyll”, drawing inspiration from the site and the landscape, just as Burns did. Artist-in-residence programmes give artists the opportunity to live and work outside of their usual environments, providing them with time to reflect, research, or produce work. These could be for Song-writing, Performance, Poetry, Music and recording, and support emerging and established artists. These residencies can be independently funded; Ellisland as the venue would work with creative organisations who manage and programme residencies for their own communities. These organisations source funding or fees to pay for accommodation and catering e.g. in the same way as The Scottish International Flute Summer School currently use Strathallan School. Ronnie Gurr, CEO of the Scottish Music Industry Association would be keen to revive Burnsong (see below) and Ellisland would provide the perfect location for this. This approach allows RBET to have the expertise and network of other specialist organisations to run the programme and manage bookings and Ellisland is simply the host venue. If Ellisland chose to run their own residency, the fees would be self-funded by the artists. These two models are not mutually exclusive.

Artists-in-residence could be required as part of their residencies to take workshops to schools, or to have workshops for young people on-site. Residencies could include a performance at the end of the residency, or allow RBET to gain sponsors to commission new work to attract visitors and artists to the site. This would increase the creative credibility and visibility of Ellisland Farm, and provide an attraction to other creatives to stay at the site for retreats.

A single event bringing together creatives for a week-long residency could start this set of activities, in a similar way to Burnsong. Burnsong came together as a national body in 2003, in collaboration with Dumfries and Galloway Arts Association. At the time, the Scottish Parliament, local Galloway and Ayrshire MPs and MSPs, and local authorities in south west Scotland were looking for a powerful, creative and contemporary way to celebrate the wide ranging artistic legacy of Robert Burns. Through Scotland-wide consultation with songwriters, broadcasters, music producers and representative music bodies, Burnsong emerged with the purpose of developing the art of contemporary songwriting in all its many forms.

6.5 Creative Retreats

Retreats, in contrast to residencies, include elements of teaching and collaboration. These can be self-funded by the participants, or through a mix of grants and fees.

Retreats typically require the participants to be accommodated on-site, with a structured programme of learning and collaboration. While the current site could not accommodate overnight stays other than in the farmhouse, this would enhance the reputation of Ellisland Farm and provide a focus for creatives. Consultees also suggested that wellbeing retreats would be well-received, again reflecting on the “idyllic” nature of the site.

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6.6 National, international and digital reach

RBET is already connected to organisations such as the Robert Burns World Federation Ltd, who visited Ellisland Farm in 2022. Consultees noted that there is a world-wide Scottish diaspora, and Burns legacy already enables RBET to connect with millions of people globally who identify as having Scottish or Scots-Irish heritage.

RBET provides on-line and digital engagement, and this creates an opportunity to “monetise” this into national and international visits to Ellisland. A wide provision of events, festivals, culture, and of accommodation on the site will enable RBET to meet visitor needs in addition to promoting Ellisland, Burns, and Dumfries and Galloway to an international audience.

6.7 Challenges

Consultees noted challenges, both financial and physical, to achieving these aims at the current site.

These included:

Accessibility:

- Access to the site is poor with only a long single-track road from the main A76.
- Limited parking.
- The bus service from Dumfries would leave a long walk to the site.
- Cost of transport
- Accessibility around the site is poor

Facilities:

- Limited capacity for indoor space makes some performances unviable
- No separate space currently for performers i.e. green room
- Marquees have notoriously bad acoustics
- No Café to keep visitors on site.
- Toilets – insufficient and not accessible
- Heating is inadequate
- Rusty and sharp farm machinery is a hazard

Financial / viability

- Post Covid – audiences are cautious
- Cost of living crises.
- Location – not roadside, need to know about it. You are not just going to stumble upon it.
- Competition with Ayr and Dumfries for Burns market.
- Viability and sustainability. Income and funding landscape is currently extremely challenging
- Ageing audiences at Scottish traditional music concerts.

The architectural and landscape architecture proposals in Sections 8 and 9 address the issues under accessibility and facilities, to the extent that these can be addressed on-site.

The markets and financial viability assessments in Section 10 address the issues of financial viability.

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6.8 Partnerships

Overall, consultees were enthusiastic and welcoming of opportunities to work with RBET at Ellisland Farm. It was clear that in this challenging climate, and to derive maximum local benefit from the revitalisation of the site, partnerships would provide support, activities, and potentially access to funding. Funders are increasingly looking at place-based applications which bring organisations together with a focus on people and community, rooted and connected in your area. Organisations benefit from shared marketing, a clear understanding of the role of respective organisations within an area/demarcation of roles, knowledge exchange, networking and training. Ultimately this can lever investment into the area. Partners suggested were:

Education and outreach:

- Moat Brae National Centre for Children's Literature
- Local schools
- University of the West of Scotland – Creative Industries courses
- Hollywood Trust
- Scotland's Rural College - SRUC Barony, Dumfries (relating to sustainable agriculture)

Culture:

- Stove Network – Creative Placemaking Network
- Spring Fling
- DG Unlimited/Cultural Strategy – become a member of the steering group
- Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festival
- Dumfries and District Music Festival Association
- Dumfries Music Conference
- Scottish Music Industry Association
- Scottish Book Trust
- Luminate – Scotland's Creative Ageing Organisation

Burns / Scots language:

- Burns Birthplace Museum
- Burns Club network
- The Globe

Community:

- Auldgirth and District Community Council
- Friars Carse

In addition to those partners suggested by consultees, we identified potential partners in the course of our wider market research. Please see Section 10.

7 Community engagement

At the completion of the work with wider stakeholders as above, RBET instructed two pieces of community engagement; a drop-in session at Ellisland Farm as part of the main consultant team brief, and a digital engagement held over the following two weeks by an independent consultant, Lorna Young (MIED).

7.1 Drop-in session

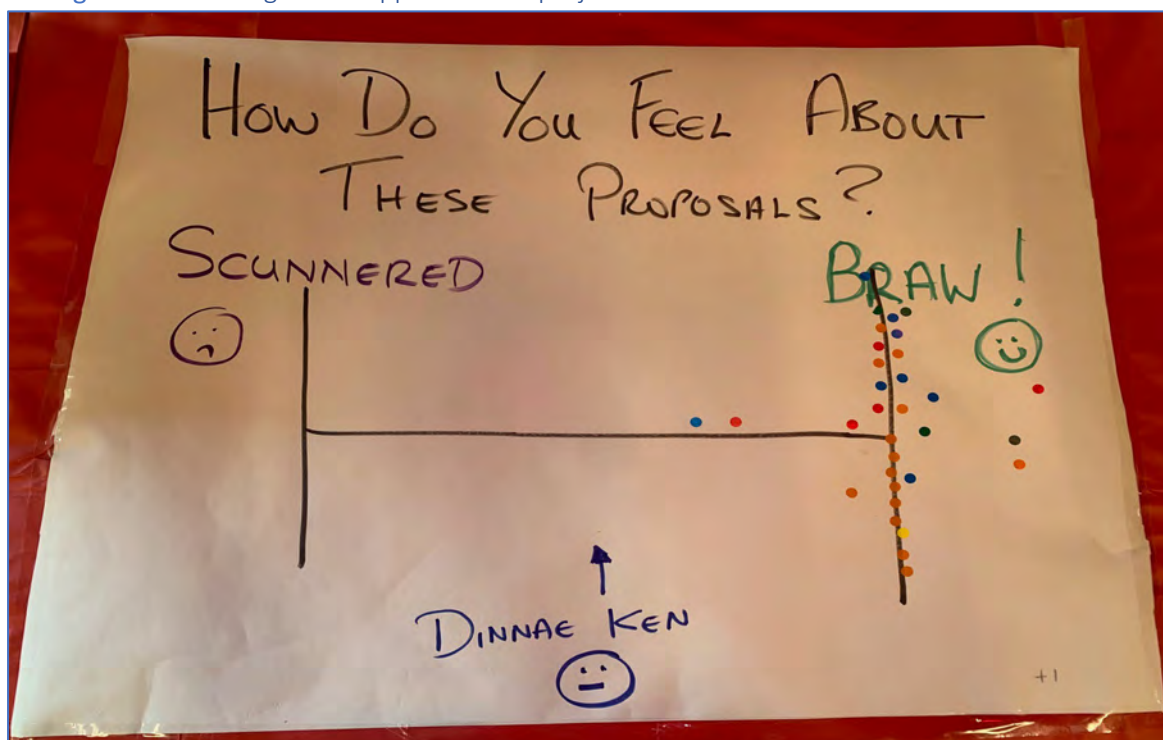
A community engagement event was held in the Threshing Barn of Ellisland Farm on Monday the 27th of February 2022. The event was open to the public from 11am to 5pm. It had been promoted by the Trust in advance on social media and was extensively covered in local and national newspapers, the BBC online site, local and national radio and ITV Border news television programmes, as well as the trust's social media channels. Invitations were sent out in advance to local stakeholders including community grounds, elected members, youth and arts organisations and members of the trust itself.

A number of informational boards were prepared which explained the background, thinking and proposals for the site. These were arranged around the Barn. Light refreshments were also provided. There was the opportunity for attendees to talk with the Trust and the consulting team. Individuals were encouraged to note thoughts, questions and concerns on cards which were then collected in a sealed postbox so that these could be received and reviewed anonymously.

The event attracted over 30 visitors throughout the day, ranging from Trust volunteers through to local politicians and SOSE. Ellisland's grass let farmers (Mr and Mrs Lindsay and Bertie Austin also attended, providing further insights for the team. They were positive about the proposals, requesting that existing field access would not be modified if possible. We discussed future events and the possibility of temporary car parking in one of their fields; again, they were supportive but requested some notice be given.

Attendees were also asked to indicate their overall view of the project on an H diagram. This is scale which enables individuals to place their position on a spectrum ranging from strongly against to strongly in favour. In the spirit of Burns and Ellisland, the scale was labelled with traditional Scots as shown in Figure iii.

Figure iii. H diagram – support for the project



32 individuals participated in the H diagram and 30 were highly supportive. We had discussions with some individuals as they were placing their dots. For the 2 indications of slightly lower support, one individual had concerns about potential impact on wildlife, whilst another was keen to see wider acknowledgement and more emphasis on the impact of Patrick Miller of Dalswinton on the Ellisland site and wider local rural development.

Attendees were positive about the plans that were being suggested and were supportive.

In terms of the comments that were provided on the cards, the detail may be found in Appendix x.

- Enthusiasm that the site is being sensitively restored and getting the attention it merits;
- Enthusiasm regarding return of the farmhouse to as Burns would have experienced it;
- Desire for a wider farming interpretation/aspect, incorporating animals, which would increase appeal to families;
- More information/interpretation of the family life of Burns and local social history.

7.2 Digital engagement

The digital engagement took the form of an online survey, which ran from 28th February to 12th March, which was promoted via social media, e-newsletter to Ellisland contacts, and local media. The promotion of the survey on social media focused on Dumfries & Galloway, Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire as 'local' regions to Ellisland, with strong cultural connections to Burns. The survey was anonymous, but respondents had the option to include their name for quote attribution.

Respondents were encouraged to watch a short video summarising the FutureVision plans for Ellisland. This merged FutureVision visuals into video footage of the current site to aid visualisation of the proposals. Respondents were invited to indicate whether or not they supported key elements of the plans, and to explain why they responded as they did. The survey also asked whether they agreed

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with a selection of statements, presented in a randomised order, and it invited respondents to leave a comment, with the option of having that comment attributed to them.

The survey asked questions to enable analysis through segmentation, including membership of Ellisland or other Burns organisation, home postcode and an indication of familiarity with the site, expressed through a statement of most recent visit.

No questions were compulsory, which meant respondents could answer all or some of the questions, as they preferred. Most answered all questions, and the answers were generally of a high quality, with a large proportion of respondents (approx. 45% per question) also providing thoughtful comments, which added insight and nuance to the quantitative data.

Overall the respondents were knowledgeable about Ellisland and Burns heritage. 42% of respondents had visited Ellisland within the last two years, with a further 22% having visited in the last 10 years. 25% of respondents had not visited Ellisland before, but noted an intention to do so. 29% of respondents were members of the Robert Burns Ellisland Trust, and just under 20% were a member of another Burns club or organisation.

The pattern of responses was consistent regardless of sample segmentation. This suggests that the responses and opinions on the proposals were not swayed by geography, by membership of the Trust, or by familiarity with the site as it currently is. The engagement report therefore presented the findings of the full sample, with analysis of subsections of the sample considered not necessary. A full copy of the engagement report is provided at Appendix 3.

230 responses were received over a 12 day period.

Out of 230 respondents, predominantly located in south west Scotland, 89% stated they supported the proposals, with 87% agreeing that the proposals would enhance Ellisland's importance as a Burns heritage site.

The opposing point of view, that respondents did not support the proposals, was selected by only 3.5% of respondents, while 4.4% believed the proposals would damage Ellisland's heritage.

However, while community support for the proposals is very high, support is partly conditional on development at Ellisland being done sensitively and with respect to the authenticity of the site.

The dominant theme within the comments was a strong ask from respondents that care be taken to ensure that the special atmosphere and nature of Ellisland is protected and conserved in future development plans.

Four secondary themes emerged from analysis of the comments.

1. Respondents believed the proposals outlined would have a positive impact on the local economy, particularly with respect to the local tourism economy.
2. Respondents wanted the development of active travel to be prioritised within future plans, in particular the creation of safe active travel routes between Dumfries and Ellisland.
3. There was a clear wish for inclusive, affordable access to be prioritised, particularly with respect to the local community.
4. Respondents wanted Ellisland to be a living space with a contemporary purpose; a place that can inspire and nurture creativity.

Robert Burns Ellisland Trust

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The findings were that there is overwhelming support and clear enthusiasm for the FutureVision proposals for Ellisland within the communities of south west Scotland. The individuals who participated in the digital engagement provided high quality answers, which reflected thoughtfully and respectfully upon the proposals. Many of the concerns expressed are constructive and questioning in nature, rather than indicating opposition, which is entirely appropriate given the high level nature of the information provided in the video and survey.

The Robert Burns Ellisland Trust can therefore be confident that the proposed approach is well supported by the local community, and by the Robert Burns community of interest within south west Scotland.

8 The built environment: celebrating the legacy

The Robert Burns Ellisland Trust (RBET) safeguards the farm designed and built by the poet Robert Burns on the banks of the Nith near Dumfries. The A-listed steading is the best preserved of all the poet's homes, the only one he built and the place he wrote a quarter of his musical output, including Auld Lang Syne. A recent Conservation Study funded by Historic Environment Scotland concluded the site was of exceptional significance - historically and culturally - and emphasised the importance of its relatively unchanged rural setting.

8.1 Developing the Architectural Brief

The existing buildings are in varying states of repair. The Condition Survey Report carried out by the Adams Napier Partnership alongside the wider Conservation Plan in 2021 summarises the condition of each of the existing buildings on the site, and makes recommendations for their repair and future maintenance.

While short term repairs have been carried out to address some of the critical issues, a full programme of repair and renovation works is proposed as part of the FutureVision for Ellisland in order to improve the condition of the existing buildings and to make them suitable for any proposed new uses:

- Removal of unsuitable impervious materials from previous repairs, and replacement with lime mortars and other breathable materials
- Redecoration & repairs to all external joinery
- Structural repairs: replacing rotten lintels, repairs to collar ties in Long Byre, repairs to cracked masonry, repairs to loft floor in Cart Store
- Thermal improvements: internal insulation to Granary, Long Byre, Cart Store & Threshing Barn, using breathable materials such as wood fibre insulation and lime plaster.

The FutureVision aims to secure the short, medium and long term future of Ellisland by engaging new audiences in new activities and providing an exciting immersive experience that interprets life at the farm in the time of Burns. By improving accessibility throughout Ellisland, this is an inclusive vision which invites all parties into Ellisland which, through the invaluable work of volunteers, already acts as a centre for wellbeing in the community.

Initial discussions focused on the Trust's vision for Ellisland, and how the estate should present itself to the visitor in order to increase understanding of Burns, his work, and his life at Ellisland, and foster an appreciation and celebration of Scots writing and music, both relating to Burns and in a wider context. Key to the development of the architectural proposals has been the study of both the historic iterations of Ellisland and the current state of the buildings and landscape, with an aim to find out how best to create an experience which will help visitors to enjoy the landscape as Burns did before he built the house.

Exhibition and interpretation consultant Lyndsey Clark developed a conceptual visitor journey which focused on translating the Trust's vision into an experience and learning path for the visitor to Ellisland (see Section 5). This conceptual map (Figure ii) for how the visitor could gain insights and appreciation of Burns and his work through a visit to Ellisland was then considered in tandem with the site layout, and options reviewed for how the existing site could best support the visitor journey.

OCA undertook an initial assessment of the existing buildings at Ellisland; recording key characteristics such as their internal footprints, their heritage significance as indicated in the Adams Napier Conservation Study, and their general condition. This identified the key constraints and opportunities

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inherent in each of the buildings and enabled a high-level appraisal of their suitability for adaptation to new uses as identified in the initial brief development. Preferred options for reuse of each of the existing structures were then mapped onto the site, creating a visual depiction of how the existing buildings on the site could be used to fulfil some of the requirements of the Trust's vision for Ellisland.

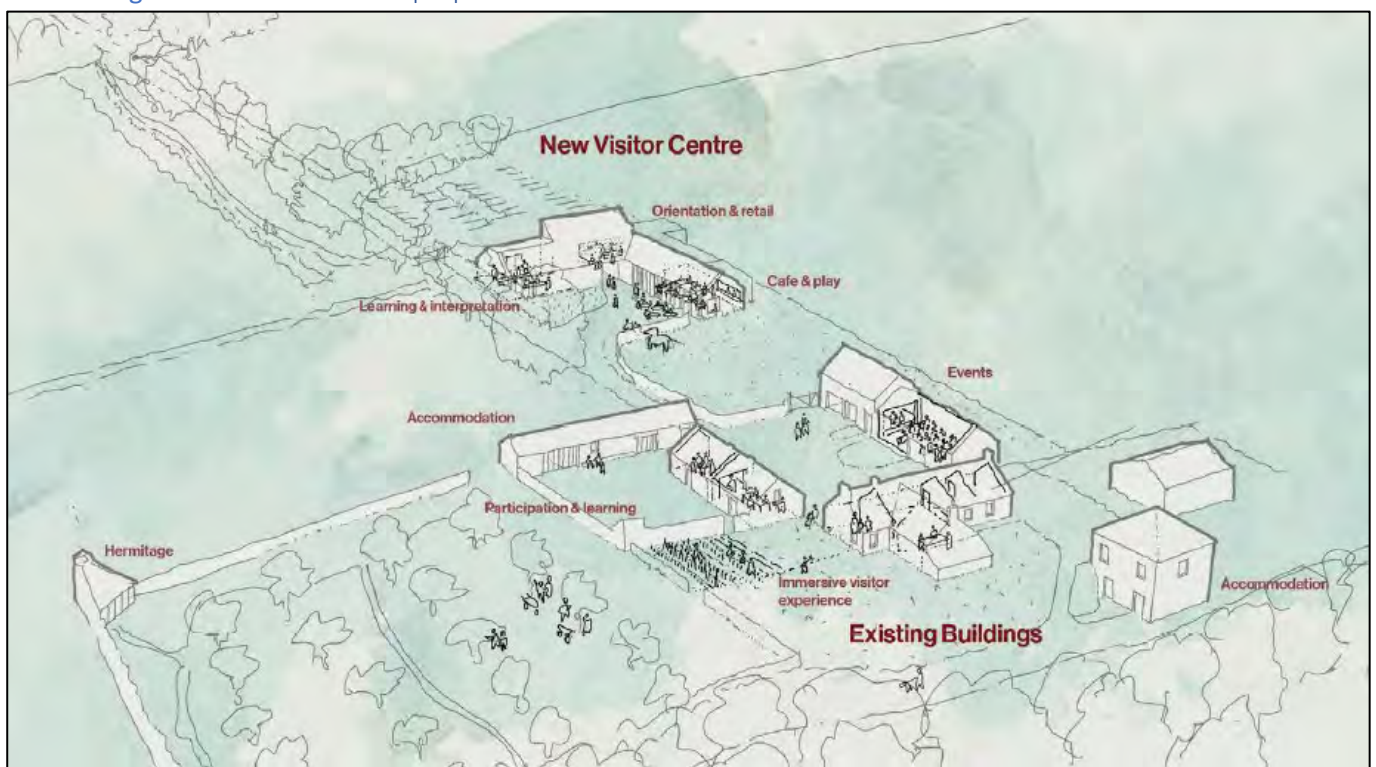
The process highlighted a deficit of suitable space for certain activities which, whether due to heritage value, existing footprint, or site constraints, could not reasonably be accommodated within the existing buildings, and therefore generated a list of requirements for a supplementary new-build element. Please see Figure vi.

8.2 Architectural Proposals

Using the principle of 'conservation through use' the existing buildings will be enlivened with a wider programme of events, creative workshops and artist residencies. A new visitor centre will act as a hub with permanent and temporary exhibition spaces, archive space, staff facilities, a shop and café.

The new building and landscape interventions, improved accessibility and staff / volunteer facilities will enable the continuation of Ellisland as a hub of wellbeing and learning, the latest in the many iterations of Ellisland. The new building will allow us to store and exhibit the existing collection in a secure environment and open up the existing buildings to be used in creative ways. Showcasing the life of Burns and the family in an immersive environment, the existing buildings will also be used for events, residencies and workshops.

Figure iv. Architectural proposals: site overview



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8.2.1 Burns' Farmhouse

There has always been a tension between presenting the farmhouse as Burns' home versus the display of cased artefacts. RBET will return the farmhouse to an immersive experience with a 'homely' feel and move the storage of collections and presentation of cased exhibition displays to the new building.

The farmhouse will allow the visitor to:

- Experience Burns' domestic (family) life
- Be immersed in the period
- Learn about Jean Armour and their children
- Discover the family's daily rhythms of eating, working and sleeping

8.2.2 The Steading

A further programme of residencies and events throughout the year will take place within the other existing buildings of Ellisland. The threshing barn and the wee byre, set across from each other in the farmyard, will be used for a wide range of events and workshops, and the long byre and granary will be used for accommodation and residencies that will support those events and workshops. This environment will enable the community to celebrate the traditions of Burns as well as contemporary Scottish music and culture. Events will include live music and ceilidhs as well as artist workshops and creative residencies. This will build on Ellisland's existing strength as a place where the intangible cultural heritage of Scotland is kept alive.

8.2.3 The new Visitor Centre

Central to the vision of the new Ellisland experience is the care, collection and exhibition of the existing collection. The main introductory exhibition will tell the story of how Burns came to Ellisland, his time there, and why and when he left. This is where the star items of the Ellisland Collection will be displayed and will cover:

- Burns' work at Ellisland; his creative output and the Scots Musical Museum.
- The library, and his beliefs and values around society and education.
- His friendships, socialising and letter writing.
- Encouraging visitors to visit the farmhouse to experience his personal life at Ellisland.

Along with the permanent exhibition space, there will be an audio-visual and temporary exhibition space to allow for a changing programme of related exhibitions, more rotation of artefacts for conservation reasons and opportunities for co-production and co-creation. A new collection and archive space will also be included to enable the long-term conservation of the existing collection.

Ellisland Farm is typical in its type and form; small byres enclosing sheltered courtyards. Historically this typology would have allowed animals and people to circulate freely between the buildings externally. Our proposal looks to take the best aspects of the byre and reinterpret them in the new building to allow for high-standard exhibition space, staff facilities, cafe, and retail. The exhibition space will have a high standard of environmental control more suitable to house the important collection which, along with a new archive space, will enable the long-term appreciation, conservation and study of Burns and his family's life in Ellisland.

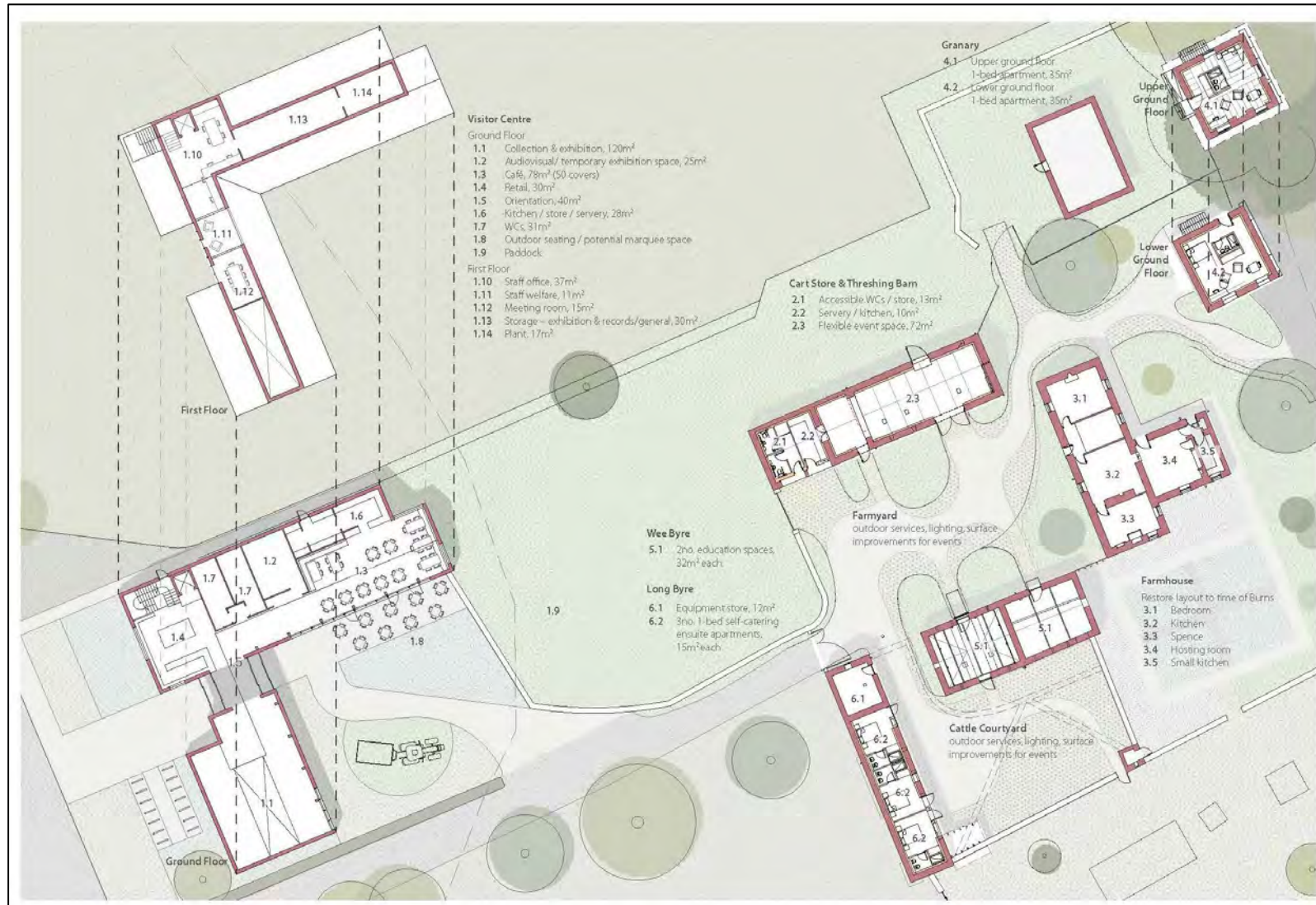
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The arrangement of the new visitor centre mirrors the existing condition of the Ellisland that Burns built by creating a new courtyard on the other side of the paddock. By picking up on the pattern of courtyards and other managed landscapes like the orchard and paddock, the new building aims to augment the existing relationships at play between buildings, external spaces and different scales of landscape.

This composition allows the new and the old to be in dialogue, where each complements the other. See Figure v.

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Figure v. Ellisland: site map



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Figure vi. Matching the activities to the site

Building Name	Age, Listing & Heritage Significance†	Construction	Outline Condition‡	GIFA*	Previous / current use	Opportunities for use: Exhibition & Interpretation	Opportunities for use: Events / Retreats / Education
Farmhouse	1788 - 91 (Burns' tenure) with early 18 th C. east wing and later mid-19 th C. lean-to Category A-listed Exceptional significance†	Painted masonry rubble walls, slate roof, timber windows & doors. 1990s adaptations inc. underfloor heating system.	Fair condition. Areas of damp due to roof and rainwater issues and previous use of inappropriate repair materials.	116m ²	- <i>Dwelling</i> - <i>Museum / interpretation / staff facilities / storage & archive</i>	- internal reorganisation to 1788 layout - conditions generally unsuitable for 'key' collection items without significant intervention	- venue for small events, (4-8 person) eg dining experiences or as part of writing retreats
Granary	Early 19 th C. Category A-listed Considerable significance†	Painted masonry rubble walls, slate roof, timber windows & doors.	Fair condition. Internal cracked masonry to be monitored	76.6m ² (38.3m ² / floor)	- <i>Granary</i> - <i>'Ballroom'</i> - <i>Farm worker accommodation</i> - <i>Interpretation / display / WCs</i>	- upper storey could be insulated and made secure (eg secondary glazing internally) to house elements of key collection & interpretation - WCs (not fully accessible)	- accommodation (requires insulation / upgrades) (2-4 person), or; - small workshop space for retreats / education (6-8 person)
Wee Byre	1788 - 91 (Burns' tenure) Category A-listed Exceptional significance†	Painted masonry rubble walls, slate roof (originally thatched), timber windows & doors.	Fair condition.	73.2m ²	- <i>Cowshed / stables</i> - <i>Display / interpretation</i>	- insulated & made secure to house key collection - significance may not allow major upgrades	- activities / creative spaces (assume uninsulated), or; - pop-up bar / kitchen to serve events in courtyard(s)
Long Byre	Early 19 th C. Category A-listed Considerable significance†	Painted masonry rubble walls, slate roof, timber windows & doors.	Fair condition.	67.1m ²	- <i>Cowshed / storage</i> - <i>Display / interpretation / storage</i>	- agricultural exhibits, or; - sheltered space for visiting groups	- open shelter for dining / activities / small performances in adjacent courtyard, or; - internally subdivided to form insulated accommodation units (5-10 person)
Threshing Barn	1788 - 91 (Burns' tenure) Category A-listed Exceptional significance†	Painted masonry rubble walls, slate roof (originally thatched), timber windows & doors.	Fair condition.	60.2m ²	- <i>Barn</i> - <i>Threshing barn</i> - <i>Occasional events</i>	- larger (10-25 person) group activities eg interpretative films, orientation, talks, meeting point for tours	- small receptions / weddings (20-30 person), and; - talks / performances / sharings (40-50 person)
Cart Store	Mid 19 th C. Category A-listed Considerable significance†	Painted masonry rubble walls, slate roof, timber windows & doors.	Fair condition. Penetrating damp to west wall of loft	44.8m ²	- <i>Store</i> - <i>Display / kitchen / storage</i>	- visitor facilities / welcome, and/ or; - staff facilities / storage	- reception area / facilities to service adjacent events space
Dry Toilet	Early 19 th C. Category A-listed Considerable significance†	Masonry & brick walls, - some painted, slate roof, timber window & door.	Poor condition. Requires extensive repair throughout.	1.4m ²	- <i>Dry toilet</i> - <i>Timber 'replica' dry toilet</i>		
Bungalow	Late 20 th C. Unlisted Little significance†	Assumed rendered brick cavity walls, concrete roof tiles, timber & uPVC windows & doors	Recently renovated.	49.2m ²	- <i>Farm worker accommodation</i> - <i>Leased as private dwelling</i>		- visitor accommodation

Notes

* GIFA refers to existing gross internal floor area, developed internal floor areas may vary

† Adams Napier Partnership, *Ellisland Conservation Plan, Section 3: The Significance of Ellisland Farm, 2021*

‡ Adams Napier Partnership, *Ellisland Conservation Plan, Appendix E: Condition Survey Report, 2021*

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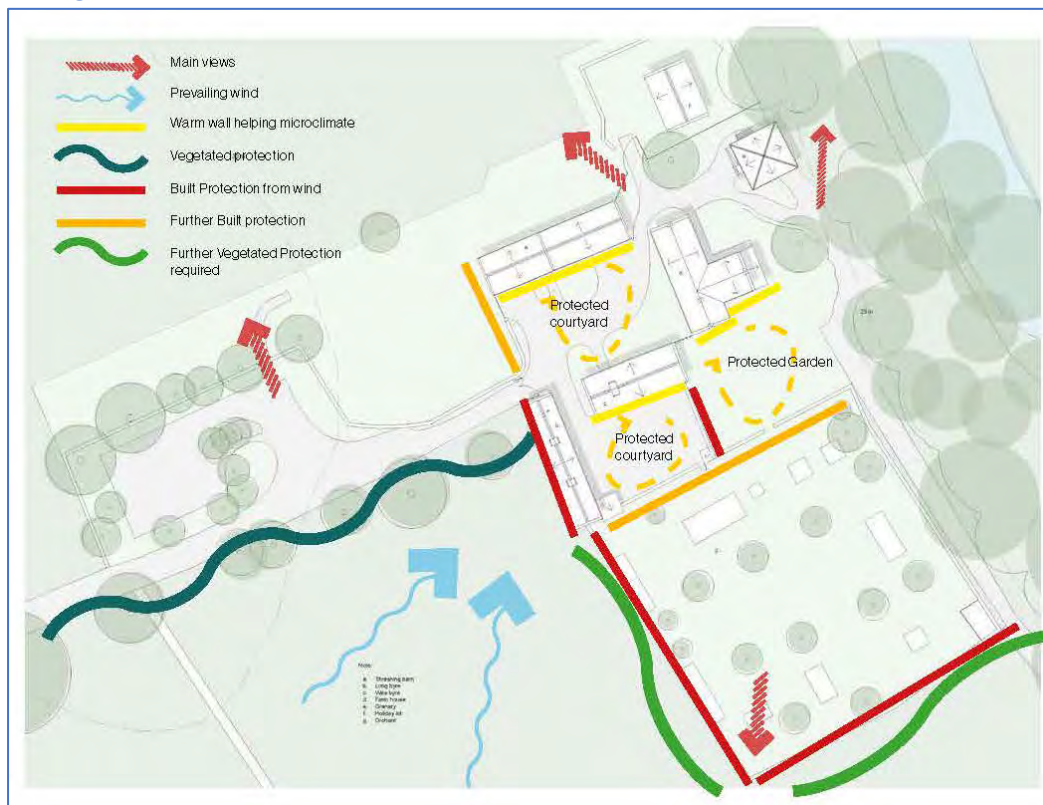
9 Exploring the landscape: relaxation and inspiration

The landscape of Ellisland is key to its attraction to Burns, and remains an agricultural landscape with the River Nith, roadside and field edges providing biodiversity and visual interest.

The Landscape Plan undertaken by HarrisonStevens notes Ellisland’s existing paths and connections more widely, with walking access to Burns’ Hermitage along the river and the potential to link to existing pathways across the river via a new bridge.

The farmstead itself generates a micro-climate, protected from the prevailing south-westerly winds and creating sheltered outdoor spaces in a generally mild climate. These sheltered outdoor spaces provide opportunities for events, gatherings, and contemplation in the heart of the site.

Figure vii. The farmstead: a sheltered microclimate



Ellisland Farm also provides opportunity to showcase responses to the biodiversity crash and climate crisis, delivering the proposed Scottish Government Biodiversity Strategy as seen in the regenerative farming practices or the Riverwoods funded strategies.

Burns was an “improving farmer”, who toiled to improve the fields, but was at odds with the effect of farming practice as seen in ‘To a Mouse’. This development of the farm is an opportunity to address these issues, learning and teaching through a living landscape that can evolve through measurable scientific objects such as

- Carbon storage on site, for example in the rootzone
- Cooling and cleaning waterways

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- Increasing biodiversity and numbers of species through the improving the richness and diversity of ecological matrices
- Outreach programme to a diverse audience with impact assessments.

Further, this provides an opportunity for community engagement and action at the site; the Biodiversity Strategy vision is that:

“Regenerated biodiversity will drive a sustainable economy and support thriving communities, and people will play their part in the stewardship of nature for future generations”.

Habitat creation and monitoring, informed by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment, will enable local people to be involved in tree planting, woodland management, habitat enrichment, creating habitat niches and removal of invasive species etc, creating an eco-hub of activity and providing evidence of improving biodiversity value across the estate in addition to enhancing the visual aspect of the estate and its interest to visitors.

Building on the existing rural agricultural landscape and progression of layered views we propose a series of interventions that strengthen this character and make the farm resilient to the future climate whilst diversifying and strengthening the community around the legacy of Robert Burns.

Landscape plans for the farmstead and policy include:

- Growing a series of garden spaces to provide seasonal interest and support Ellisland’s themes of farming, beauty of nature, and the inspiring landscape. These will also provide an attractive backdrop for residencies, retreats, and events.
- Extending the orchard and adding a natural play area to diversify the site’s attraction and allow for larger events to be held, and to provide outdoor spaces for weddings and celebrations
- Making the site more resilient to future climate and capacity pressures by growing an additional wooded entrance to the south while extending the car parking and providing extra storage and drop off for larger vehicles.

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Figure viii. Proposed improvements to Farmstead

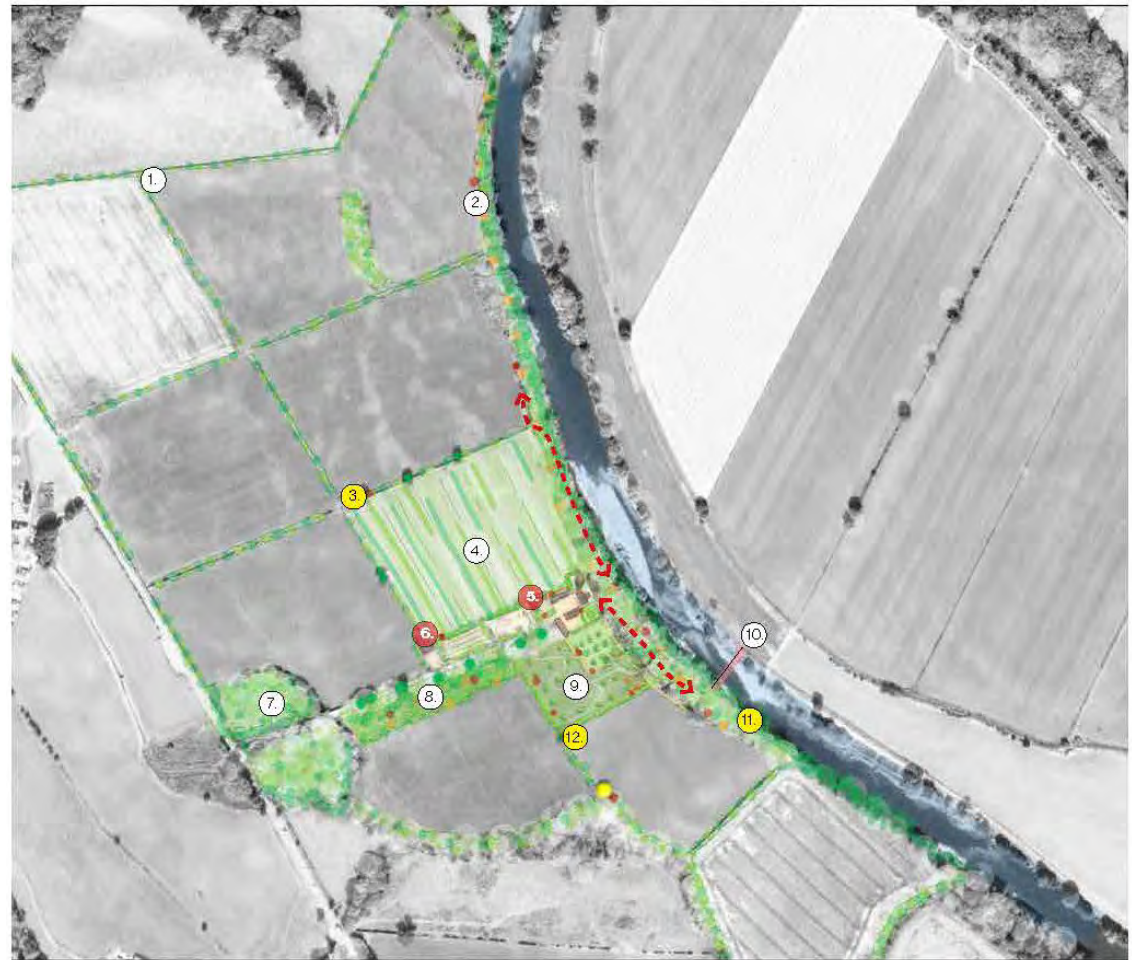
1. Writers' retreat garden
2. Entrance courtyard garden
3. Car park - whin-dust finish, hedges and tree planting
4. Overflow car park with grasscrete surface
5. Survey and manage existing entrance trees
6. Kitchen herb and flower garden
7. Improve existing orchard and increase bee hive capacity
8. Extend orchard with seating and meandering paths
9. Nature play facilities with seating and shelter
10. Survey and manage existing riparian woodland with additional planting and seating
11. Accessible path network improved
12. New accessible bridge to core path
13. River Shed for people to reflect and connect with nature
14. Orchard Shed
15. New paving to provide accessible routes to farm buildings
16. New Pedestrian Routes



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Figure ix. Wider Farm Proposals

1. Interplant hedgerows with trees along field boundaries
2. Manage and improve woodland edge to river adding seating and interpretation
3. Field Creative Shed - place to dwell, shelter and reflect
4. Cultivate experimental crops with SRUC and others for education, and development of rural skills knowledge
5. New building designed by OCA building on courtyard character
6. Agricultural shed for storage of larger maintenance items
7. Manage and improve wet woodland with planting and monitoring of species
8. Plant new avenue woodland with significant trees and seating
9. Extend orchard with meandering path to river and nature play equipment.
10. Construct new bridge with accessible path to connect to core path network
11. River creative shed - place to dwell, shelter and reflect
12. Woodland/Orchard creative shed - Place to dwell, shelter and reflect.



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10 Development costs

10.1 Construction and landscape costs

The scheme presented in Sections 8 and 9 have been costed by ThomsonGray, using costs inflated to Q12026 when it is anticipated the project will go out to tender. The total cost for the build, landscape and interpretation totals £12million plus VAT, or £14.3million including VAT.

These costs are summarised at Figure x.

Figure x. Development costs – Build, landscape, interpretation

Building	Current use	Future use	m ²	Cost per m ²	£
Existing farmhouse	Exhibits, "room" set up, office	Immersive experience in Burns' life	119	2,931	349,872
Wee byre	Events, workshops, community outreach		73	1,926	141,037
Byre and store (Long byre)	Accommodation, store		67	4,559	304,135
Cart store and threshing barn	Events, workshops, community outreach	Performance venue, community outreach, WCs	107	3,685	394,328
The Granary	Offices, WCs	Accommodation	81	3,911	316,791
Courtyard Walls and Dry Toilet			n/a	n/a	122,754
Visitor Centre	n/a	Exhibits, café, shop, office spaces, WCs	561	5,820	3,263,438
Holiday pods (4 No)	Accommodation	Accommodation	35	N/A	600,000
Visitor centre exhibition fit out	n/a	Exhibition and interpretation		7,652	750,000
Site works	n/a	Landscaping, pathways, road upgrade		514	2,362,646
Construction Cost					8,605,000
Contingency				7.5%	540,386
Inflation (Programme required)	Q22026 to			12.7%	1,089,815
Construction plus allowances			1,043	9,811	10,235,200
Design team fees				15.5%	1,586,425
Statutory fees					10,000
Legal fees					10,000
Surveys and investigation costs					84,000
Total before VAT					11,925,625
VAT⁷				20.0%	2,385,125
Total including VAT					14,310,750

⁷ A VAT consultant should be engaged at the early stages of the project and during the design and construction phases to minimise the VAT burden on RBET's project costs and future operations.

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The construction costs above include the items identified and costed by the Adams Napier Partnership Conditions Survey Report dated 2021, with an allowance of 14.5% to bring them from 2021 costs to 2023 costs.

Site works of £2.4million (£3.34million including inflation, contingency, professional fees and VAT) include the main items as set out in Figure xi. These costs do not include the paths alongside the Nith or the bridge over the Nith; further specialist survey work and design works would be required to specify these items.

Figure xi. Site works costs

Item	m ²	Cost per m ²	£
Road improvements	150	5,162	774,319
Car park	65	10,627	690,761
Farmstead	300	783	234,867
Adjacent field / proposed orchard			279,386
Play equipment			75,000
Subtotal			2,054,333
Preliminaries			308,313
Site works			2,362,646

10.2 Project management costs

In addition to these costs in section 10.1, RBET should allow for:

- Fundraising support from now until project completion. Over the 4 ½ years of the project these are estimated at £150,000 plus VAT, with the £125,000 of the cost relating to the period before construction commences.
- Procurement support for the design team and for the main contractor(s) - allow £7,500 for design team and project manager, and £12,500 for main contractor, plus VAT.
- Project management particularly specialist project management during the detailed design and delivery phase; this is not included in design team fees, but will manage the design team – allow 6 months for RIBA3 design phase, and 2 ½ years for construction (the RIBA4 to 6 phases) – circa £200,000 plus VAT
- Core staff and overhead costs during the construction phase – allow £250,000 over 2 years
- Financial and grant management particularly during the delivery phase allow for 0.5 FTE for the detailed design phase over 2 years, rising to 1.5 FTE for the construction phase or £150,000.
- Finally NLHF will require activity to help support interpretation and outreach during the construction phase when the site will be closed. An activity and outreach plan allowance of £200,000 for staff and for project costs over 2 ½ years, to be detailed during the development phase.

Total project management, fundraising, activity plan, and core overheads costs above are £970,000 excluding VAT.

10.3 Total project costs

Total project costs, including other costs, are thus £12,895,425 plus VAT £2,459,085 or £15,354,510. Please see Figure xiii for the breakdown over the period of the project.

The VAT cost emphasises the need for specialist VAT advice set out in this report, both for the construction phase and for the operation of the activities.

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11 Funding Outline

Fundraising for such a major capital project must be seen as a process over a considerable timeline. The critical path for the strategy is:

- 1 Consider the timeline for the spend and therefore also the timeline for the funding
- 2 Identify key funding sources for each aspect of the project, aligning funder objectives with project outcomes. Success with these key funding sources will enhance the status of the project to other funders, even if the key funding sources are relatively small. Where possible, obtain start up revenue funding along with the capital funding
- 3 Develop a programme of fundraising from individuals and corporate funding
- 4 Ensure that the organisation has assessed the capacity and skills required to deliver such a large capital project, and has a plan for addressing any gaps.

11.1 Timeline for development and funding

A timeline for development is shown in detail at Appendix 6, with the following critical dates:

Figure xii. Critical path for project delivery

Milestone	Date
Application to NLHF Round 1	Aug 2023, decision Dec 2023
Procurement of design team and project manager	Feb 2024
NLHF Permission to Start	April 2024
Complete development scheme to RIBA stage 3 , achieve planning permission	Sep 2024
Application to NLHF Round 2	Sep 2024, decision Dec 2024
NLHF permission to start	April 2025
Complete RIBA stage 4, procure contractors, commence works	Feb 2026
Practical completion	Feb 2027
Open to the public	July 2027

In practice and given the size and the number of stakeholders, this is unlikely to be achieved, and January 2028 is a more likely opening date. NLHF are one of the “key” funders, and a successful application to them will help open doors to other funders and Trusts.

11.1.1 Pre-NLHF application phase

Application to NLHF Stage 1 requires the Design to RIAS stage 2, a business plan, social and economic outcomes, and an outline learning and engagement plan explaining how the public will be engaged and learning delivered during the construction phase. Funding for this must be raised and work carried out before the NLHF deadline of noon, 17 August 2023, to receive a decision by the end of December 2023.

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11.1.2 NLHF development phase: April 2024 to Sept 2024

In order to gain “permission to start” on the development phase, the project must have sufficient funding to carry out the works.

Additional costs to completion of RIBA stage 3 will broadly relate to design team and project management costs, estimated at 33% of total design team fees plus costs for additional technical surveys, project management, and procurement expertise (and some of the above costs).

11.1.3 NLHF delivery phase: April 2025 to Dec 2027

The delivery phase will require completion to RIBA Phase 4 (technical design, build warrant), tendering for the main contractors, and construction.

As noted above, RBET will require an activity and outreach plan for the period when the site closes down.

The timeline for the costs to be incurred, and for the funds to be raised, is set out in Figure xiii.

This shows a fundraising requirement of £760,000 by April 2024 and the remaining £14,595,00 by April 2025.

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Figure xiii. Project timeline, costs, and funding targets

No. of months	8.00	2.00	2.00	5.00	3.00	4.00	10.00	17.00	6.00	57.00
Apr-23	Dec-23 (approval on NLHF Round 1)	Feb-24 Procure design team and project manager	Apr-24 NLHF Permission to Start	Sep-24 Complete development scheme to RIBA stage 3, planning permission	Dec-24 Successful application to NLHF Round 2	Apr-25 Permission to start	Feb-26 Complete RIBA stage 4, procure contractors, commence works	Jul-27 Practical completion	Jan-28 Recant and open	Total
Fundraising	10,000	10,000	10,000	21,900	12,900	17,200	43,000	12,500	12,500	150,000
Procurement fees		7,500					12,500			20,000
Learning and Activity Plan								147,800	52,200	200,000
Project management				30,000			60,000	80,000	30,000	200,000
Financial and grant management				7,700	4,300	6,000	17,000	85,000	30,000	150,000
Core staff costs								184,900	65,100	250,000
Total project management and other costs	10,000	17,500	10,000	59,600	17,200	23,200	132,500	510,200	189,800	970,000
Design team fees				475,900			713,900	396,625		1,586,425
Statutory fees				2,500			7,500			10,000
legal fees				5,000			5,000			10,000
Specialist surveys				54,000			30,000			84,000
Construction costs								9,326,400		9,326,400
Interpretation costs								454,300	454,300	908,600
Project construction costs	-	-	-	537,400	-	-	756,400	10,177,325	454,300	11,925,425
Total costs excl VAT	10,000	17,500	10,000	597,000	17,200	23,200	888,900	10,687,525	644,100	12,895,425
VAT	2,000	3,500	2,000	117,860	2,580	3,440	174,380	2,053,965	99,360	2,459,085
Total costs incl VAT	12,000	21,000	12,000	714,860	19,780	26,640	1,063,280	12,741,490	743,460	15,354,510
Fundraising target			759,860			14,594,650				15,354,510

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11.2 Key funding sources – demonstrating outcomes

The proposals for site reinvigoration and the future activities to be undertaken are not separate items for funders. While Historic Environment Scotland does include strengthening the resilience of Scotland's historic environment by conservation repairs as one of its six strategic areas, funders are focussed mainly not on the buildings and infrastructure but the activities to be carried out, and how they meet outcomes.

Key grant funders and stakeholder objectives are set out below. Please note that NLHF has launched a new 10-year strategy: Heritage 2033 and will release the first of a series of delivery plans that will provide further detail and direction in summer 2023. The information at Figure xiv sets out to their current guidance and relates it to project outcomes.

All funding bodies are under significant pressure. It seems likely that public funding and main grants will be limited to around £5 - £7.5million of the total costs, as below:

Architectural Heritage Fund	Initial development costs	£80,000
RCGF	Construction and build costs, excluding fees and interpretation	£500,000 - £1,000,000
NLHF	Items excluding commercial items such as accommodation	Up to £5,000,000 maximum
HES	Aspects of historic conservation which increase costs	Up to £300,000
SOSE	Discussion required: may assist with initial development costs prior to larger award for main cost programme	For discussion with SOSE. Estimate £500,000

The remaining £8 - £10million will require to be raised through a compelling fundraising programme. The funding for the fundraising programme itself will require to be raised from an initial round of individuals who are already engaged with Burns and this site.

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Figure xiv. Stakeholder outcomes and project outputs

Key Stakeholder	Stakeholder outcomes	Project activities
National Lottery Heritage Fund (HES) indicates this is also a Heritage Environment Scotland outcome	A wider range of people will be involved in heritage (every project must achieve this mandatory outcome)	Education and outreach programmes
	(HES) the funded organisation will be more resilient	Increase in Trustee capability; increase in staff numbers and staff skills
	People will have greater wellbeing	Wellbeing proposals, site visitors Community engagement in landscape and gardening projects
	People will have developed skills	Community engagement in landscape and gardening projects. Opportunity to support local education establishments offer SVQs
	The local area will be a better place to live, work or visit	Education and events programme. Increased visitor numbers bringing economic benefit A place for locals and visitors alike to enjoy and be inspired by the place and landscape
	(HES) the local economy will be boosted	Number of FTE jobs (count)
	Other outcomes: (HES) heritage will be in better condition	Restoration of site and buildings
	(HES) people will have learned about heritage, leading to change in ideas and actions	Interpretation proposals
Heritage will be identified and better explained	Interpretation proposals	
Historic Environment Scotland	The historic environment inspires a creative and vibrant Scotland	Proposals for retreats, residencies, events, and community events
Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) Re-opens end of April 2023 for 2024-2025 proposals	Strategic aims set out in Achieving a sustainable future: regeneration strategy Application is from Dumfries and Galloway Council Supports locally developed place based regeneration projects that involve local communities, helping to tackle inequalities and deliver inclusive growth in deprived, disadvantaged and fragile remote communities across Scotland NOTE: Only funds capital expenditure, not development costs or non-capital project costs.	
	Focussed on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> projects that primarily focus on areas that suffer from high levels of deprivation and disadvantage projects that demonstrate clear community involvement projects that will deliver large scale transformational change with strong regeneration outcomes projects and programmes that can encourage additional investment and address market failure 	Revitalization and creation of a visitor destination in Dumfries and Galloway Community engagement proposals Increase in FTE; increase in indirect FTE Total project costs £15.4m of which £8 – £10m will be provided by fundraising.

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Key Stakeholder	Stakeholder outcomes	Project activities
South of Scotland Enterprise	Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inclusive and sustainable growth including to Social enterprises • changes required to deliver a Just Transition to Net Zero. 	Significant growth in income and expenditure; skilled and semi-skilled jobs Landscape enhancements to promote walking links, climate challenge, biodiversity enhancement
	Maintain, enhance and encourage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment creation • Skills attainment • Tackling inequalities • Business start-ups and entrepreneurship • Natural and cultural heritage and environmental quality of SoS 	No of FTEs and indirect FTEs Opportunity for skills development through paid and volunteer opportunities Rural deprivation and permanent jobs Turnover from £50,000 to over £1m Landscape and built heritage revitalisation and improvement
Creative Scotland	Promote inclusion and involve a wider range of people	Proposals for a wide range of activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young people and schools - Community engagement particularly in natural heritage - Working in partnership with organisation that support people who are further from work
	Excellence and experimentation in creative learning across the arts, screen and creative industries is understood, valued and developed.	Residencies and retreats programme
	Everyone in Scotland has the opportunity to experience high quality arts and creative learning	Events and community events programme
	Places and quality of life are transformed through the reach and application of creative learning	Events and community events programme
	There is a workforce skilled in the leadership and delivery of creative learning	Residencies and retreats programme

In addition to larger funds, potential trusts and foundations which can support projects about regeneration, heritage, tourism, social enterprise and the redevelopment of historic buildings include: William Grant Foundation, Robertson Trust, Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, Wolfson Foundation, Gannochy Trust, and the Hugh Fraser Foundation.

11.3 Fundraising

Fundraising from individuals through a structured, focussed and well-administered programme is essential to the success of this project. This type of funding acts as a match to grant funding and provides essential support for areas that funders may not, such as

- Early stage development work
- Fundraising itself
- Landscape and path improvements
- Grant administration and finance
- Cash flow financing between disbursement of cash and receipt of grant funding – this can be obtained e.g. from Social Investment Scotland but this is expensive

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- Cost overruns or unforeseen expenses; building cost inflation is now almost unpredictable, and restoration of historic buildings always carries the risk of unknown unknowns
- Buildings that are intended for a commercial purpose, such as the café, retail, and the accommodation provision
- Risk capital: funding for cash deficits in the early years of delivery

The Board intend to launch a programme to raise £8m – 10m over the course of the project development and delivery.

This area of funding is largely dependent on the networks of contacts that exist around the project, in particular those of the Trustees of RBET. The involvement of individual trustees and directors in facilitating the initial face-to-face contact will be critical in opening doors to private donors alongside the commitment of RBET to maintain an ongoing relationship with donors. Legacy donations are seen by the Ellisland board as an important element of private fundraising. This can generate significant income but may well fall outwith the timescale for the renovation and build project.

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12 Site activities – ensuring viability – markets, activity, finance

12.1 Visitors

12.1.1 The market

Prior to the pandemic, visitor numbers to Dumfries and Galloway were overall increasing, particularly from the UK and from international areas outside of Europe and North America. This did not translate fully into spend per visit, as the number of overnights decreased for Scottish and UK visitors but increased for those international markets. The challenge for Dumfries and Galloway tourism pre-pandemic was to encourage visitors to stay longer, particularly overnight, to generate greater spend per visit. For details see Appendix 4.

Friendship, socialising and entertainment are the main motivations for day visitors, with visiting a castle or historic attraction accounting for just 6% of 51 million activities. While this is a substantial number of visitors, it also indicates the wider market available to Ellisland Farm from programmed events that link to aspirations for family trips, eating out, and going for a short stroll.

Figure xv. Activities Day Trips in Dumfries and Galloway, 2016-18



Broad consumer trends favour this participative approach to visitors. Audience research⁸ shown in Appendix 4 shows that post pandemic, predictions are for:

- Increasing participation in arts and heritage
- Increasing participation in creative activities post Covid
- More visits to outdoor historic parks, gardens and heritage.

Also, this research shows more people are favouring local tourism, as inflation hits spending power. Ellisland will require a national and international profile as a destination location to enable it to attract overseas visitors.

The characteristics of new tourism⁹, below, suit the proposed Ellisland offer:

⁸ The Audience Agency. Autumn 2022 research wave

⁹ LITERARY TOURISM THE NEXT CHAPTER – A Guide for SMEs and Other Stakeholders, Spotlit

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- More responsible, safe and authentic, more local and small-scale, more digital, and more flexible
- Move towards a recreation economy based on meaningful outdoor experiences close to home
- Nature, rural tourism, and road trips emerged as popular travel options due to travel constraints and desire for open-air experiences
- Domestic tourism increased in many markets as people have preferred to travel closer to home
- Contactless and personalized services and experiences
- Virtual tours
- Travellers value having a positive impact on local communities. Increasingly seeking authenticity, sustainability, and local food
- Significant increase in money spent and length of stay per trip in 2021.

Forward information from Booking.com's Travel Predictions published October 2022 also link to a market where exploring, activities, and community are key to the desired experience, as shown in Appendix 4.

12.1.2 Burns Tourism

In addition to these general tourism trends, Ellisland's offer is anchored in Burns and his story at the farm. The report Robert Burns and the Scottish Economy, published in December 2019, estimated that the economic benefit of Burns-related tourism for Dumfries and Galloway was around £21m, compared to £121m for Ayrshire. There is evidently a substantial market for Burns tourism but Dumfries and Galloway is not yet taking economic advantage of its opportunities.

The Burns Tourism in Nithsdale report commissioned by Dumfries and Galloway Council in 2021 noted the many places where visitors can discover more about Burns, his life and work including Ellisland Farm amongst others:

- Burns House Museum - the town house where Burns lived for the final three years of his life is now a museum in the care of Dumfries & Galloway Council.
- Robert Burns Centre - a historic building in Dumfries with a permanent exhibition interpreting Burns life and work in the area, managed by Dumfries & Galloway Council.
- Mausoleum - the monument built around Burns grave is open to the public.
- Robert Burns statue - erected in Church Place in Dumfries.
- Jean Armour statue - erected opposite St Michael's Church.
- Museum collection - Dumfries & Galloway Museum service hold a collection of original manuscripts, letters and personal objects connected to Burns.
- The Globe Inn - the place Burns described as 'his favourite howff' is now a bar and restaurant, with historic rooms once used by Burns and a collection of personal items.

That report noted that, "While living in the area, Burns wrote over 130 poems and songs, including some of his most famous works such as Tam O'Shanter and Auld Lang Syne. Many other works refer to locations or incidents that took place in the area, such as The Banks of

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Nith and On Seeing a Wounded Hare. Dumfries and Nithsdale can rightly claim to be at the heart of ‘Burns Country’.

The report concluded that:

“There is clear scope for a Burns tourism offer to target visitor segments that will increase the value of tourism to Dumfries and Nithsdale, with increased overnight stays and visitor spend. The established link between cultural tourism and higher visitor spend shows the potential benefits of developing products and experiences to attract this market.”

The report also supported the proposed offer at Ellisland, identifying key market segments whose aspirations would be met at Ellisland:

Figure xvi. Visitor Segments for Burns Tourism

Visitor segment	Motivators for a visit	Product/experience development
Engaged Sightseers	Built heritage, scenery, sightseeing by car, gentle walks, local authentic experiences, chance to participate	Trails/itineraries Participatory experiences
Food-loving Culturalist	Contemporary arts, literature, built & natural heritage, museums, high-quality food and dining experiences	Trails/itineraries Special exhibitions and events Local/unique food and dining
Culturally Curious	Authentic cultural experiences - heritage, arts, literature, food & drink	Self-guided trails Unique experiences -appealing to a sense of pilgrimage Superior service Local guides/interpreters

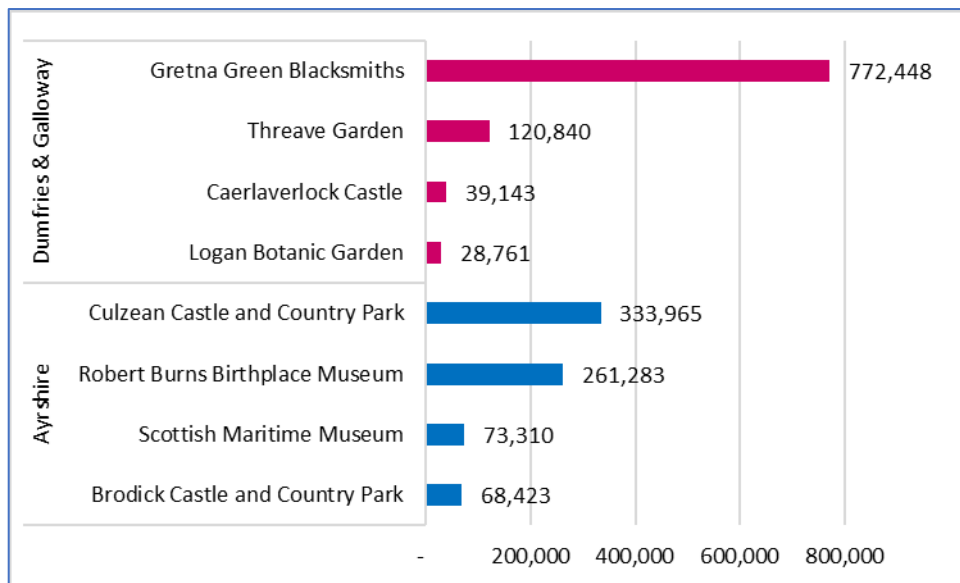
The report also emphasised the need to “join up” the shared character of Burns heritage in the area, to maximise benefit from its draw for UK and overseas visitors.

12.1.3 Visitor numbers and pricing

Ticketed visitor numbers have been considered based on Visit Scotland 2019 reported numbers for paid attractions in Dumfries and Galloway, and in neighbouring Ayrshire.

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Figure xvii. Visitor numbers to top 4 paid attractions in Dumfries and Galloway, and Ayrshire



The proposal for Ellisland Farm relates to paying visitors to access the museum. At this time there are no plans to enforce paid parking for those drop-in visitors to the site who do not want to visit the museum, but who wish to walk and enjoy the location and idyllic ambiance; donations will be requested. Financial returns from these visitors would be from visits to the café.

Ticketed visitors to the museum are forecast at 35,000 for the first two years, with 5% growth in the next three years bringing it to 40,500 in the fifth year of opening. Comparison to other Burns attractions and to attractions in Ayrshire indicate that these are modest numbers; these targets are 10% lower than the pre-renovation visitor numbers for Dove Cottage in the Lake District. However the comparison to other D&G attractions indicates the challenge to bring visitors into the region.

Pricing has been set in comparison to these two main similar attractions (in 2023 prices):

Figure xviii. Museum admissions pricing

Proposal ^a	Category	Dove Cottage	Robert Burns Birthplace
10.00	Adult	11.00	11.50
25.50	2-Adult family	27.00	27.00
18.00	1-Adult family	16.00	20.00
8.00	Concession	9.00	8.50
4.00	Child		5.00

^a This is the displayed ticket price including a 10% donation, which enables the whole admission price to be treated as a donation and therefore eligible for gift aid. The visitor is entitled to refuse to include the 10% donation.

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12.1.4 Visitor mix and gift aid

Ticket income depends on visitor mix and on assumptions about gift aid collection. Gift aid on tickets is immensely valuable to the charity sector, generating over £1.3bn annually.

There are two key assumptions:

- That most visitors will be adults who are not accompanied by children, which is the case for most heritage attractions;
- That a majority of such visitors will waive their right to reduce the entry fee by the donation.

The following assumptions give an average ticket price of £9.20 per visitor:

Figure xix. Average museum admissions

	Price £	Gift aid price £	% gift aid	% tickets	No of ppl per ticket	Weighted average entry per person
Adult	9.00	10.00	80%	50%	1	£5.90
2-Adult family	22.95	25.50	40%	13%	4	£0.83
1-Adult family	16.20	18.00	40%	12%	4	£0.59
Concession	7.20	8.00	40%	20%	1	£1.66
Child	3.60	4.00	40%	5%	1	£0.22
				100%		£9.20

12.1.5 Income and expenditure

Based on the assumptions in sections 12.1.3 and 12.1.4, the income projections (excluding inflation) for the first five years are set out below, rising from £322,000 to £372,000 over a five year period.

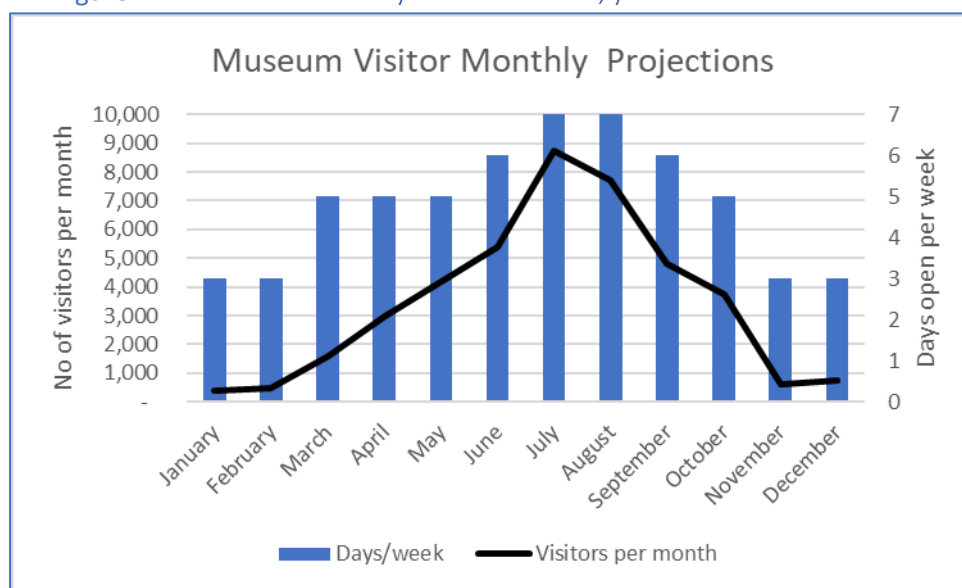
Figure xx. Admissions income, first five years

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Admissions	35,000	35,000	36,750	38,600	40,500
Average ticket	£9.20	£9.20	£9.20	£9.20	£9.20
Total income	£322,000	£322,000	£338,100	£355,120	£372,600

Visitors are expected to be highly seasonal, with the majority of visitors coming to the region in the main tourism seasons. For this reason we propose that the museum has restricted winter opening hours, only 3 days per week for November through February, rising to 7 days per week for July and August. Monthly visitor numbers are shown below.

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Figure xxi. Museum monthly visitor numbers, year 5



Direct expenditure for visitors will be the reception staff, which will be shared with the shop staff particularly during quieter months. In addition to ticketing (which will be encouraged to be self-service on-line rather than at the door) these staff will be in attendance at the Farmhouse door to check tickets and to ensure that visitors do not damage any exhibits. The nature of the site, with a separate exhibition space and the farmhouse, will require a higher staffing level than a single site. Average Full Time Equivalents are 2.5 over the year, peaking at 3.6 in August. Staff numbers are not expected to increase with the annual growth in visitor numbers; at the range in visitor numbers forecast, the museum will continue need more staff at its peak season when it is open 7 days and fewer in the off season when it is open 3 days.

As the visitors will be seasonal, so will the staff, as set out in Figure xxii. Retail staff are included to demonstrate the total team who will be on-site.

Staff costs are assumed at £22,500 per Full Time Equivalent, including employer on-costs. This equates to £12.50 per hour plus holiday pay.

Figure xxii. Museum reception and site staffing

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual average
Average FTE reception staff	0.6	0.9	2.2	2.6	3.1	2.9	3.3	3.6	2.6	2.2	0.7	0.7	2.5
Average FTE retail staff	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.9	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.3	1.1	0.4	0.4	1.1
Total	0.9	1.2	2.8	3.5	4.6	4.3	4.9	5.3	3.9	3.3	1.1	1.1	3.6

Other staffing costs incurred in delivering this experience (e.g. curatorial) and overheads to support these and other activities on the site are set out in Section 12.9.

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Using the assumptions set out in Section 12.1, Figure xxiii provides the admissions income and reception staff costs for the first five years.

Figure xxiii. Museum Admissions income and direct staff expenditure

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Income	£322,000	£322,000	£338,100	£355,120	£372,600
Staff costs	£56,250	£56,250	£56,250	£56,250	£56,250
Net surplus	£265,750	£265,750	£281,850	£298,870	£316,350

12.2 Outreach and education

Although born into poverty, Burns' family valued education and he benefitted from a particularly inspiring teacher, John Murdoch. His references to Scots, English, and Continental writers provide evidence of his awareness of literary tradition and contemporary developments in philosophy and politics. His work in gathering the oral tradition of Scots songs and publishing both words and music showed a passion for furthering Scots traditions at a time when the English language was gaining ground about Scotland's elite.

Education was a lifelong interest of Burns. One of his achievements during the Ellisland years was setting up a The Monkland Friendly Society subscription library together with Robert Riddell of Glenriddell to enable poorer people who could not afford their own books, access to education. RBET has continued this theme, building connections with local schools and with young musicians.

Our consultations confirmed that there are many organisations with existing contacts with young people who are already or would be pleased to work with Ellisland on programmes relating to music, poetry and writing. Enhancing the landscape and the built heritage at Ellisland will enable RBET to expand this creative work with other groups we talked to, for example for people with disabilities or additional support needs, for whom the site is not currently accessible. RBET will also continue the work of the community orchard and expand this into the planned landscape enhancements such as tree planting. A community garden planning approach could input into the designs of a sensory garden, for example, and a vegetable garden such as Jean Armour would have kept.

The built and landscape capacity to undertake additional outreach and education with a variety of people has been designed into the Future Vision Plan. To achieve RBET's vision, a full time FTE Education and Outreach post has been created in the overhead costs to coordinate activities, identify and achieve project funding, and work with other organisations.

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12.3 Retreats

12.3.1 Demand and markets

Creative and wellbeing retreats remain popular despite the pandemic. These offerings meet the needs of a section of the “Culturally Curious” population, who are seeking an opportunity to step out of their normal lifestyle and focus on creativity or increasingly wellbeing. They are largely self-funded, although some organisations offer access to bursaries or grants.

Examples of current pricing and experience being offered for such retreats varies, from shared self-catering rooms, those offering shared catering facilities, to fully-catered, luxury apartments; and from single day offerings, to full weeks. Pricing varies hugely to reflect the accommodation and catering offering, from £60 for a one-day writing course to £4,500 for a 7-day fully catered photography retreat in Knoydart. Those researched were all mainly booked, with limited spaces available for 2023, indicating the level of demand for such provision even in these somewhat straitened economic times.

The key to all retreats is the provision of a unique location suited to creative inspiration, and a reputation for guidance and tutoring in the proposed activity.

Figure xxiv. Creative Retreats in the UK, 2023 offerings

	Location	Price pp	Nights	Notes
Write SW Scotland	Threave	£750	5	Writing tuition, food and accommodation. Shared room
Moniak Mhor Scotland’s National Writing Retreat	Beauly	£650	5	Writing tuition, food & accommodation. Single room, shared facilities. Weekly retreats until Dec. All fully booked
Wild At Arts	Orkney	£1,980	7	Visual creative. Women only. Fully catered in self-catering accommodation (spread out)
Wild At Arts	Iona	£2,690	7	Visual creative. Fully catered at Columba Hotel. Fully booked. 2/3 of 2023 dates already fully booked
Arvon Retreats	Herefordshire	£880	5	Writing tuition. Single room with shared facilities. Communal cooking. Also do day courses at £75 pp
Knoydart Retreats	Knoydart	£1,750	6	Song writing. Fully catered, 11 places (sharing rooms 5 twin, 1 single) and concert.
Knoydart Retreats	Knoydart	£4,500	7	Photography. Fully catered, 6 places – single rooms, some shared bathrooms.
Shambellie House	New Abbey	£ 60		6 hour writing course, inc. lunch. Former National Museum of Costume
Wordpath Scotland	Online	£100		1 day online writing course

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12.3.2 Retreats at Ellisland

Retreats at Ellisland would initially focus on writing (poetry/prose/drama) and wellbeing, and then expand to music and potentially creative arts. Accommodation would be available for up to 14 people per retreat, in the four new “accommodation pods” which would allow 8 people, sharing, in three bedrooms in the converted Long Byre, which would allow up to 6 people sharing rooms; and in the holiday cottage, which sleeps 4 people. Assuming 14 out of 18 available beds allows separate accommodation and allows separate accommodation for tutors. Clients who wished not to share accommodation would pay a higher price and use the Granary.

Ellisland would provide tutors in the chosen specialities, for a programme of learning, using spaces in the museum building, the farmhouse, the threshing barn or wee byre as gathering spaces and also as dining spaces. Catering could be provided externally or by in-house staff.

There is also a model for Ellisland to provide the accommodation and the space with the organiser responsible for advertising, filling the spaces, identifying tutors, and providing catering. This may be an initial viable model as Ellisland develops confidence and expertise in this provision, but it will be less profitable than Ellisland providing this directly.

Music retreats may require additional studio / soundproofed space for recordings, and that has not been included in the current version of the redevelopment. Other music retreats involving collaborative performance and learning would not require such specialist spaces. The sound of practised and performed music drifting across the courtyards and spaces of Ellisland Farm would add to drop-in visitor’s connection to Burns.

12.3.3 Pricing and frequency

Retreats would be held over 5 days, with 14 people attending each retreat and 2 tutors available each day. RBET propose commencing at 10 retreats per year and growing to 21 retreats a year, which would utilise theh, small byre and accommodation pods for 21 of 52 weeks; the remaining time would be available for residencies and visitor accommodation.

Prices are assumed at £1,150 per person (2023 prices) for a 5 night retreat.

12.3.4 Income and expenditure

Income and expenditure per retreat are modelled on the assumptions set out above, and provided for one week at Ellisland as set out in Figure xxv.

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Figure xxv. Income and expenditure for a weekly retreat

	Pods, Long Byre, Holiday Cottage
Price per person (5 nights)	1,150
Available beds	18
No. of people	14 (78%)
Income per week excl VAT*	12,917
External catering £35 per person per day	2,450
Tutor costs 2 per day	3,500
Utilities / cleaning 15%	2,325
Total cost	8,275
Net income	4,642

VAT note: Provision of accommodation with services is assumed to be a VAT-able activity, unlike the provision of accommodation without services which may fall under the charitable exemption.

The five-year model at Figure xxvi assumes a steady growth in retreats, with improving occupancy levels as the reputation for Ellisland as a retreat centre grows.

Figure xxvi. Retreats, five year income and expenditure

Pods, Long Byre, C	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Number of retreats	10	13	16	19	21
Attendees	12	12	14	14	14
Occupancy	67%	67%	78%	78%	78%
Price per person	900	900	1,000	1,000	1,150
Income net of VAT	90,000	117,000	186,667	221,667	281,750
External catering £35 (plus VAT) per person per day	24,500	31,850	39,200	46,550	51,450
Tutor costs 2 per day	35,000	45,500	56,000	66,500	73,500
Utilities / cleaning 15%	16,200	21,060	33,600	39,900	50,715
Total cost	75,700	98,410	128,800	152,950	175,665
Surplus	14,300	18,590	57,867	68,717	106,085

Retreats have the potential to promote the legacy of Burns through inspiring music, poetry, and prose, to allow people to experience wellbeing as part of the Idyll; and to create a surplus to assist RBET to maintain and interpret his legacy. They deliver the vision of Ellisland as a vibrant creative place.

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12.4 Residencies and Accommodation

12.4.1 Accommodation Provision

Ellisland has already invested in tourist accommodation, completing the renovation of the 1960s holiday cottage on the site for the 2023 season. The holiday cottage accommodates 4 people in a building that was previously a home. This renovation was substantially grant funded, on the basis of a detailed business plan for holiday lets which examined the market for such properties in Dumfries and Galloway.

The Future Vision Plan for Ellisland adds considerably to that accommodation, aiming at four sets of activities and markets:

- To support retreats (Section 0);
- To raise the value of weddings (Section 12.7)
- To create accommodation for festivals and events (Section 12.5)
- For artists residencies and holiday accommodation (this section).

The additional accommodation in the Future Vision Plan includes

- The Long Byre – 3 double rooms or 6 people, self-catering.
- Accommodation pods – 4 double spaces or 8 people, self-catering
- The Granary – 2 self-contained studios or 4 places, self-catering

Self-catering here is with a minimal kitchenette in each property, primarily to allow guests to self-cater breakfast and simple meals. Facilities are restricted to a microwave / oven, a fridge, and a sink. The Long Byre has no separate table or seating space.

12.4.2 Markets

Self-catering accommodation is a crowded market in Dumfries and Galloway. Figures from VisitScotland for 2019 suggest that regional occupancy rates for all types of accommodation in the region are around 13% on average, and occupancy is highly seasonal. Lodges and chalets have the highest occupancy rates, more than double “glamping” provision and static caravans.

Figure xxvii. Scottish Occupancy for self-catering properties, VisitScotland 2019



Current challenges in delivery, in addition to over-capacity, also relate to the lack of staff; high wage rates; and the difficulty of finding staff who are willing and able to work in out of

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town locations. Given the competition, the guest ratings must be kept high – over a 9 or four stars – which requires constant management and staff effort.

RBET can address this occupancy rate by linking and providing accommodation to support its other activities.

- Artists' residencies at this unique site, both in collaborative groups or in solo retreats, will create a new offering and will significantly increase the occupancy rates particularly off-season. The advantage of this market is that unlike retreats, little need be offered other than the accommodation. RBET can create the potential for collaboration, by setting aside particular dates for themed residencies and allowing artists to meet in the historic farm buildings after opening hours. If RBET decide to attract people to residences e.g. by the presence of a salaried Artist in Residence, then income such as grants would be found separately, and additional fees charged to participants;
- Leveraging the weddings and celebrations offering, Although the weddings and celebrations proposal is for a very limited number of these –6 in the year – the accommodation provision will be linked to these events;
- Linking to larger festivals and events. Again, 4 of these are anticipated per year as they will restrict access to the rest of the site. They will increase the demand for accommodation related to these events.

In terms of potential displacement, the offering at Ellisland Farm seeks to attract additional overnight visitors to Dumfries and Galloway; visitors who are excited by the opportunity to stay at Burns' farm and to experience the poet's landscape and idyll. The accommodation at Ellisland will command a premium over other similar types in the region, or, as with the Granary, provide a new subsection of the accommodation market which is not currently addressed in the region. The year-round attraction of Ellisland provides a natural extension into the "shoulder months" in a highly seasonal tourism market.

The market evaluation for the holiday cottage proposed an overall occupancy rate of 65%, taking these factors into account. This did not include accommodation for retreats, which were not considered as an activity during that study.

The range of accommodation proposed in the Future Vision Plan are aimed at different subsections of the self-catering markets.

12.4.3 Occupancy and income assumptions

As the Long Byre, the Holiday cottage, and the Accommodation Pods are all required to support the Retreats, this will occupy (for 21 retreats per year) 105 days, leaving 255 days for other markets.

The Granary

This is aimed at the higher end of the market, providing bijou and high-end accommodation for a section of the holiday market which is looking for a unique and unusual experience. These types of accommodation, suitably furnished and presented, can command

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significantly higher prices in the market and a higher occupancy rate, for example, Fairburn Tower in Ross-shire, a 2 bedroom, 2 bathroom Scottish towerhouse set over 5 floors and fully booked until August 2024. Other examples include:

Nisbets Tower, Eyemouth: A renovated 18th-century doo’cot. 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom and a patio with river views. Minimum 2 night stay, rates from £350 for 2 nights in the low season to £500 in the high season.

Hay Cheese Market, Hay on Wye: Originally Hay’s manorial courtroom, above the restored market hall in the centre of the town. 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom with views over Hay. Minimum 2 night stay, rates from £200 for 2 nights in the low season to £280 in the high season.

Courtyard Cottage, Drumoak, Peterculter: the gatekeepers lodge above the gatehouse. 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, open plan living space. Minimum 2 night stay, rates from £170 for 2 nights in the low season to £475 in the high season.

The Granary, suitably and sympathetically restored, will form 2, 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom flats with open living spaces. Occupancy is anticipated to be around 75%, given its location, ambiance, and history. Rates will range from £200 in the low season for 2 nights, to £400 in the high season for each flat.

Figure xxviii. Granary accommodation income per flat, year 5

Calendar Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Available nights	90	90	90	90	360
<i>Dumfries and Galloway occupancy rates</i>	20%	31%	38%	16%	26%
Granary occupancy rates	65%	75%	95%	65%	75%
Average price per night	£100	£150	£200	£150	£150
Income excluding VAT	£4,875	£8,438	£14,250	£7,313	£34,875
Total Granary income for 2 flats					£69,750

The Accommodation Pods

Accommodation pods, Shepherds Huts, and other “off grid” accommodations are popular with farms seeking to diversify income, including in Dumfries and Galloway. Advice taken from a rural diversification consultant is that this type of accommodation typically rents at around £95 per night on average, with an occupancy rate of 44%.

The combination of the residencies, the weddings and celebrations, and the festivals and events, with the added impact of Ellisland’s destination status, will increase this occupancy rates to 55%, with a particularly high rate in the summer (peak) season.

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Figure xxix. Pods accommodation income, year 5

Calendar Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Available nights (i.e. excluding retreats)	60	60	75	60	255
<i>Dumfries and Galloway occupancy rates</i>	20%	31%	38%	16%	26%
Pod occupancy rates	31%	62%	95%	31%	55%
Average price per night	£97.50	£112.50	£82.50	£94	£95
Income per pod excl VAT	£1,258	£3,023	£6,680	£1,293	£12,253
4 pods					£49,011

The Long Byre

While the Long Byre offers smaller accommodation than the Granary and the Pods, being a neat double room, it provides a further opportunity to stay on the site of Burns’ farm – as does the Granary. Its occupancy levels will therefore be equivalent to the Pods, but the pricing point is assumed to be lower as the accommodation has fewer facilities and is less spacious. It will have a slightly longer season, but will less of a “peak” as the accommodation will be in the heart of the site and therefore less “idyllic”.

Figure xxx. Long Byre accommodation income, year 5

Calendar Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Available nights (i.e. excluding retreats)	60	60	75	60	255
<i>Dumfries and Galloway occupancy rates</i>	20%	31%	38%	16%	26%
Long Byre occupancy rates	36%	62%	76%	27%	50%
Average price per night	£97.50	£112.50	£82.50	£94	£95
Income per room	£1,223	£2,519	£4,453	£942	£9,138
3 rooms					£27,413

The Holiday Cottage

Assumptions for the holiday cottage are based on those in the business plan originally provided. Price points remain comparative with similar accommodation, with a premium for the property’s location at Ellisland. The occupancy rate estimated by that business plan, of 65%, has been maintained, with 105 days at 100% occupancy for the Retreats business and 255 days at 48% occupancy for other activities.

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Figure xxxi. Holiday cottage accommodation income, year 5

Calendar Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Available nights (i.e. excluding retreats)	60	60	75	60	255
<i>Dumfries and Galloway occupancy rates</i>	20%	31%	38%	16%	26%
Holiday cottage occupancy rates	31%	62%	76%	24%	48%
Average price per night	£130	£139	£145	£135	£137
Income	£1,983	£4,299	£6,903	£1,586	£14,771

Total income

Based on the above assumptions, the total income for accommodation on the site (excluding income for retreats) is as below for Year 5.

Figure xxxii. Total accommodation income, year 5

Calendar Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Granary	£9,750	£16,875	£28,500	£14,625	£69,750
Pods	£5,033	£12,090	£26,719	£5,170	£49,011
Long byre	£3,670	£7,556	£13,359	£2,827	£27,413
Holiday cottage	£1,983	£4,299	£6,903	£1,586	£14,771
Total Income	£20,435	£40,820	£75,481	£24,209	£160,945

In the earlier years, there will be fewer retreats (see section 12.3.4) and therefore there will be additional availability for the accommodation. With all other assumptions on occupancy and cost per night, this decreases income from retreats and residences over the 5 year period as set out in Figure xxxiii.

Figure xxxiii. Accommodation availability and income, first five years

Calendar Quarter	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Retreat days	50	65	80	95	105
Accommodation & residencies days	310	295	280	265	255
Accommodation income	£173,687	£179,002	£166,318	£162,634	£160,945

12.4.4 Direct costs

Direct costs associated with letting income are estimate on a percentage of gross (pre-VAT) turnover basis as below:

- Air BnB Fees and bank fees 5%

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- Cleaning, housekeeping and laundry 22% for all properties except the Granary
- Licenses: rates, refuse, water, sewerage, WiFi: £740 per property and £1,480 for the holiday cottage
- Utilities: 9%. This is considerably higher than in the Holiday cottage business plan, but is based on recent actual experience of letted properties and reflects current utility prices.
- Maintenance and repairs 10%

These direct costs do not include overheads such marketing, which will be mainly a charge to time of the core staff; or facility and guest management time which will be undertaken by the Visitor and Operations functions. This management function, for 6 buildings and 22 beds, will add 1FTE to management time; estimated at 1.2 FTE in high season, 1 FTE in the shoulder seasons and 0.8 FTE in low season. Insurance is included in site insurance costs. ,

Overall direct variable costs (fees, cleaning and laundry, utilities, maintenance) are 47% of turnover. Rates, licenses and fees etc are fixed per unit.

12.4.5 Accommodation and residences: Income and expenditure

Using the above assumptions generates the following income and expenditure for accommodation and residences.

Figure xxxiv. Annual income and direct costs, accommodation and residences, Year 5

	Granary	Pods	Long byre	Holiday cottage	Total
Annual Income	£69,750	£49,011	£27,413	£14,771	£160,945
Air BnB and bank fees	£4,185	£2,941	£1,645	£886	£9,657
Cleaning and laundry	£12,555	£8,822	£4,934	£2,659	£28,970
Utilities	£7,533	£5,293	£2,961	£1,595	£17,382
Rates, refuse, water, sewerage, licenses, Wi-Fi	£1,480	£5,920	£4,440	£1,480	£13,320
Maintenance and repairs	£8,370	£5,881	£3,290	£1,772	£19,313
Total direct costs	£34,123	£28,857	£17,269	£8,393	£88,642
Annual gross profit	£35,627	£20,154	£10,143	£6,378	£72,302

Income, expenditure, and gross profit over the full five years decreases, reflecting the decrease in income as retreats absorb more of the accommodation space as set out in Figure xxxiii.

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Figure xxxv. Income and direct costs, accommodation and residences, first five years

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Income	173,687	170,002	166,318	162,634	160,945
Web host and bank charges	10,421	10,200	9,979	9,758	9,657
Net income	163,266	159,802	156,339	152,875	151,288
Cleaning and laundry	31,264	30,600	29,937	29,274	28,970
Utilities	18,758	18,360	17,962	17,564	17,382
Rates, water, licenses	13,320	13,320	13,320	13,320	13,320
Maintenance	20,842	20,400	19,958	19,516	19,313
Total costs	84,184	82,681	81,178	79,674	78,985
Gross profit	79,081	77,121	75,161	73,201	72,302

These activities generate a substantial return to Ellisland, even taking into account overheads costed elsewhere such as management costs, insurances, and time for marketing.

Further, creating accommodation to support the other creative activities – retreats, residences, and festivals – helps deliver the vision of Ellisland as a living creative place.

12.5 Small and community events

As noted in Section 6.2, RBET has developed a series of smaller events, held within Threshing Barn, which can hold 60 seated in cabaret format and 180 standing. RBET struggles to deliver these at full economic cost; the ticket prices cover direct additional costs such as food and materials, and funding is found for any performers, but staff time and effort for advertising, event preparation including food preparation, and attendance at the event are not recovered. Future funding applications will include an “event hire” charge to help contribute to the overheads. Future pricing should also be carefully considered; prices are currently very low and a modest increase on all tickets would not be a deterrent to the audiences.

No assumptions are made in the financial models for the income and direct costs associated with these small and community events; they are assumed to break even overall.

In the financial models, the staff necessary to fundraise for and to deliver events will do so as part of the Visitor and Operations team. These staff will support various of RBET’s activities, and so there are no directly allocated costs for these small and community events. We estimate 0.5 FTE to fundraise, plan, market and deliver 1 community event per month.

12.6 Festivals and larger events

RBET have previously considered using Ellisland as a larger events venue, and commissioned a report of the feasibility of this at the site as it is currently in December 2021. This concluded that, “The site has great potential for a range of events. There are a number of limiting factors

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which combine to suggest that events best suited to the site have a maximum capacity of 500 people. In fact, the limited car parking capacity probably limits the likely visitor numbers on site at any one time to nearer 200.”

The challenges raised by the report were:

- **Access:** The access road is single track with few passing places, and while there is good visibility on the A76, should there be a large event then there is significant risk of congestion on the track which could even feasibly cause issues on the main road.
- **Car parking -** The lack of significant weather-proof parking; currently available space is probably for 50 cars.
- **Public Transport:** the lack of public transport would require a shuttle bus.
- **Toilets:** The number of toilets is adequate for events with less than 400 men and 150 women on site.
- **Lighting:** The site is poorly lit at night and additional lighting will be required if an event is taking place after dark.
- **Uneven surfaces:** There are uneven surfaces, in particular the cobbled yard areas. Not only are these more treacherous when wet, they are a barrier to full accessibility
- **Farm machinery:** There is a significant amount of old farm machinery in a number of areas of the site which affect the usability of areas of the farm and pose a hazard.

The interpretation and landscaping proposals address the items relating to access, lighting, uneven surfaces and farm machinery. The remaining items – public transport, toilets, and lighting – are typically arranged through temporary hire by festivals and events operating at temporary locations such as farms. These events often also hire water, generators, temporary stages and marquees as required.

Discussions with a musical events promoter and with an events organiser were that in its current state, Ellisland could host events with the use of hired temporary roadways to overcome the access issue, and firm covers for the cobbles. However, this would significantly increase the cost and therefore require a much larger event to make any financial returns. With the interpretation and landscaping proposals, this cost would be removed.

Events help deliver the Ellisland vision, meeting the objects of wider cultural outreach and community benefit by increasing the cultural offerings available locally. Events would link to the ethos of Burns, Links to the ethos of Burns, targeted at creativity and performance, music, literature, food, friendship gathering,

Events have the potential to generate significant local economic benefit in terms of hospitality provision.

For RBET, events would also generate commercial benefit by increasing site utilisation, income and surplus.

The events planner provided detailed commercially confidential income and costings for a 2 – day food festival event to be attended by 1,500 adults and 1,200 children. This event would have 53 traders, generating income through fees, and providing the attraction for adults. There would be a separate marquee with activities targeted at children.

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Income generated was modelled at £30,605, with direct costs (excluding staff time to organise the event) at just under £20,000, a surplus of around £10,000 per event.

Figure xxxvi. Example event income and expenditure

Item	Number	£
Tickets – adult £15 per ticket	1,500	22,500
Children’s activity area £2.50 each	1,200	3,000
Camping / motorhomes £12 - £15	45	585
Traders incl VAT (53)	50	4,520
Total income		30,605
Utilities		2,400
Staffing (temporary) (marshals, security)		2,450
Marketing		500
Children’s activities		1,280
Marquee equipment & facility hire		12,900
Total costs		19,630
Net contribution		11,075

RBET should also consider the potential to apply the charity exemption from both VAT and tax for events which are promoted as fundraising events. If the events meet the criteria set out in HMRC guidance, and if there are fewer than 15 fundraising events per year, then the events are exempt from VAT and also from corporation tax. RBET are referred to the available HMRC guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-fundraising-events-exemptions/fundraising-events-exemption-for-charities-and-other-qualifying-bodies#fundraising-event-exemptions>) and encouraged to take professional advice on this issue.

Event organisation could be outsourced to an event planner (around £5,000 to manage the above size of event). Alternatively RBET could hire out Ellisland as an events venue, using a promoter to help contact potential events holders, reducing the risk and the outlays but also reducing the income to, say, a £2,500 hire per event.

There are clearly financial risks in running an event or festival of size for the first time. In addition to the above mitigations, RBET could:

- start small, build and grow it, using a minimal viable product approach. This will also help iron out the inevitable unforeseen logistical issues
- if possible, start with a funded event by writing a compelling application; economic development agencies may assist in the early days to minimize costs to smallholders

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- stick with “tried and tested” e.g. food festival in the first instance where there are no significant outlays up front
- hold a showcase event to ask promoters to the venue to gather their views and to “sell” the site
- consider the artists residences ending in a mini festival, including a headliner performer to help draw a wider audience.

12.6.1 Events income and expenditure

We propose a maximum of 4 events per year: for example, a celebration of Burns and his legacy, food, wellbeing, and contemporary music.

For modelling purposes we propose an income of £2,500 per event for Ellisland, assuming an outsourced model.

12.7 Weddings and celebrations

12.7.1 The wedding market

Ellisland has the situation, history and facilities for an outstanding wedding venue. The site is located in beautiful grounds and landscape and has a unique connection to one of the most romantic figures in Scottish culture. Close to a sizable town with good transport connections, it is in the heart of Dumfries and Galloway, which continues to be seen, through Gretna Green, as THE wedding destination in the UK.

Weddings represent a significant opportunity to generate high value and high margin revenues for the organisation.

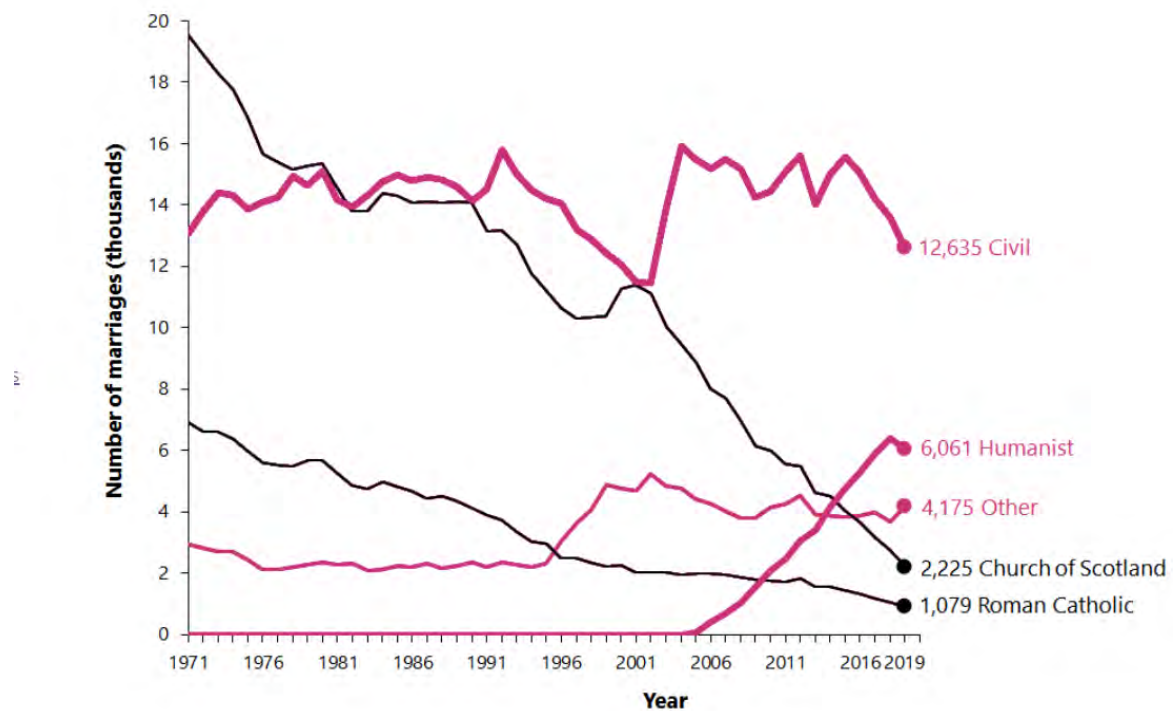
In terms of the overall UK market size, there were 275,000 weddings held in 2021, generating an overall direct spend estimated at £14.7bn, with £9.4bn spent on the day itself. (Source: ukweddings.org).

Whilst weddings have been in decline, over 26,000 weddings were held in Scotland in 2019. There is currently pent up demand post Covid that is impacting wedding numbers in the short to medium term.

There has been a sharp fall in the number of church weddings, but civil and humanist weddings, as could be offered at Ellisland have remained stable (civil) or grown substantially (humanist) since the early 2000s as can be seen in Figure xxxvii.

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Figure xxxvii. Marriages, by type of ceremony, 1971-2019 (Source: Registrars of Scotland).



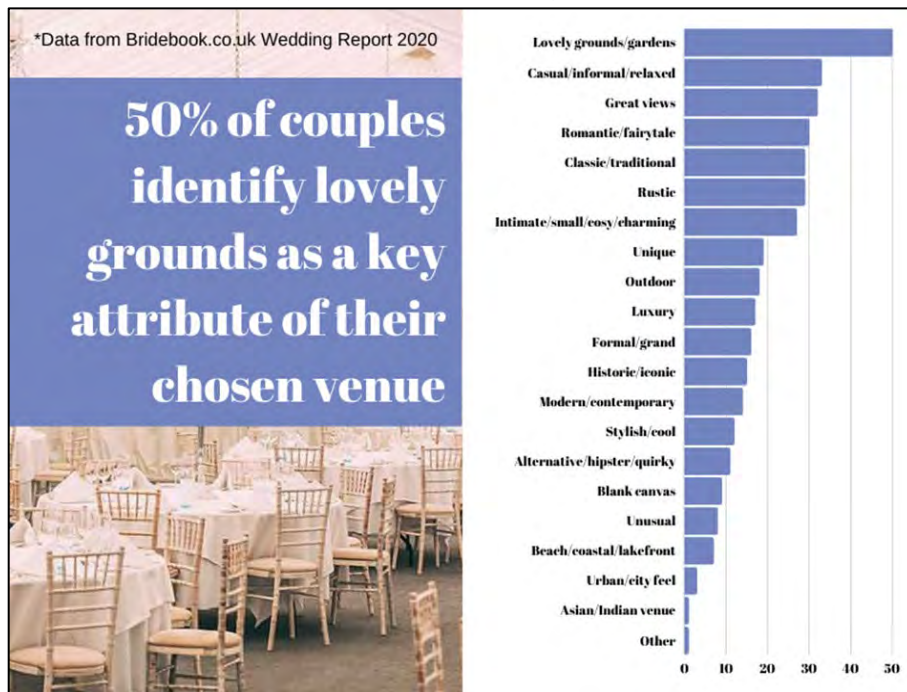
In Scotland, a disproportionate number of wedding (19% of all Scottish wedding)s are held in Dumfries and Galloway, due in the main to the pull of Gretna. The area is already well known, internationally, as a prime wedding destination.

Following the move away from ‘traditional’ church weddings, there is a move away from the conventional reception venue of a local hotel. Customers are increasingly looking for venues that can provide them with a complete package – a place to get married, host a party and even stay before and after the event.

Ellisland has the key attributes demanded from wedding venues, featuring lovely grounds, a casual and informal relaxed environment, great views and a truly romantic history. There are innumerable opportunities for unique photographs and videos – an increasingly important consideration for modern weddings, which are widely shared over social media.

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Figure xxxviii. Key requirements for wedding locations



A growing trend for smaller weddings is also fulfilled by an Ellisland wedding. A survey by OnePoll in 2021 of 2000 unmarried adults across the UK found that nearly 70% wanted only close friends and family on their special day. This was regardless of whether COVID19 restrictions were in place. [Thanks to COVID, most unmarried adults are now open to a 'micro-wedding' - Study Finds](#)

12.7.2 The Proposal

The proposal for Ellisland is for a small number of high value, high margin weddings, to be held in the shoulder season (and potentially during the winter months in time). These would be delivered on a 'dry hire' basis, where elements of the site are hired out for the wedding, but with the hirers responsible for arranging and providing all services/facilities such as catering, furnishing, marquees, bell tents, decoration, bar provision, in addition to the more common wedding services such as entertainment and cake. Such rustic dry hires are popular and generate high revenues as demonstrated in the table below:

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Figure xxxix. Rustic wedding “dry hires” examples

	Location	Venue hire peak	Venue hire low	Notes
Barn at Banchory	Banchory, Aberdeenshire	£ 4,995	£ 4,695	2020 prices. 2 day dry hire. Garden, gallery, barn, theatre. Manned bar and catering kitchen. Additional charge for stage, lighting etc
Dalduff	Maybole, Ayrshire	from £10,000	from £5,000	2 day hire. 2 nights accommodation for 10 and 1 cooked breakfast. Inc food and drinks package, with minimum numbers set
Ashridge Great Barn	North Tawnton, Devon	£ 5,500	£ 5,500	3 day hire, 3 nights accommodation for up to 6. Catering kitchen, Log supply. Staff onsite. Booked every weekend June, July and August 2023
Bachilton Barn	Methven, Perthshire	£ 10,165	£ 5,995	2 nights accommodation for 40. Lower price for yurt accommodation only for 12 (£7270/£4120)
Dorset Woodland Weddings	Nr Gillingham, Dorset	£ 5,750		Exclusive use of reception site, traditional canvas marquee, car park, storage area with mains electricity and water and two camping fields from Friday 9:30am to Sunday 2pm.
English Country Weddings	Yarkhill nr Hereford	£ 3,500		Dry hire of meadow and small barn
Hadsham Farm Weddings	Nr Banbury, Oxfordshire	£ 12,450	£ 5,950	Permanent tipis, for event space plus 1 shepherd hut for B&G. Accommodation is 12 bell tents - glamping with toilet/shower blocks AT EXTRA £120 each. April - October. Only 8 dates left for 2023

Several options are possible, for example:

- Ceremony only, in the orchard, by the Nith, in the farmhouse, with reception held offsite
- Small, intimate wedding, with wedding breakfast served in the farmhouse or the Threshing Barn, with hire of the on-site accommodation for the wedding party
- Larger scale wedding, with catered reception, bar, dancing etc, utilising the wider spaces, with marquee/bell tent provision as required. With the on-site accommodation and potentially use of the surrounding area for temporary, tent-style accommodation

These would have different price points and would have different levels of impact on other potential site users. It is anticipated that a large scale wedding would require closure of the site to other users, but would attract a premium price as a result.

The aim of weddings is to continue the theme of conservation through use. It enables the Trust to

- generate revenues
- increase site utilisation
- raise awareness of Ellisland itself to a wider and perhaps different audience – including internationally. It is anticipated that target market for weddings at Ellisland will be outwith the local area.

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There is little direct competition locally for what could be offered at Ellisland. There are clearly a number of established wedding venues in the locality but none offering the romantic, rustic rural experience that could be delivered by Ellisland.

Figure xl. Local provision of wedding facilities

	Location	Venue hire peak	Venue hire low	F&B package	Typical price	Ceremony only	Notes
Friars Carse	Auldgirth	£2,500	£2,500	£58	£4,640		Traditional hotel wedding.
Dalswinton	Auldgirth	£3,950	£3,950	£79	£11,850	£300	Glass marquee - glamorous and luxe
Hetland Hall Hotel	Dumfries			£75	£6,000	£500/£700	Traditional hotel wedding
Mabie House	Mabie Forest, Dumfries						Can do exclusive hire. Can have own caterers
Crichton	Dumfries						Traditional venue wedding
Marthrown of Mabie	Nr Dumfries	£4,100	£2,700				For full site, 2 nights. 36 accommodated in yurts etc
GG's Yard	Gatehouse of Fleet	£7250	£4,000	£75	£14,725		Luxury "barn" offer

12.7.3 Practical considerations

The challenges for Ellisland are in getting the offer right. One option is to work with exclusively with one or two upmarket wedding planners, who attract the target market that Ellisland is seeking. They have the knowledge, experience and contacts to ensure a very high standard of service, reflecting well on themselves and the Ellisland site. This a model that a neighbouring property, Dalswinton, has adopted.

Most similar venues stipulate that only approved suppliers can be used, and weddings and similar hirers are restricted to this list. This helps deliver control over the event and supports a minimal impact on Ellisland itself. Connecting to local suppliers will be key in terms of successful delivery; the aim of income-generation at Ellisland is to increase local economic activity.

The requirements for a successful wedding offer are:

- well-presented and maintained facilities; whilst rustic has huge appeal, high-paying customers will expect to experience the idyll.
- flexible infrastructure (that can also be used to events other events including festivals). The Future Vision Plan addresses requirements such as
 - o a large space and, if required, room for a large marquee/covered outdoor space
 - o kitchen facilities for food preparation
 - o bar area
 - o toilets

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- car parking
- accommodation - at least for the wedding party
- a range of photographic and imagery opportunities – in the landscape, by the Nith and in a unique farmstead, garden and orchard, with historic buildings and art installations
- a range of options with ability to customise the space and the day
- responsive and engaged team at Ellisland with respect to handling enquiries
- a clear marketing message and marketing plan
 - targeted to reach the affluent, individualistic customer who will be attracted to the uniqueness of Ellisland
 - engaging with influential wedding suppliers such as wedding planners and highly rated photographers and videographers
 - seeking coverage in aspirational publications and media such as ‘Rock my Wedding’ where brides and grooms seek inspiration

The proposed approach to market the site as a dry hire wedding venue will mean relatively low input from the Ellisland team, with the organisation and co-ordination of suppliers and the day falling to the wedding party and/or wedding planner. Initial weddings will require a higher effort and input but it is anticipated that, over time, arrangements will well understood and replicable. One or two low-key weddings at the start would help ease everyone into the practicalities.

Examples of similar, successful venues are provided at Appendix 5Appendix 4.

12.7.4 Other gatherings and celebrations for “Auld Lang Syne”

As families disperse across the UK and internationally, they are brought back together to celebrate significant milestones – for example a golden wedding anniversary, or 80th birthday party. The same delivery model for these celebrations could equally be supported at Ellisland, with on-site accommodation for up to 22 family members and use of Dumfries and Galloway’s existing hotel and B&B accommodation for others.

Further, there is an increasing demand for individualized and personalized non-secular funerals, carried out in a meaningful and contemplative space. A survey undertaken by Co-operative Funeral Care in 2016 noted that

- One in four people would like to have their funeral by a lake or river
- One in five would opt for a location in the countryside

Last year’s census for England and Wales reported that the percentage of the population who described themselves as being of no religion rose from 25% to 37%, indicating that the demand to recognise life events in a secular manner will increase

There is also increasing interest in and adoption of direct cremation rather than a traditional funeral, accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Sunlife’s Cost of Dying Report 2023 reported that 18% of funerals in 2022 were direct cremations, compared to 3% in 2019¹⁰. Direct

¹⁰ (<https://www.sunlife.co.uk/siteassets/documents/cost-of-dying/sunlife-cost-of-dying-report-2023.pdf/>).

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cremation is often followed by a ‘celebration of life’ at a later date at a place that has resonance and calm. These societal trends are positive for Ellisland, which is ideally placed to offer a very special send-off.

12.7.5 Income assumptions

The business plan assumes that Ellisland holds 3 weddings and 3 other celebrations per year.

Figure xli. Income generation from weddings and celebrations

Item	No	Selling price (no VAT)	Total takings (no VAT)	Net
Weddings	3	£2,000	£6,000	£5,400
Celebrations	3	£1,000	£3,000	£2,700

It is assumed here that as Ellisland is providing only the space, and assuming that Ellisland does not “opt to tax” the land and buildings, this income would be exempt. As noted elsewhere in this report, expert VAT advice should be sought to clarify the position.

A 10% deduction has been made from the income to cover sundry direct expenses. Marketing costs are included in the overall overhead costs at Section 12.12.

12.8 Private dining/small events

Ellisland is an excellent fit for private dining and small-scale events, where clients are seeking a very special and memorable space for a very special occasion, and has held successful fundraising dinners in the farmhouse in the past.

There are a number of examples where this is undertaken successfully. For example, the Gordon Highlanders Museum in Aberdeen offers private dining in the original Officers’ Mess – a wooden panelled room, set with regimental crockery and cutlery. For £150 per head, an evening over 3 ½ hour provides:

- champagne and canapé reception
- guided museum tour
- piper
- 4 course dinner including 500ml wine, port, Drambuie and whisky
- experience of regimental traditions and etiquette

This is popular with local companies and families, who have a unique experience, with the added pleasure of supporting a charitable organisation.

There is growing demand for private dining in the UK¹¹. This is further evidenced by the appearance of several websites collating and offering both commercial private dining spaces and private in-home dining, where a chef and team produce a meal in a domestic home.

From an income and surplus perspective, private dining is appealing as it generates a higher spend per head, lower wastage and lower kitchen costs, as numbers and menu choices are

¹¹ See e.g. Catering Today [The rise of private dining | Catering Today](#) 18/3/2019

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known in advance, with no impact from no-shows. This results in margins of 15-25% compared to 3.5-8% in general restaurant catering. It is also highly plannable, with bookings made significantly in advance of the event itself.

Ellisland has the core requirements for a private dinner offer:

- privacy
- atmosphere
- exclusivity
- uniqueness
- accessibility/space

Catering and front of house could be outsourced, under a 'dry hire' arrangement similar to that proposed for weddings. Or, to increase the margin generated by Ellisland, this could be done in-house, using the facilities on-site.

There is some existing provision locally for private dining, most notably at The Globe Inn, Dumfries, Copper Beech at Hetland Hall, Carrutherstown and the Dumfries Arms in Cumnock. However the history, setting and the accommodation offer provide very clear reasons for a customer to choose Ellisland, if the food and service offer are of high-quality.

Events that could be supported under this model include:

- Celebrations
 - o Birthday, anniversary, christening/naming
- Corporate meeting/dinner
- High end travel trade
 - o As part of an exclusive tour of Scotland (catering to the target market of the Belmond Royal Scotsman tours)
- Small-scale weddings/elopements

It is anticipated that the majority of clients for private dining/small events will be relatively local, however, the provision of on-site accommodation increases the range/draw of Ellisland from the local area. Families and groups are increasingly willing to travel for major life events and celebrations, meaning that the market for private dining/small events is not restricted to the immediate locality. Close targeting of prospective customers from the Central Belt and north and north east of England will generate additional clients.

Figure xlii. Income assumptions

Private dinners

Income: 12 diners at £175 per head x 10 per year	£17,500 excl VAT
Expenditure: 75% direct costs (food, staff, other expenses)	<u>£13,125</u> excl VAT
25% surplus	<u>£4,375</u>

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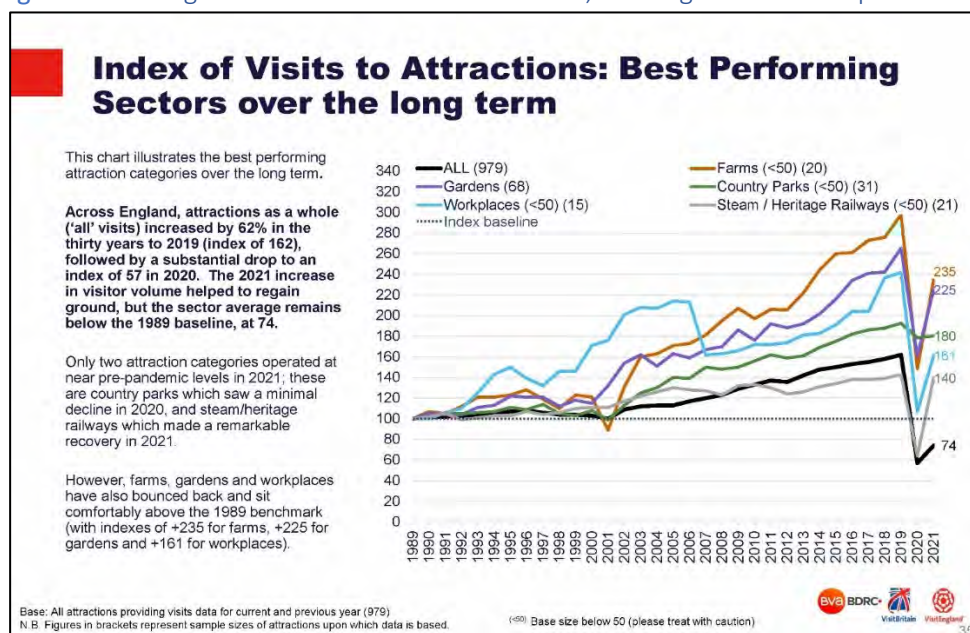
12.9 Wellbeing

Wellbeing builds on the concept of “The Idyll”, envisaging a multi-faceted offer that will attract people to the site who might not otherwise visit, and providing recreation, reconnection to the natural world and relaxation in Ellisland’s grounds. This offer might include:

- Wellbeing retreats and residencies – the model being as for “residences” above
- Participation in food production e.g.
 - Apple orchard: planting, pruning, picking and pressing
 - Community garden at (some) scale, working with vulnerable groups e.g. young people not in education, employment or training; people with mental health issues, or those living with a disability
- Participatory one-off events (butter churning, cheese making, sausage making, haggis making etc) as an attraction for visitors, linked to Burns’ and Jean Armour’s food production on the farm. Events could include using methods that were current to Burns’ time on the farm, and could be delivered using family-friendly methods
- Awareness raising events and demonstrations including for example farming methods from Burns’ time to the present day, perhaps re-starting the ploughing competitions, ecology tours of the site with recognition of Burns love of nature.

Shorter walks, signposted, appropriately interpreted and with a high degree of accessibility, will provide a significant local benefit to communities and to visitors alike. VisitScotland statistics provided at Figure xvii show the popularity of destinations with a managed outdoor space for people to relax and enjoy. This reflects a decades-long growth for visits to farms and gardens, which has outstripped growth in visits to all other attractions over the last 3 decades.

Figure xliii. Long term trends in visitor attractions, VisitEngland trends report 2021



While the Crichton Campus offers an opportunity for the people of Dumfries to explore a managed urban greenspace and historic gardens, Ellisland allows visitors to access a rural

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idyll, focusing on the Nith and its landscapes. With the proposed bridge, it would be possible to walk from Ellisland past the Roman forts and camps to the established walks on the Dalswinton Estate, and, for the able walkers, on existing core paths to the hills above Nithsdale.

The landscape design and infrastructure summarised in Section 9 and set out in the Architectural Report incorporate the necessary all-accessible paths, trails and a new bridge over the Nith which connects to the Dumfries and Galloway “core path network” on the east of the river – a bridge which is fully promoted by local walking groups and by neighbouring Kirkmahoe Community Council. There are no bridges over the Nith between Dumfries and Auldgirth.

12.9.1 Wellbeing – generating income

Wellbeing retreats are included in the “Retreats” modelling in section 12.3.

Community gardens and orchards, working with vulnerable groups, will be part of the remit of the Education and Outreach officer, as set out in section 0, as will participatory and awareness raising events.

As discussed in 12.1, there are no plans to charge for visitor car parking. Visitors to the site only, for walks, will create an income to RBET to extent that they donate to car parking or visit the café and retail outlet.

The additional footfall for these non-ticketed visitors to the site is estimated at 10,000 to 20,000 café visitors per year; a significant number to help ensure that the café is viable and delivers an income to RBET. This is a conservative estimate based on Trustees’ and consultants’ knowledge of other visitor experiences where the museum entrance fee does not control access to the site. Examples include Kilmartin Museum, where the historic monuments are accessible from main road car parks.

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12.10 Café and catering

12.10.1 The need for a café

Café and catering provision at the site was considered both as part of the overall visitor experience to the site and to the museum, and also to support other activities. These are:

Figure xlv. Catering and café requirements

Requirement	Delivery model	Catering model	Catering requirements
Retreats	Catered lunches, evening meal	External provider, “chalet girl” model	Servery - place to heat up, unpack, poss. some food heating facility
Residences	Self-catering		
Events and festivals, weddings	Outside/inside, pop up	Outsourced	Water, poss. power, grey water, space
Pop up evening dining	In the Farmhouse	Outsource/ in-house	Small catering kitchen
Green space / wellbeing visitors	Phase 1 Outsourced shack/van Phase 2 Indoor/outdoor café	Phase 1 outsource Phase 2 outsource/in-house	Cabin/van Small catering kitchen
Staff welfare	Self service	Provide space	Fridge, kettle, microwave

As shown above, whilst most activities would not necessitate a café, it would be a significant part of the attraction for visitors to the museum and to the site. As the location would be off the main road and 6 miles outside Dumfries, it is not considered to create a risk of displacement for existing establishments in the town. The nearest establishments include Friar’s Carse, who operate a country house hotel; and the Auldgirth Inn, which is a cosy pub, built in the 1500s.

Creating a catering facility on the site will help support the other activities, providing equipment and space for outsourced catering, and the facility for in-house catering.

The café will be open during museum opening hours, and offer a light lunch and baked goods, with hot drinks. Due to the need to use café facilities to cater for other activities, for example evening meals for retreats, the café will be run in-house. The café manager will be a key appointment to help ensure that the risks of running a café are minimised: attracting, managing, and retaining staff, delivering pricing, margins, portions, and waste management.

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12.10.2 Covers, spend per head assumptions

The modelling assumes that 90% of museum visitors will spend in the café; these visitors are set out in Section 12.1 above. In addition, 10,000 visitors to the site will use the café, rising to 20,000 by year 5.

Spend assumptions are for £7 per person, at 2023 prices. This is a mix of hot drinks and cake, and lunches; lunches are £10 per person and snacks etc are £6 per person. The modelling assumes the following splits:

Figure xlv. Average spend per café customer

	Price incl VAT	% of customers
Soup and sandwich	£6.00	20%
Lunch	£10.00	20%
Drink	£2.50	90%
Cake / baked goods	£2.50	40%
Weighted Average Spend per customer	£6.45	
Average spend excl VAT	£5.51	

12.10.3 Café income and expenditure

Based on these assumptions of customer number and spend per customer, the following annual income is forecast for the first five years:

Figure xlvi. Café income, first five years

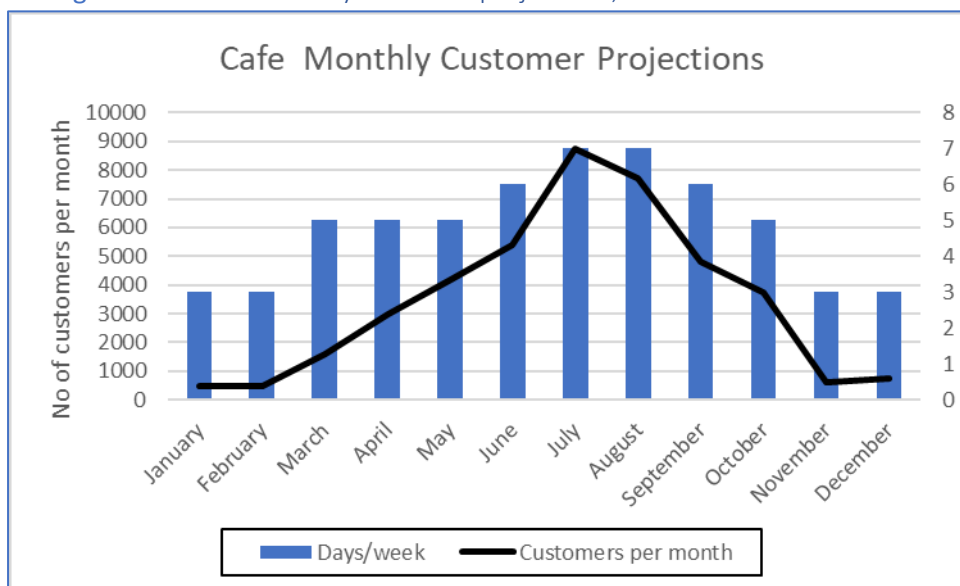
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Museum Admissions @ 90%	31,500	31,500	33,075	34,740	36,450
Site visitors	10,000	12,500	15,000	17,500	20,000
Total café	41,500	44,000	48,075	52,240	56,450
Average spend	£5.51	£5.51	£5.51	£5.51	£5.51
Total income	£228,720	£242,564	£265,029	£287,990	£311,199

The café will mirror the museum opening days, restricted to 3 days per week from November to February, rising to 7 days per week in July and August.

Projected café monthly numbers mirror those for the museum shown in Figure xxi.

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Figure xlvii. Café monthly customer projections, Year 1



Café margins are very lean. Typically a café such as this can expect food costs at 35% of turnover (slightly lower if there are more hot drinks and cakes); staff costs at 40% of turnover; and overheads at 15% of turnover, leaving just 10% of turnover for the café profitability.

Further, there will be a minimum staffing number of 2 FTEs each day; the cook, a server, and possibly an additional member of staff for the busiest lunch hours. Small rural cafes really struggle to make a profit between November and February, when they rely entirely on local custom. Some do manage to create a sufficiently strong local demand to remain profitable all year round; however this is rare.

Figure xlviii. Café quarterly income and expenditure, Year 1

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Customers per quarter	2,550	12,600	21,250	5,100	41,500
Spend per customer	£5.51	£5.51	£5.51	£5.51	
Income	14,113	69,462	117,147	28,115	228,782
Gross margin 65%	9,173	45,150	76,146	18,275	148,744
Labour 40%	8,701	27,785	46,859	13,608	96,953
<i>average daily staff at £12.50 per hour</i>	2.0	3.9	4.7	2.4	3.6
Direct costs (utilities etc) 15%	2,117	10,419	17,572	4,217	34,326
Surplus (deficit)	(1,645)	6,946	11,715	449	17,466

The proposed increase in café customers over the first 5 years will result in an increase in the surplus, as shown at Figure xlix.

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Figure xlix. Café income and expenditure, first 5 years

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Income	228,782	242,564	265,029	287,990	311,199
Food costs 35%	80,093	84,897	92,760	100,796	108,920
Labour 40%	94,580	97,026	106,012	115,196	124,479
<i>average daily staff at £12.50 per hour</i>	<i>3.6</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>4.4</i>	<i>4.8</i>	<i>5.2</i>
Direct costs (utilities etc) 15%	34,326	36,385	39,754	43,198	46,680
Total costs	208,999	218,312	238,530	259,196	280,084
Surplus	19,839	24,252	26,498	28,794	31,115

Cafes can make a welcome contribution to the income available to a visitor attraction. They are equally important to draw visitors to the site, and to encourage them to stay longer.

12.11 Retail

12.11.1 Demand and markets

A considered and appropriate retail offer will be provided as part of the overall Ellisland offer. This is because retail:

- is a customer expectation at heritage/leisure sites
- can be a reason to visit for some visitors
- provides visitors with a memory of the museum and enhances the visit
- educates visitors about the museum and its collection, typically through publications, but sometimes through other products too
- helps spread awareness and interest in Ellisland through the dispersal of items carrying the brand and information about the site
- is a profit opportunity

Research from Autumn 2022, undertaken by the Audience Agency identified that over half of visitors purchase for themselves, with purchases for children forming the next highest category. Perhaps not surprisingly, the over 65s are more likely to buy for children they are NOT with (e.g. grandchildren), compared to the under 65s (buying for accompanied children).

Whilst the current economic climate has reduced the propensity of visitors to make ancillary purchases, retail trends suggest that there will be a continued and increased interest in products that are authentic, ethically sourced with low environmental impact – leading to demand for local products. (*Green Trends in Museum Retail. 27/1/2021. American Alliance of Museums*).

As might be expected, there is considerable local competition in the general gift sector, as evidenced by the listing below:

- Dumfries Museum sells toys, books and gifts
- Gracefield Arts Centre sells contemporary crafts

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- Rosefield Mills Gallery sells local crafter and maker products
- Flourish – independent not for profit gift store (The Guild)
- Ottersburn - art
- The Treasure Trove – Scottish souvenir shop
- Heathhall Garden Centre – conventional garden centre gift shop
- Dalscone Farm – large independent toy shop

This raises the importance of the development and sourcing of a distinctive retail offer for Ellisland that is relevant to one-off and regular visitors.

12.11.2 Proposal

The proposed retail offer for Ellisland is for a range of goods, covering price points from ‘pocket-money’ up to approximately £50, with the majority of products at £1 - £25.

Location is key and the shop will be situated at the entrance/exit to the visitor centre, helping ensure that the majority of visitors will pass through the shop. Museum/exhibition ticket sales will also be made here, reducing the need for additional retail staff during the winter quarter. There will also be an opportunity to display goods in other public areas such as the café.

A full plan for shop fitting will be required as part of the detailed architectural drawings, and it is anticipated that Ellisland will take advice as to range and product display. Considerations include:

- Clear definition. Visitors need to know exactly where the shop begins and ends.
- Sufficient space to present the merchandise effectively and with authority. Quality presentation and setting leads to a higher price point
- Flexibility of display space – adjustable shelving, table space, cabinetry. This also enables display to be changed easily and regularly, to reflect seasonality and to create interest – particularly for regular visitors
- Stock storage - drawers below cabinets/shelving are often used for this
- Enough space for visitors to move safely and easily through the shop without congestion

The Future Vision Plan has 30m² allocated to retail, which will provide generous wall and floor display space. Monitoring and maximising the income and margin generated per square metre and spend per visitor are key elements for a successful retail operation.

Product range

- A distinctive and appealing range that is relevant to the different visitor demographics
 - o Drop-in visitors/holiday makers
 - families
 - retirees
 - o Burns pilgrims
 - o Local residents
 - o School groups
- Different and ideally unique. This is not only for Ellisland branded ‘standard’ products such as pencils, keyrings etc but also for products that are themselves inspired by

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Ellisland and/or Burns' creations there. Bespoke products featuring images or items from the collection or the wider site are special and differentiated from the norm.

- Depth rather than breadth – a focus on Scottish literature, poetry and music would be a good fit with Ellisland.
- Green credentials. These can be demonstrated through very localised sourcing (e.g. honey and other produce from Ellisland), the sale of natural and ethically sourced goods, use of well written descriptive tickets/shelf talkers
- Local sourcing from partners/creatives. This presents another opportunity for partnership working in the region, so that the 'new Ellisland' is positive for the local area.

Range and buying decisions will be informed by close monitoring of sales performance, with modest stock purchases initially, as the visitor demographic evolves and buying preferences are revealed. Production and print run minimums have come down very considerably enabling Ellisland to be able to develop some bespoke items to help create a "point of difference.

Service

Quality of service delivery is vital in retail; the quality and value of physical products sold, as well as an overall view of the Ellisland experience will be impacted by the warmth, professionalism and speed of service. A focus on the retail side is important, and it will be the responsibility of the Visitor and Operations Manager to monitor and drive performance in profitability and service.

There is also the opportunity to market and sell products on line via platforms such as <https://museumshops.uk/>. These would provide a wider market both for Ellisland products and wider exposure/awareness of Ellisland itself. These typically take a small commission (e.g.10%), but generate additional revenue opportunities from customers who have been to Ellisland and those who are seeking appealing and unusual items.

Specialism

An option is for a wider book offer, providing a destination for the local community. There is no independent bookshop in Dumfries currently. There is also the ability to generate profits from online sales through the Bookshop.org platform. Bookshop.org supports both independent bookshops and affiliates - those promoting/recommending books, acknowledging that more and more people purchase books online.

As an independent store:

Individual customers nominate the Ellisland book shop to support. 30% of the cover price of all books they purchase online at Bookshop.org is remitted to the Ellisland book shop. The book shop does not have to purchase or hold the stock – orders are sent directly to the customer from Bookshop.org

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As an affiliate:

Bookshop.com pays a 10% commission on every sale, and gives a matching 10% to independent bookshops. As an organisation that recommends books, Ellisland could sign up to be an affiliate, start its own shop, and be rewarded for book recommendations.

The sales projections below do not include the bookshop model; this would generate additional revenues and profits but, in the store model, would require the provision of adequate space.

12.11.3 Income and expenditure

Based on these assumptions of customer number and spend per customer, the following annual income is forecast for the first five years:

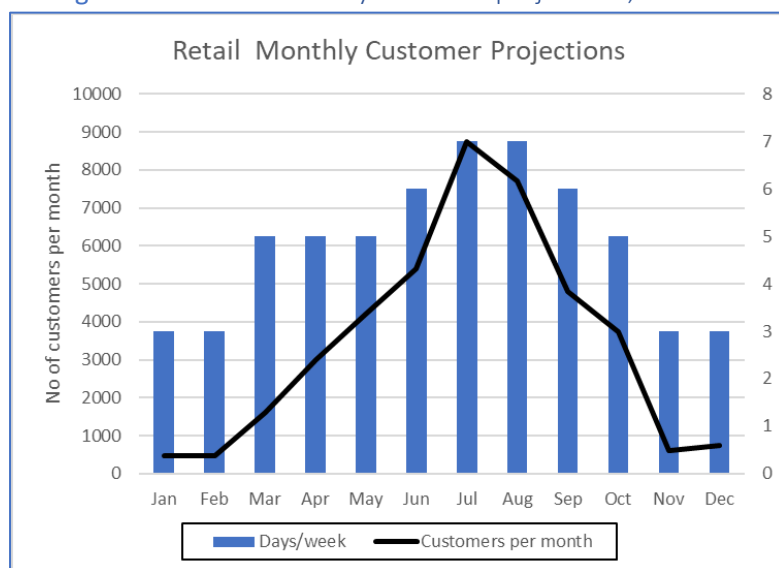
Figure I. Café income, first five years

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Museum Admissions @ 90%	31,500	31,500	33,075	34,740	36,450
Site visitors	10,000	12,500	15,000	17,500	20,000
Total retail	41,500	44,000	48,075	52,240	56,450
Average spend	£2.00	£2.00	£2.00	£2.00	£2.00
Total retail income	£83,000	£88,000	£96,150	£104,480	£112,900

The retail will mirror the museum opening days, restricted to 3 days per week from November to February, rising to 7 days per week in July and August.

Projected retail monthly numbers mirror those for the museum shown in Figure xxi.

Figure li. Retail monthly customer projections, Year 1



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Retail success depends very much on the approach taken to purchasing. Spend per customer and margins are a function of the offer. Gross margins are assumed to be 50%, in line with many bought-in goods. However if RBET choose to showcase local artists, they typically expect no more than a 30% commission paid to the seller. Mass produced smaller goods (pencils, fridge magnets) carry a higher margin.

Spend per site visitor is assumed at £2.00. Not all site visitors purchase from the shop; retail outlets has been carefully configured to maximise the shop footfall, as they will have to go through the shop to pay for tickets and enter the café.

The proposed increase in retail customers over the first 5 years will result in an increase in the surplus, as shown at Figure lii.

Figure lii. Retail income and expenditure, first 5 years

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Total income	£83,000	£88,000	£96,150	£104,480	£112,900
Cost of sales	£41,500	£44,000	£48,075	£52,240	£56,450
Labour	£24,900	£26,400	£28,845	£31,344	£33,870
Staff FTE	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5
Direct overheads	£4,150	£4,400	£4,808	£5,224	£5,645
Total costs	£70,550	£74,800	£81,728	£88,808	£95,965
Surplus	£12,450	£13,200	£14,423	£15,672	£16,935

Retail can add a “sticking point” and an income opportunity to a visitor attraction. Labour costs can be managed by having visibility of the retail and reception area to a single member of staff. However, staff costs mean that margins are low, and many smaller attractions staff their retail with volunteers if possible.

12.12 Staff and overhead costs

12.12.1 Staff costs

The establishment or staff costs will have responsibility for:

- Ensuring the delivery of the vision
- Curating and exhibiting the collection and the historic buildings
- Maximising the visitor experience and delivering profitable income streams, including weddings celebrations, and outsourcing festivals
- Ensuring education and outreach
- Delivering community events
- Managing and maintaining the buildings and grounds
- Delivering financial planning, monitoring, and reporting

Staff for the café, reception, retail, and for housekeeping for the retreats, residencies and accommodation are costed into those activities.

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Once fully established, this will require a significant team of staff. The Trustees have considered the likely staffing requirements for a minimum complement of 13 Full Time Equivalent posts as in Figure liii . Salaries are benchmarked to UK advertised posts.

Staffing is the majority of the RBET costs, and delivers significant local economic benefit by the provision of additional jobs. The total annual costs are forecast at £432,000 including Employers national insurance and statutory pensions.

Figure liii. Staff establishment and costs

	FTE	Annual salary
Director	1	55,000
Curator	1	40,000
Assistant	1	22,500
Visitor and Operations manager	1	35,000
Education and outreach manager	1	25,000
Education and outreach officer	1	funded
Finance	1.5	50,000
Fundraising and funders	1	40,000
Marketing and communication	1	36,000
Administration	1.5	22,500
Groundsperson	1	22,500
Facilities	1	33,750
Total salaries	13.0	382,250
Including 13% on-costs		431,943

12.12.2 Overhead costs

The overhead costs of a site such as Ellisland include the costs of running and maintaining the historic buildings, the new buildings, and the managed landscape.

Costs have been estimated based on the Trustees’ and Consultants’ knowledge of existing similar enterprises, including high building maintenance costs to allow for the upkeep pf the historic buildings. While the redevelopment programme will address backlog maintenance and ensure buildings are fully wind and watertight, keeping these historic buildings maintained to the standard and with the materials required by Historic Environment Scotland will continue to be costly.

Marketing Ellisland, including marketing the community events, the accommodation, the retreats and residences, the venue as a wedding and celebratory event will require both staff time with the Marketing post, and investment.

Fundraising both in general to support RBET’s work, and in particular to support community events, outreach events, festivals, young people’s and other programmes, and community

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engagement e.g. in the landscape will also require staff time and also part of the marketing budget to support their efforts.

Education and outreach project costs have not been included, as it is expected that these will be raised from grant funding by the fundraiser.

Collection care will be an ongoing responsibility for RBET, and budget will be required to maintain exhibits, their controlled environment. Staging of temporary exhibitions will require expenditure.

Cleaning and utility costs for the accommodation provision, retreats, and café have been included in their direct costs. The main buildings also require to be cleaned and heated; these costs will be minimised with the use of highly effective insulation in the new building, and appropriate solutions for the historic buildings.

Total overhead costs are set out in Figure liv and total £135,000 annually.

Figure liv. Overhead costs

	Annual costs
PR, Advertising, Branding & Print	15,000
Web & Social Media	5,000
Routine maintenance	12,500
Gardening & Grounds	5,000
Cleaning	20,000
Power Oil & Water	20,000
Insurances	15,000
Curation & Collection Care	10,000
Office costs	10,000
IT costs	5,000
Financial & HR Support	5,000
Professional Fees - Legal & Audit	10,000
Banking Charges	2,500
	135,000

12.12.3 Revenue grant, fundraising and donations income

To support the first two years of the developing enterprises at Ellisland, RBET require to raise £150,000 per year by core grants, fundraising and donations income. This drops to £100,000 for years three and four, and at least £50,000 for year 5.

Grant funding may be obtained for the first two years of new posts from organisations such as SOSE for start-up funding, and potentially from Historic Environment Scotland for some posts such as the Education and Outreach Officers.

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RBET wish to become financially independent of grant income, and to develop both a substantial endowment fund which will generate investment income, and an on-going giving programme. These will be sourced from international Burns enthusiasts, as described in Section 11.

12.13 Total income and expenditure

Total income and expenditure for the first five years based on the assumptions in Section 10 is shown in detail at Appendix 7 and summarised in Figure Ivi. Quarterly income and expenditure for the first two years is shown in detail at Appendix 8.

This income and expenditure is based on an overall programme of activities at Ellisland, which seeks to balance use of the site in the shoulder and less busy seasons with the peak season.

Figure Ivi. Seasonal programme of activities at Ellisland

	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn
Retreats	3	6	6	5
Small events	1	1	1	1
Outreach – schools / young people / workshops	6	6	Summer programme	6
Festivals	Burns	Food	Wellbeing	Music
Weddings	1	3	0	2
Celebrations	3	3	3	3
Accommodation	Residence/ Holiday/ wedding	Residence/ Holiday/ wedding	Holiday/ Residence / wedding	Residence/ Holiday/ wedding

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Figure Ivi. Income and Expenditure, first five years

Year ending Dec	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Revenue					
Core income and costs	150,000	150,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Retreats	90,000	117,000	186,667	221,667	281,750
Residencies & accommodation	173,687	170,002	166,318	162,634	160,945
Events and festivals	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Weddings, private dining, hire	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Café	228,662	242,437	264,890	287,839	311,036
Retail	82,999	87,999	96,149	104,479	112,899
Museum entries	322,000	322,000	338,100	355,120	372,600
Total Revenue	1,087,348	1,229,438	1,192,123	1,271,738	1,379,229
Total Cost of Goods Sold	(208,102)	(233,053)	(262,615)	(292,441)	(316,569)
Gross Margin	879,246	896,386	929,508	979,297	1,062,660
Salaries & Wages	(602,145)	(603,706)	(615,132)	(626,811)	(638,615)
Operating Expenditure	(273,883)	(279,506)	(294,319)	(302,974)	(317,001)
Total Operating Expenses	(875,978)	(883,212)	(909,451)	(929,785)	(955,616)
Net Profit	3,267	13,173	20,058	49,512	107,044

With the fundraising efforts Ellisland will reach breakeven in its first year, and by Year 5 when Ellisland’s reputation, activities and staff capability have been established, it breaks even without fundraising.

By Year 4, the Trustees will be able to consider additional outreach and development work, investing the surplus from operations into new areas but always retaining sufficient unrestricted cash reserves to ensure financial resilience.

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13 Governance

13.1 Legal form

RBET was formed as a SCIO, creating both a charity and an incorporated organisation. As a charity it can take advantage of the various tax exemptions and reliefs, both for VAT and corporation tax purposes. However it is also bounded by charity law on trading. Charities may trade for their primary purpose – so, for RBET, this would include selling museum tickets; and they may also trade for purposes ancillary to that trade. This includes rental or hire of land and buildings. Some trades are not either of these, and are secondary trading – this includes cafes, retail, and accommodation lets. Retreats for the purposes of promoting education may be regarded as primary trading; RBET should seek appropriate legal advice on this. Further information is at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charities-and-trading>.

Charities may carry out non-primary purpose trading up to the small exemption limits, set at 25% of charity income, up to £80,000 or 25% of £320,000 income. There are two benefits of trading within the charity. One is that the profits from trading are immediately available to the charity, rather than having to be gift-aid from the trading company. The other is that it may improve the VAT recovery position of the charity. It must be noted that primary purpose trading is not automatically sheltered from VAT. The trading must be assessed as business or non-business, and whether it meets the criteria for a charitable exemption from VAT.

Pending legal advice and expert advice on the most effective VAT structures, it is assumed that the split between charitable and non-charitable trading would be as below.

Figure lvii. Charitable and non-charitable trading

	Charitable	Non-primary purpose	Assumed VAT status
Fundraising	150,000		Outside the scope
Retreats	90,000		VATable
Residences and accommodation		173,687	VATable
Events and festivals	10,000		Exempt if meets criterial for “fundraisers”
Weddings and celebrations hire	9,000		Exempt if there is no option to tax on the land and buildings
Private dining		21,000	VATable
Café		228,662	VATable
Retail		82,999	VATable
Museum entries	322,000		Exempt if meets the criteria
Total `	583,000	506,349	

As the non-primary purpose trading is significantly above the permitted level, RBET will have to form at least one wholly-owned trading subsidiary to carry out this trading. Legal advice should be sought to ensure that this is set up correctly, and that it has the ability to gift aid its profits up to the parent charity at the end of each financial year.

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Another point is to consider the financial year end. While March will tie with many funders, this means that profits in the subsidiary company in the previous summer cannot be gifted up until the accounts are complete, at best, the following summer. This will create a cash deficit in the charitable company. RBET should seek financial advice on whether a September year end date would enable better cash flow in the company.

The final point is that the trading company will require working capital. If it is funded by the charity from its fundraising income, the charity Trustees are required to follow charity law in terms of that loan: they must be confident that it will be repayable, and set a repayment schedule. The risk is that a loan made and not repayable will be treated as taxable on the charity. Again, Trustees should seek appropriate legal advice.

13.2 Resilience and capacity building

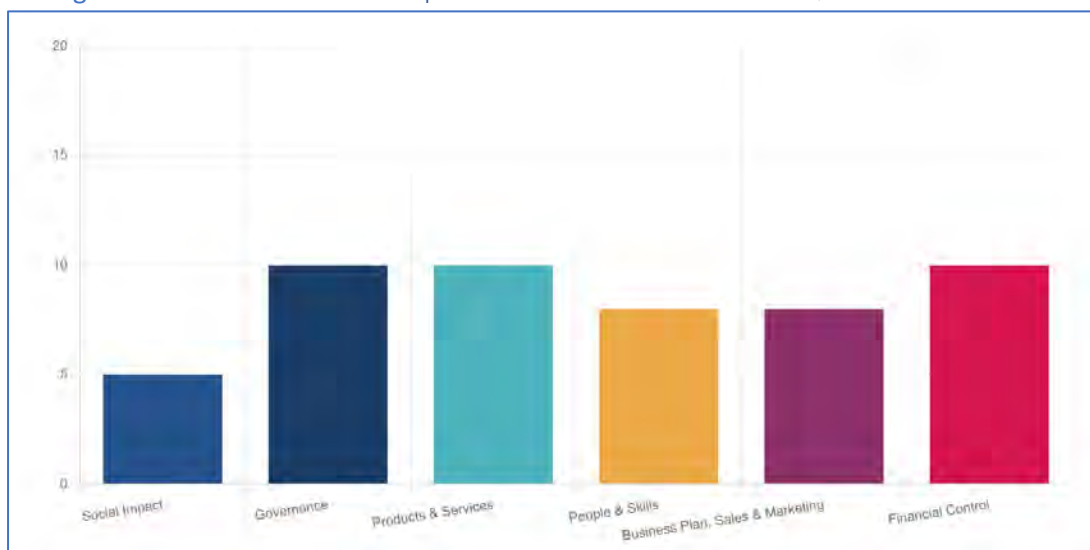
Grant funders are increasingly focused on the skills and capacity of the Trustees and senior management to govern and manage large, complex, restoration and building projects. The Investment Readiness Tool provided online by Social Investment Scotland is helpful in identifying areas of strength and weakness in a Board.

Results from this for RBET suggest that the organisation will need to build capacity and skills as it begins the fundraising phase of the project. RBET set up and took over Ellisland from the previous Trust during 2020, and is therefore a relatively new body which has accomplished a great deal in the two years since then. The step into large capital projects is a challenge even for well-established charities, and the output from the SIS tool suggests that capacity building will be a priority for the organisation, in particular:

- Understanding, measuring, and demonstrating its social impact
- Holding regular Board meetings which focus on strategy delivery, key risks and issues relating to the organisation and to the project
- Assessing current Board skills in accountancy, legals, HR, marketing and business development, fundraising and project management, and addressing gaps by either building capacity in existing Trustees or recruiting additional members
- Continuing to test proposed activities in the existing site where possible, to demonstrate feasibility to themselves and to funders
- Actively seeking development funding to strengthen the executive staff capacity, to reduce over-reliance on one key individual
- Becoming more actively involved in partnerships or networks that really enhance RBET's knowledge, skills or opportunities, including shared delivery
- Designing and commencing a fundraising and donations programme as soon as practicable, to generate "free" cash reserves.

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Figure Iviii. RBET: Assessed output from Investment Readiness Questionnaire



13.3 Board skills and capacity

Section 13.2 considers the concept of “investment readiness” of RBET. RBET’s Trustees have considerable skills and experience, and all share a passion for Robert Burns and his legacy.

Dr David Hopes, Interim Chair

Head of Leeds Museums & Galleries, David was previously Head of Collections & Interiors for the National Trust for Scotland and, before that, he was formerly Director of the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway as well as a research fellow at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. David has a PhD from the University of Birmingham focused on Museums and Digital, and a Masters degree in Museum Studies from the University of Leicester.

Professor Gerard Carruthers

One of the world’s leading Burns scholars, Gerry holds the Francis Hutcheson Chair of Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow and is Co-Director of the Centre for Robert Burns Studies there. He was formerly Convener of the Burns Scotland Partnership (the National Burns Collection), and is General Editor of the Oxford University Press Edition of the Works of Robert Burns. He has published 17 books and over 150 academic articles and essays.

Ian Houston

Ian is President of the Scottish Business Network U.S . He specialises in promoting Scottish business, trade, industry, culture and universities in the U.S. He is also the Director of Clydebuilt International which supports charitable organisations, businesses, and universities to grow their business in North America. He has collaborated with former US Secretaries of State, senators, ambassadors, CEOs and academics focused on leadership, education and the value of cooperation. He writes for the Herald Scotland and Voice Newspapers in Cornwall. He also published a book of poetry and is a GlobalScot.

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Professor Ian Brown

Honorary Senior Research Fellow in Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow and Emeritus Drama Professor at Kingston University, London, Ian is General Editor of The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature and Series Co-editor of The International Companions to Scottish Literature. A former convener of the Saltire Society, he is a highly regarded playwright and poet. He is Past President of The Association for Scottish Literary Studies and Founder-Chair of the Scottish Society of Playwrights. Responsible for theatre revenue funding/fundraising for eight years as Arts Council of Great Britain Drama Director. Member of Queen Margaret University senior management group during the period of the major Gateway Theatre capital development.

Emily Smith

Emily Smith is an award winning Scottish musician with eight studio albums and many appearances on national and international TV. A former BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year, her voice has delighted audiences at Edinburgh's Fringe Festival, Cambridge Folk Festival, Tonder Festival, Edmonton Folk Festival, the National Folk Festival in Australia to name a few. Emily works with Fèis Rois on a Youth Music Initiative funded project to deliver workshop tuition and online teaching resources to schools across Dumfries and Galloway.

Asif Khan

Asif is the director of the Scottish Poetry Library, and has worked across arts and heritage, including at the Museums Libraries & Archives Council for the UK's Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Cultural programme in 2007. He was an associate of the Arts Council England's Cultural Leadership Programme, for which he wrote the visual art strategy for Barbados. Asif has also worked with the Jamaican Government in support of their poet laureate initiative. He sits on the Advisory Committee for British Council (Scotland) and is a Board member of Perth & Kinross Culture Trust. He also sits on the national Policy Committee for CILIP, the UK's library and information association, and Edinburgh's Slavery and Colonialism Legacy Review Group.

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14 Strategic Risks and Mitigations

The following key risks and mitigations are identified in delivering this project. RBET have existing actions in place where possible and where funding allows; additional actions are identified in this assessment.

Figure lix. Strategic risks and mitigations

Risk	Impact	Probability	Existing Actions	Additional Action Required	Lead Responsibility
Inability to raise funds for capital renovation.	High	Medium	Continued development of current activities to demonstrate feasibility and track record; enables 'meantime' use, generating income and building capacity; Detailed Future Vision Plan and business plan to demonstrate architectural and financial feasibility Outline funding strategy	Fundraising strategy Expression of Interest to NLHF. Discussions with DGC on RCGF. Ongoing discussions with HES.	Board, Business Development Manager
Grant funding refused / stakeholder support withdrawn due to displacement issues	High	Low to Medium	Continue to build partnerships and networks, demonstrating working with others to minimise overlaps and maximise cooperation		Business Development Manager
Planning permission refused or delayed or requires substantial alterations	High	Medium	Development of Future Vision Plan in line with current planning policy and regulations	Submit for pre-planning enquiry. Identify by PPE, additional information (surveys etc) and seek funding (e.g. AHF) to	Board, Business Development Manager

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Risk	Impact	Probability	Existing Actions	Additional Action Required	Lead Responsibility
				<p>complete these during NLHF stage 1.</p> <p>Ongoing discussion with HES.</p> <p>Continue to build links and discuss proposals with immediate neighbours to identify and address concerns.</p>	
Project costs increase very substantially before and during build and / or completion is delayed	Medium	High	Contingency (12.7%) for inflation	<p>Fundraising strategy to continue through build period to raise free funds to cover over-budget expenses and delays in trading income</p> <p>Review Future Vision Plan to determine essential / nice to have priorities against vision and future viability, early in process to enable some aspects of project to be delayed or withdrawn</p>	Board
Unable to attract / retain key consultants and staff	Medium	Medium	£370k budgeted as part of redevelopment and build project	Fundraise and persuade grant funders of importance of appropriately qualified key posts. Recruit sufficiently in advance that re-recruitment is possible.	Board, Business Development Manager
Insufficient / poor advice to Board leading to loss of control over project – unforeseen	Medium	Medium	Board skills assessment, training and recruitment to build capability, including visits to other community	Over-invest in project manager post – recruit appropriate skills and experience in contracting, delivering complex and historic building projects,	Board

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Risk	Impact	Probability	Existing Actions	Additional Action Required	Lead Responsibility
costs, delays, quality issues			and charity led projects	dispute resolution with contractors	
Procurement issues lead to costs being ineligible for funding	High	Medium	-	Ensure adequate funds for procurement advice and support, records retention and administration	Board, Business Development Manager
VAT complexities lead to substantial additional costs	High	High		Ensure adequate funds for VAT advice and support, at the early stages of the project	Board, Business Development Manager
Inadvertent breach of charity and tax laws and regulations regarding charity trading	Medium	Low to medium		Ensure adequate funds for legal advice and support, at the early stages of the project to determine most appropriate legal structures. Board training.	Board, Business Development Manager.
Significant changes in markets / competition between this Plan and opening	Medium	Medium	Continued development of current activities to demonstrate feasibility and track record; enables 'meantime' use, generating income and building capacity; .	Annual update and review of Business Plan during fundraising / development phase to ensure uses and therefore plans remain appropriate	Board, Business Development Manager.

Appendix 1. Stakeholder Alignment

Figure 1x. Stakeholder Alignment

Stakeholder	Project Aims Stakeholder Aims	A first class visitor attraction	A well maintained and preserved heritage asset of exceptional significance	A vibrant hub of learning, developing and diversifying audiences	Inspiring place for artists to develop their creative practice	Providing a welcoming space and sanctuary for wellbeing
Historic Environment Scotland	A wider range of people will be involved in heritage	X		X	X	X
	Improve the resilience of organisations working in heritage (NLHF)	X		X	X	
	People will have learnt about heritage, leading to change in ideas and actions (NLHF)	X	X	X	X	
	The historic environment makes a real difference to people’s lives	X		X	X	X
	The historic environment is looked after, protected and managed for the generations to come (NLHF)		X			X
	The historic environment makes a broader contribution to the economy of Scotland and its people (NLHF)	X		X	X	X
	The historic environment inspires a creative and vibrant Scotland			X	X	
Creative Scotland	Promote inclusion and involve a wider range of people	X		X	X	X
	Excellence and experimentation in creative learning across the arts, screen and creative industries is understood, valued and developed.			X	X	
	Everyone in Scotland has the opportunity to experience high quality arts and creative learning	X		X	X	
	Places and quality of life are transformed through the reach and application of creative learning	X		X	X	
	There is a workforce skilled in the leadership and delivery of creative learning			X	X	
National Lottery Heritage Fund	A wider range of people will be involved in heritage (every project must achieve this mandatory outcome)	X		X	X	X
	People will have greater wellbeing					X
	People will have developed skills			X	X	
	The local area will be a better place to live, work or visit	X	X	X	X	X

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	Heritage will be identified and better explained	X	X	X	X	
ScotGov / SOSE	Protect and enhance assets as essential to our economy, culture, way of life and the wellbeing of future generations	X	X	X	X	X
	Thriving and innovative businesses with quality jobs and fair work for everyone	X		X	X	
	We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe	X		X	X	X

Appendix 2. Arts, Youth and Culture Consultees

NAME	ORGANISATION	GENRE
Caitlin MacLeod	Robert Burns Ellisland Farm and Museum	Arts and Culture, Youth
Cathy Agnew	Crawick Multiverse	Arts and Culture
Colin McKenzie	Troqueer Primary, Head Teacher	Youth
Craig McEwan and Heather	The Usual Place	Youth
David MacDonald	DG Unlimited	Arts and Culture
David Powell	Crag Community Arts SCIO, Willow sculptures for Burns venues	Arts and Culture
Derek Hextall	Dumfries and Galloway Council, Ward Officer	Arts and Culture, Youth
Emily Smith	Trad singer and Ellisland board member	Arts and Culture
Joshua Ellicott	Dumfries and Galloway Youth Strings Orchestra	Arts and Culture, Youth
Karen Little	Shawhead Primary, Head Teacher	Youth
Karen Ward Boyd	Hollywood Trust	Funding
Lynn McEwan	volunteer, head retired teacher with Dumfries Primary	Youth
Matt Baker	Stove Network	Arts and Culture
Rab Wilson	Ex convenor of Scots Language Centre	Arts and Culture
Robyn Stapleton	Former young trad musician of the year	Arts and Culture
Ronnie Gurr	CEO, Scottish Music Industry Association (SMIA)	Arts and Culture
Ruth Morley	Scottish International Flute Summer School, Red Note Ensemble	Arts and Culture
Stuart Paterson	Scots Language Practitioner	Arts and Culture

Robert Burns Ellisland Trust

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Appendix 3. Community Engagement – detailed feedback

A number of the Delfinity team participated:

- Hazel Allen and Fiona Smith from Delfinity
- Oliver Chapman and Angus Henderson from OCA
- Mike Harrison from Harrison Stevens
-

as well as 3 Ellisland Trustees:

- Professor Gerald Carruthers
- Professor Ian Brown
- Asif Khan

and Joan McAlpine from the Trust.

Caitlin MacLeod and Sarah White from the Trust provided refreshments and admin support throughout the day.



Attendees included:

Sharon Ogilvie, SOSE

James Proctor, SOSE

Mr and Mrs Bertie and Linday Austin, grasslet farmers

Tony Fitzpatrick, Stove Network

Matt Baker, the Stove Network

Colin Smyth MSP

Tracey Little, Dumfries Provost

Mizzy Marshall, Senior Planner Built Heritage Policy, Dumfries and Galloway Council

Oliver Mundell MSP (in advance)

Alice and David Howdell, Kirkmahoe Community Council

Peter Landale, owner, Dalswinton Estate

Karen Ward Boyd, chief executive, The Holywood Trust

Ian Tunaley, Visit Scotland

Lee Medd and Jade Fawcett, Annandale Distiller and The Globe Inn

David Miller, Wilson Ogilvie, The Burns Howff Club

Sue Grieve, Alan Lammin, Stan Little, Lynn McEwan Ellisland volunteers

Drop in consultation detailed feedback

1. Absolutely fantastic, impressive, forward thinking ambitious, exciting. Most of all, VITAL this 'museum' MUST be preserved.

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Even locals are totally unaware about the significance of Ellisland.

Membership should be increased and fee only allow a % discount NOT as many visits plus visitor as want

Re the designated walk ways - who will be responsible? Last year the path from Friars Carse to Ellisland was completely impassable. The fishermen ended up clearing it. HERMITAGE is invisible

2. Sooo good to see Ellisland getting the attention and care it deserves !!
I love the idea of the whole farm and landscape as visitor experience - landscape ideas are great. Visitor centre also good vision. I understand it as a way of framing the farm for visitors. I would just like the design team to be careful that this new 'doorway' to Ellisland does not become a 'Disney' portal which turns the farm into fantasy rather than reality, NB saying this is someone who has been coming here for years and knows how special it is - others may need that shown to them ?! All power to your elbows - fantastic!
3. Would like to see some priority given to making the paths along the Nith less muddy. The walks are beautiful!
4. Wedding use!
Meditations retreats
Courtyards - manage surface, not accessible
Ironworking sessions
Animals - horses, sheep, pigs etc brought in
Beehive and honey. Orchard buy and sell
Better signage. Link to tourism/ mini bus from White Sands.
5. There is a lovely feel to the kitchen. Can imagine the family there. Keep the house as much as you can - as original as you can!
6. Excellent plans
Make sure that is a picnic area for school groups.
Cobbles an issue but find a way to incorporate access ie. smooth slightly higher paths above cobbles?
Layout plantings beds in orchard with 'original' species crops as in Buittle Castle.
7. Very exciting proposals
- sensitivity needed on 'what you see when you drive up the lane'
- also the design/materials of the new build need careful consideration.
- the 'magic' must be preserved at the original site and Burns' house.
Well done!
8. These plans will make Ellisland a destination and encourage visitors from far afield and bring well needed recognition to Dumfries
9. Having the original cottage put back to something akin to what it was like in the 1789s-90s is a great idea.
10. More farm animals in the grounds!
What about Robbie and Jean's children? What was it like for them (schooling, farm, work, play, et cetera) Activities around this could encourage families and children.

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11. Good that there will be a clear separation between the new 'byre' and the original (or almost original) farm of Burns - so still possible to have an experience of how it was. Like that it will be multipurpose not just a tourist destination with caff. Good ideas to strip out the house and recreate lived environment. Exciting!
12. Have focus on social history of the area and what was life actually like for the family Eg cooking, eating, sleeping schooling washing even the toilet! (ie dry toilet in the orchard?)
13. What activities are there for families and partners who are not interested in poetry or music? Is a play park enough?
A working farm museum could be of interest.
There is a core path on the opposite bank - if the bridge is installed this could be a stop off for walking groups.
14. I think this is an exciting project. In addition, believe a farming museum based in the old barns would extend the attraction to wider families.
As a member of a writing group that has a chance to run a weekend event with excellent facilities and accommodation would be fab
15. How does Burns' interest/love of animals relate to conservation (modern day) and farming practices of the time?
16. Needs to be a key part of Burns itinerary around Dumfries and Galloway not standalone. Dumfries and Galloway needs to wrest back primacy from Ayrshire which gets most of the tourists. If Burns' House in Dumfries could be similarly transformed into recreating how it was in Burns' day. Walk /cycle around routes he took as an excise man up to Upper Nithsdale, Thornhill, Solway et cetera
17. Thank you - very interesting
Access to fields with large tractors and trailers on occasions to be maintained, please
18. Please ensure
 - homes for swallows
 - sand martin bank if possible
 - bats !
 - lamprey in wet woodland (at entrance)
 - [unable to read] path to Isle
 - keep byre warm and dry
 - solar or green roofs – for new builds
 - electric car charging points – for new builds
 - good insulation - for new builds
19. I like it! You seem to have got the dynamic right between conservation, preservation sustainability and development

Ellisland Digital Engagement 28 February – 12 March 2023

Summary

A digital engagement survey found overwhelming support for Ellisland's FutureVision proposals. Out of 230 respondents, predominantly located in south west Scotland, 89% stated they supported the proposals, with 87% agreeing that the proposals would enhance Ellisland's importance as a Burns heritage site.

The opposing point of view, that respondents did not support the proposals, was selected by only 3.5% of respondents, while 4.4% believed the proposals would damage Ellisland's heritage.

However, while community support for the proposals is very high, support is partly conditional on development at Ellisland being done sensitively and with respect to the authenticity of the site.

The dominant theme within the comments was a strong ask from respondents that care be taken to ensure that the special atmosphere and nature of Ellisland is protected and conserved in future development plans.

Four secondary themes emerged from analysis of the comments.

1. Respondents believed the proposals outlined would have a positive impact on the local economy, particularly with respect to the local tourism economy.
2. Respondents wanted the development of active travel to be prioritised within future plans, in particular the creation of safe active travel routes between Dumfries and Ellisland.
3. There was a clear wish for inclusive, affordable access to be prioritised, particularly with respect to the local community.
4. Respondents wanted Ellisland to be a living space with a contemporary purpose; a place that can inspire and nurture creativity.

Methodology & Response

A digital engagement exercise was undertaken to complement the on-site event held at Ellisland on 27th February 2023. The digital engagement took the form of an online survey, which ran from 28th February to 12th March, which was promoted via social media, e-newsletter to Ellisland contacts, and local media. The promotion of the survey on social media focused on Dumfries & Galloway, Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire as 'local' regions to Ellisland, with strong cultural connections to Burns. The survey was anonymous, but respondents had the option to include their name for quote attribution.

Respondents were encouraged to watch a [short video](#) summarising the FutureVision plans for Ellisland. This merged FutureVision visuals into video footage of the current site to aid visualisation

of the proposals. Respondents were invited to indicate whether or not they supported key elements of the plans, and to explain why they responded as they did. The survey also asked whether they agreed with a selection of statements, presented in a randomised order, and it invited respondents to leave a comment, with the option of having that comment attributed to them.

The survey asked questions to enable analysis through segmentation, including membership of Ellisland or other Burns organisation, home postcode and an indication of familiarity with the site, expressed through a statement of most recent visit. 230 responses were received over a 12 day period.

No questions were compulsory, which meant respondents could answer all or some of the questions, as they preferred. Most answered all questions, and the answers were generally of a high quality, with a large proportion of respondents (approx. 45% per question) also providing thoughtful comments, which added insight and nuance to the quantitative data.

Overall the respondents were knowledgeable about Ellisland and Burns heritage. 42% of respondents had visited Ellisland within the last two years, with a further 22% having visited in the last 10 years. 25% of respondents had not visited Ellisland before, but noted an intention to do so. 29% of respondents were members of the Robert Burns Ellisland Trust, and just under 20% were a member of another Burns club or organisation.

The pattern of responses was consistent regardless of sample segmentation. This suggests that the responses and opinions on the proposals were not swayed by geography, by membership of the Trust, or by familiarity with the site as it currently is. This report therefore presents the findings of the full sample, with analysis of subsections of the sample considered not necessary.

Profile of Respondents

Q1 How recently have you visited Ellisland?

Within the last two years	42.36%
Within the last ten years	22.27%
More than ten years ago	9.61%
I haven't visited yet, but I plan to	24.89%
I haven't visited, and I don't plan to	0.87%

Q9 & Q10 Are you a member of the Robert Burns Ellisland Trust? Other Burns organisation?

Ellisland: Yes	29.39%	Other Burns org: Yes	19.56%
Ellisland: No	70.61%	Other Burns org: No	80.44%

People in south west Scotland were the primary target of this digital engagement. Postcode data indicated respondents were based in Dumfries & Galloway (59%), Ayrshire (15%) and Lanarkshire & Glasgow (9%).

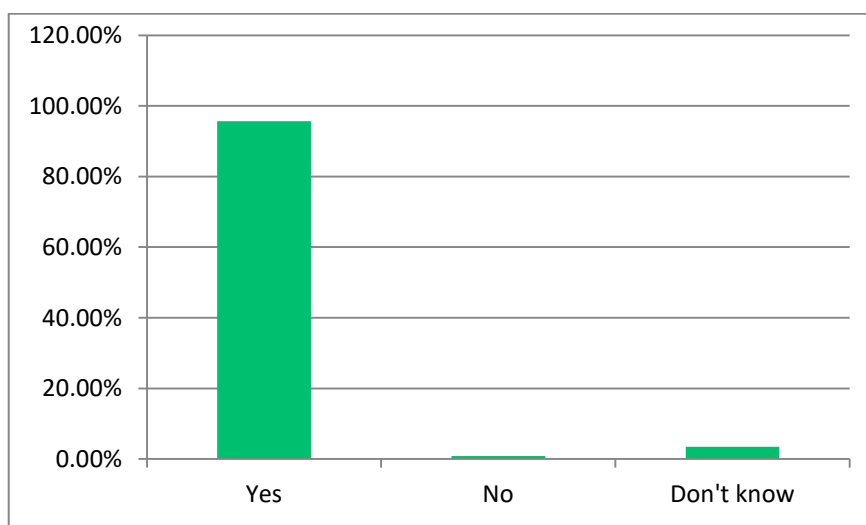
Findings

Five questions (Q2-Q6) invited respondents to reflect upon key elements of Ellisland’s FutureVision proposal, and to indicate whether they agreed with the proposal, or not. Each question then provided an opportunity for the respondent to explain why they answered as they did.

In total, 549 individual comments were received across these five questions. To analyse this feedback, comments were reviewed to identify recurring themes for each question. These themes are noted beneath the quantitative data for the relevant question, along with a selection of quotes considered representative. Any spelling errors within the comments have been corrected for ease of readability, but are otherwise presented as given.

It is worth noting that comments that oppose or express concerns about the proposals have been given extra prominence within this report in order to ensure visibility of all views to the Trust. Across all comments, less than 10% of comments included negativity, opposition or concern.

Q2 The Robert Burns Ellisland Trust think the best way to protect Ellisland is by using it. This means that conservation and education work will be subsidised by other activities, like tourism and events. Do you agree with this 'Conservation through Use' approach?



Yes	95.65%
No	0.87%
Don't know	3.48%

Respondents are overwhelmingly supportive of the ‘conservation through use’ approach proposed. 114 comments were received. Analysis of the comments suggests four emerging themes, a selection of representative comments are noted below.

Purpose & Inspiration

- *“Ellisland should be a living and active space as well as a conserved museum.”*
- *“Ellisland fired and inspired Robert Burns' imagination. Any and all conservation must continue that way, to inspire those who visit to understand its history, and ensure it has a future.”*
- *“No point in conserving just to be there - it must be used.”*

Entrepreneurship & Viability

- *“Tourism and events should definitely be a source of income to help with conservation and education; and tourism and events will themselves be a means of education.”*
- *“For any building to survive it needs a sustainable income and a purpose, your proposal provides both of these things.”*
- *“Underfunded conservation is usually poor conservation. I don't feel proper funding will be attainable without being subsidised by other activities.”*

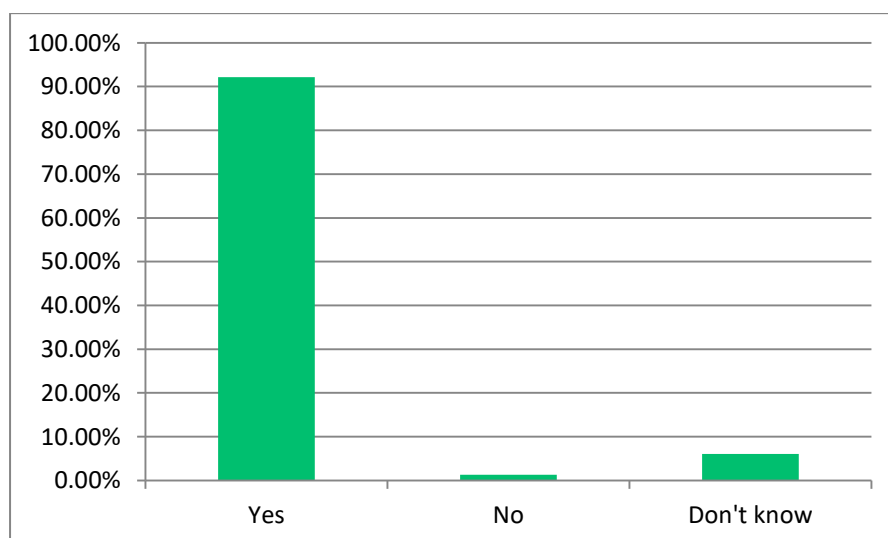
Inclusion & Education

- *“Agree, however cost of other activities, tourism and events should not be a barrier to access. Concessional prices within cost of activities please.”*
- *“We need to have as many people as possible visit Ellisland and see for themselves what an untouched and unspoilt heritage site it is.”*
- *“Preserving Ellisland is vital but so is developing its education and cultural potential.”*

Concerns & Sensitivity

- *“On the one hand I appreciate that something must be done to raise funds to protect the buildings, but when I visited I liked that that it wasn't modernised with a visitor centre etc. I think even if done sympathetically, it will change the surrounding environment which is very peaceful and undisturbed.”*
- *“As long as the commercial development doesn't destroy what visitors are actually seeking to experience.”*
- *“Whilst I am in agreement with the case for "conservation through use". I have concerns that the rurality and character of the site should not be spoilt by over- ambitious development. A balance may need to be struck.”*

Q3 The Trust plans to turn back the clock in Robert and Jean's cottage to create an immersive experience with a 'homely' feel. This means that people will be able to experience the cottage as it was in Burns' day. Do you agree with plans to create an immersive experience in the cottage?



Yes	92.17%
No	1.30%
Don't know	6.09%

Respondents are overwhelmingly supportive of creating an immersive experience in the historic cottage. 107 comments were received. Analysis of the comments suggests that some of that support is qualified, however the majority of comments are fully supportive and many refer to other heritage attractions that have successfully adopted a similar approach.

Clear Support

- *“Being able to 'step into history' is a tremendously effective way of engaging visitors with Burns' life.”*
- *“It will be lovely to experience it with the feeling that they have just stepped outside.”*
- *“Creating this opportunity to "live" the experience will absolutely bring Burns' existence to a new audience.”*

Qualified Support

- *“This is a very difficult thing to achieve without it being a bit contrived.”*
- *“Definitely - as long as it's authentic, but I'm sure the Trust would not allow any mere romanticised reconstruction.”*
- *“Partly agree. Burns cottage in Alloway has been sympathetically restored inside to as if Burns was still there, without going over the top.”*

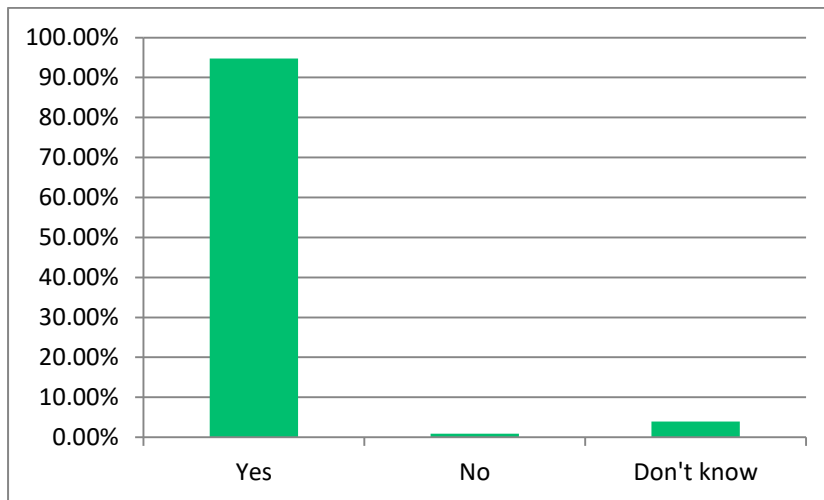
Reference to other locations

- *“Irvine and Alloway have successful immersive experiences.”*
- *“I think this is the best way to create an authentic experience for the visitor and it is proving to be very successful in other museums, e.g. Dove Cottage at Grasmere.”*
- *“A good idea, a perfect example being Beamish Museum in County Durham.”*

Concern

- *“I'm not keen on immersive, bit twee unless it's brilliantly done.”*
- *“Hesitant it may be kitschy.”*
- *“Sounds like turning an important piece of heritage into a 'Disney' attraction type novelty.”*

Q4 The Trust plans to use the barn as a hub for events and workshops, to celebrate the spirit of Burns, music, writing and culture. Do you agree with the proposal to use the barn for cultural events?



Yes	94.78%
No	0.87%
Don't know	3.91%

106 comments were received. Again, there is overwhelming support for the use of the barn as an event space, with respondents who are familiar with the site noting that it is already being used successfully for some events. Several respondents acknowledge the need to address issues relating to the condition of this building. There are a small number of comments opposed, but the majority of respondents are unreservedly supportive of this proposal, with many citing the proposal as enabling improved community access. Of note were comments from creative practitioners and event organisers who expressed particular interest.

Clear Support

- *“Burns himself was a firm supporter of the preservation of oral history through cultural mediums so the proposal would be more than fitting.”*
- *“The barn has been in use for many years as a music venue and should continue as such.”*
- *“The region needs more community/cultural events and so am happy with this suggestion, will help build stronger communities.”*

Building Condition / Facility Improvement

- *“The barn has regularly been used for events and creates its own atmosphere - work is needed to combat condensation issues.”*
- *“It is not huge, and in the winter it is cold and damp. If the cold and damp can be sorted it will be fine for small events.”*
- *“I think the farm needs some TLC and modernisation. The atmosphere which inspired is the draw for me, the peace, the tranquillity to allow your imagination to flow.”*

Concern

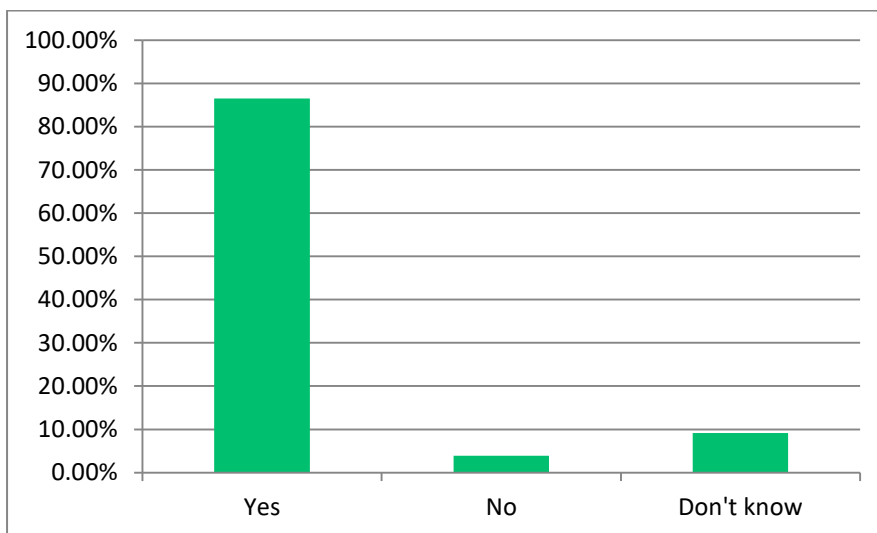
- *“No, sorry I see this as only a moneymaking idea, I thought the plan was to restore the whole farm , including buildings ,to as it was in Burns' time.”*

- *“Do we mean educational events or bigger events like weddings? Larger public events may be detrimental to the delicate buildings and surroundings.”*

Creative Practitioners / Event Organisers

- *“As a local musician , I would welcome bringing young and old that I teach traditional music to such an inspiring venue.”*
- *“It was always used for cultural events. I have been involved in several St Andrew's Night dinners (Saltire Society) held there and it would be great to open it up to other people to use.”*
- *“Music, writing and culture are inherent in Burns' prolific writings and songs, the magic he created must be heard again, and new magic created.”*

Q5 To protect Ellisland's collection - including Burns' manuscripts and personal possessions - a new visitor centre is proposed. This would be located on the site of the current car park, separate from the historical buildings. The visitor centre would also host exhibition and education space, a cafe and visitor facilities. Do you agree with this approach to protect the collection and improve visitor facilities at Ellisland?



Yes	86.52%
No	3.91%
Don't know	9.13%

Of all the questions in the survey, this question attracted the largest number of comments – 117 - and the most opposition or concern – 12 comments. Many respondents highlighted the need for improved visitor facilities at Ellisland, and acknowledged that this is an approach that has worked well at other heritage sites. Support being conditional on a sympathetic approach was an obvious theme, in particular minimising visual impact / encroachment on the historic site.

Clear Support

- *“I think this is an excellent suggestion and more interpretation and context could be included in the visitor centre which would not be appropriate in the actual Ellisland Farm. It will provide an opportunity to excite visitors about what they are going to see, i.e. the actual farm where Robert Burns and Jean Armour really started their married life. This is what happens in the best managed visitor experiences such as the Bayeux Tapestry or Culloden*

where the visitor centre gives the opportunity to give context, background, information etc and prepare the visitor for the actual experience of visiting the authentic Ellisland Farm."

- *"These facilities are much needed and would not sit happily in the historical buildings."*
- *"Get facilities ASAP - the only available loo when we went was horrible. NB Facilities should include disabled access - person plus carer plus wheelchair."*

Conditional Support

- *"I do agree but I do not agree with a structure that is not in keeping with the environment and would undermine any attempts at an immersive experience."*
- *"On the one hand it is progress and modernisation....on the other, it is not Ellisland in its natural state which is a big part of what makes it special."*
- *"Would like it to be sited a distance away from the steading otherwise it will change the look of the farm completely and won't look like it was in Burns' day which is the attraction in my humble opinion."*

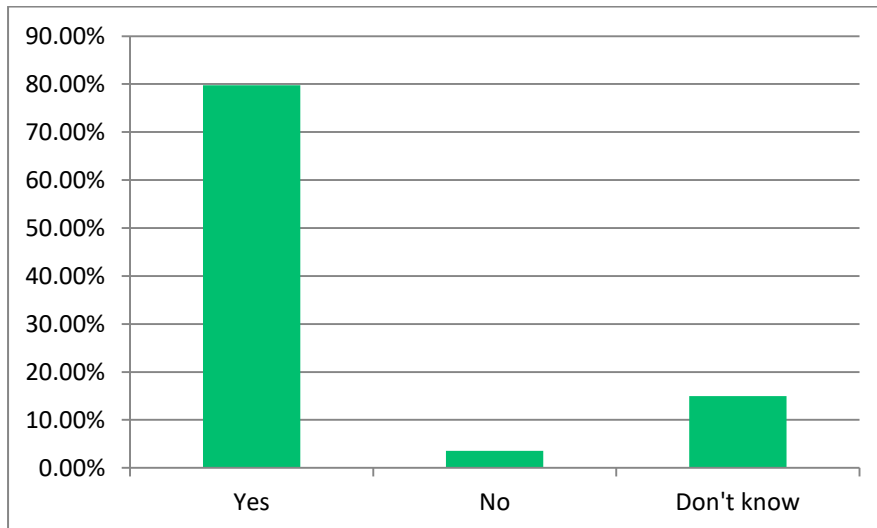
Reference to other locations

- *"Important to cater for those interested in manuscripts etc. If you want people to stay on the site and spend money you need a cafe and a high quality gift shop with range of prices - Wentworth Woodhouse in Rotherham good example of type of gift shop."*
- *"Indeed, the Burns Centre and Museum at Alloway being a perfect example of what is required."*
- *"A similar project at Scott's Abbotsford works well."*

Opposition

- *"I do not like the design for the visitor centre. It is not 'in keeping' with the farm."*
- *"Original artefacts are already contained within 3-4 display cases. There is no need to create another space for this purpose, but improve what is there already."*
- *"Is a new building really needed? What about car parking and conservation of the farm yard?"*

Q6 The Trust is inviting a new generation of artists, musicians and writers to be inspired by Ellisland. New on-site accommodation is proposed to enable creative residencies. This would be modelled on the nearby Hermitage - a small bothy where Burns would escape to write. Do you agree with the proposal to develop new hermitage-style creative residencies?



Yes	79.74%
No	3.52%
Don't know	14.98%

This question elicited the highest 'don't know' response, which is not unexpected given the lack of visualisations for this element. Nevertheless, respondents still indicated strong agreement with this aspect of the FutureVision, with some very enthusiastic supporting comments. 105 comments were received.

Clear Support

- *"I think this is the most wonderful aspect of the plan, made possible by the generous amount of land belonging to Ellisland. It would make this a unique heritage, literary and musical centre in the UK, and perhaps elsewhere too. It is important to use the example of writers such as Burns to encourage new creativity in younger generations."*
- *"What could be more appropriate than this, making the farm a vibrant centre for creativity."*
- *"Brilliant idea which should attract creative talent to such inspired and inspiring accommodation - the proposal should create a real sense of creative community among participants."*

Affordability

- *"It sounds like an excellent idea. My only question would be about affordability as I know this has been an issue with some similar artist residency type projects but hopefully through working in partnership with institutions like the Burns Birthplace Museum and other Burns attractions or with business sponsorship this could be achieved."*
- *"We need to provide creative spaces but they must be accessible to all members of the public and not overpriced and elitist. All creativity needs to be nurtured."*
- *"Yes, I hope it will be affordable and rentable for young people and can be rented on a short term basis not just long term to give a variety of people a chance to visit."*

Support conditional on appropriate setting

- *“It really depends where the residencies are and the impact to the natural landscape and current environment.”*
- *“As long as the residences are 'away' from the historic buildings.”*
- *“As long as the buildings fit in with the surroundings and the original farm.”*

Opposition

- *“Feel this would be too commercial, spoiling the tranquillity.”*
- *“Again, this is going to RUIN the appearance of Ellisland, which has remained unchanged for all these years.”*
- *“Might spoil the atmosphere.”*

Q7 Respondents were then asked to indicate which of the following statements they agreed with. The order the statements were presented was randomised.

I support the proposal outlined above to safeguard Ellisland	89.13%
The proposals will enhance Ellisland's importance as a Burns heritage site	86.96%
Ellisland should be better known	81.74%
I want Ellisland to inspire future generations	80.43%
It's a good idea to develop Ellisland's creative and cultural potential	79.13%
It's a good idea to create new education and exhibition spaces at Ellisland	76.09%
The proposals will benefit the local economy	66.52%
The proposals seem sympathetic and appropriate	63.04%
Other (please specify)	18.26%
The proposals will damage Ellisland's heritage	4.35%
I do not support the proposal outlined above	3.48%

An 'other' option was an opportunity for respondents to comment on the proposal as a whole, and to express their view on it. 40 comments were received. The dominant theme within these comments was that support is strong but conditional on development being done sensitively and appropriately. Additional themes arising in this section were statements relating to the importance of Burns and Ellisland in general, and the importance of including safe active travel infrastructure.

Conditionality of support

- *“I'm broadly in agreement with the aims of the development. I am concerned about overdevelopment detracting from the character of the site.”*
- *“This could be excellent or it could totally ruin the ambience of the setting and become too modern.”*
- *“I want Ellisland to inspire and develop its creative and cultural potential but not at the cost of its originality. It will lose the feel of the area which inspired Burns if modern buildings are sited close by.”*

Importance of Burns, Jean and Ellisland

- *“Other countries would think us crazy not to invest in such an iconic place. Perhaps, as Scots have grown up so much with Burns, we don’t see him for the symbol he is to others.”*
- *“I like the new emphasis on the influence of women on Burns’ soul and mind, especially the focus on Jean Armour. Her tale is just as important as Burns’; without her support he would likely not have reached the heights of creativity that he did.”*
- *“Burns and his works are worth every one of these constructive, inspired and inspiring ideas and proposals. Long live Robert Burns!”*

Active travel

- *“Active and sustainable travel options to the site needed.”*
- *“Please also consider travel to Ellisland via sustainable means, including supporting a better bus service and creating a safe cycle route away from the A76.”*
- *“The new building is going in the car park. Not only will this development need a car park but the road from the A76 requires to be wider without the need for passing places!”*

Q11 Respondents were invited to provide general comments or testimonials. 85 respondents chose to do so, and their comments reinforce earlier themes from the survey. The full set of comments is noted in Appendix 1.

Most comments expressed strong and clear support for the FutureVision proposals, with many of those supportive comments reflecting upon Ellisland’s potential, and acknowledging the work and investment required to unlock the potential of the site. Travel and transport was another noticeable theme, as was the tourism opportunity.

A major theme in the comments was the importance of Robert Burns and Ellisland, with many people articulating a view that the site is intrinsically precious and of international significance.

Conclusion

There is overwhelming support and clear enthusiasm for the FutureVision proposals for Ellisland within the communities of south west Scotland. The individuals who participated in the digital engagement provided high quality answers, which reflected thoughtfully and respectfully upon the proposals. Many of the concerns expressed are constructive and questioning in nature, rather than indicating opposition, which is entirely appropriate given the high level nature of the information provided in the video and survey.

The Robert Burns Ellisland Trust can therefore be confident that the proposed approach is well supported by the local community, and by the Robert Burns community of interest within south west Scotland.

Report prepared by independent economic development consultant Lorna Young (MIED) for Robert Burns Ellisland Trust, March 2023.

Appendix 4. Visitor data for Dumfries and Galloway

Figure Ixi. Dumfries and Galloway Tourism, Changes 2016-18 to 2017-19

VISITS BREAKDOWN	Visits		Nights		Spend	
	2017-19 Average (000s)	% Change 2016-18/2017-19	2017-19 Average (000s)	% Change 2016-18/2017-19	2017-19 Average (£m)	% Change 2016-18/2017-19
Europe	18	-14%	155	+32%	6	+2%
North America	10	+11%	37	-41%	4	-8%
Rest of World	8	-11%	94	+47%	7	+21%
Total International Overnight	36	-8%	286	+17%	17	+6%
Scotland	265	+5%	716	-2%	38	-9%
Rest of Great Britain	434	+3%	1,572	-5%	92	+1%
Total Domestic Overnight	699	+4%	2,288	-4%	131	0%
Total Overnight Tourism	735	+3%	2,574	-2%	148	+1%
Total Day Tourism	5,721	+7%	N/A	N/A	239	-2%
Grand Total	6,456	+7%	2,574	-2%	387	-1%

Sources: IPS/GBTS/GBDVS, 2017-19. Figures may not sum up due to rounding.
National figures are available in the *Key Facts on Tourism in Scotland 2019* report published on visitscotland.org.

Source: Dumfries and Galloway Fact Sheet Visit Scotland 2019

Future Vision Plan for Ellisland Farm: Business Plan

Figure Ixii. Arts and heritage engagement in the last 12 months¹²

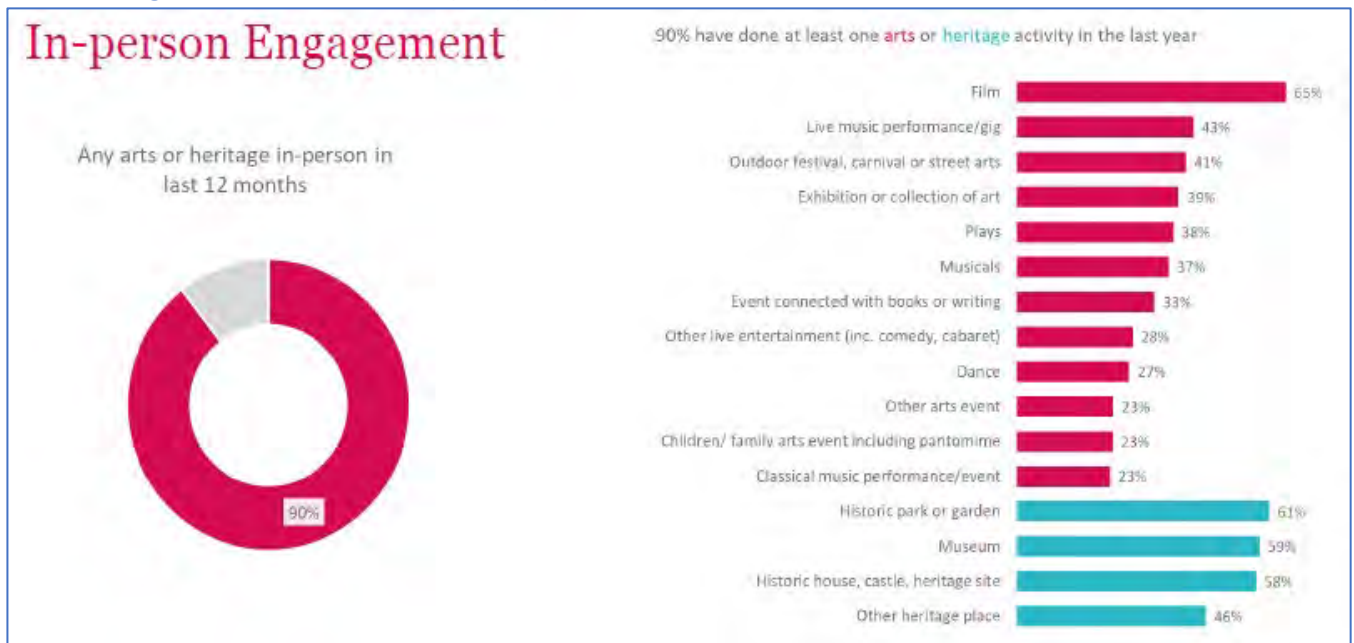
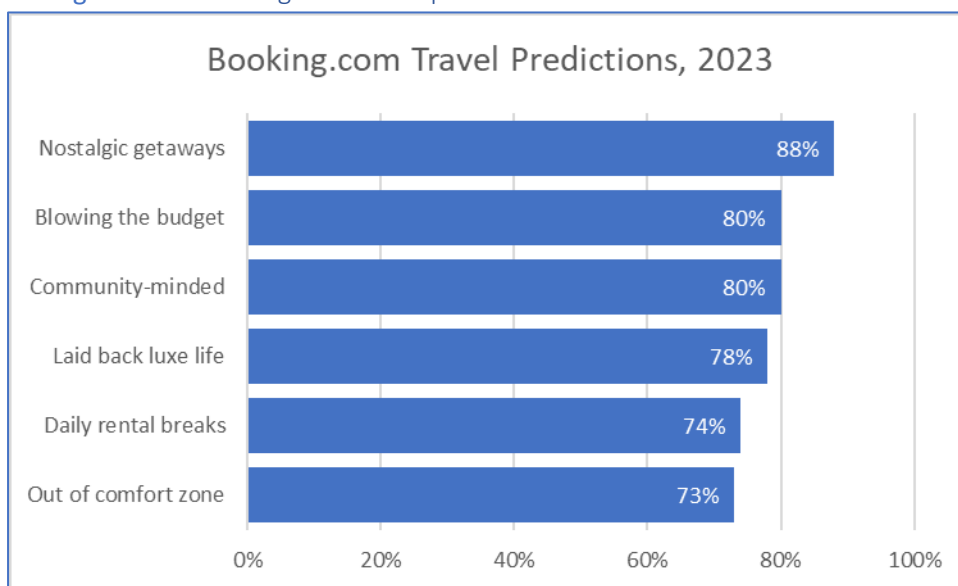


Figure Ixiii. Booking.com travel predictions 2023



¹² ibid

Appendix 5. Examples of wedding venues

The Barn at Banchory

<https://www.thebarnarts.co.uk/>

The Barn began its life as a cultural space in the early 1990's when the Burnett family of Leys offered the use of a derelict farm steading and cattle byre as a makeshift rehearsal space for a community play, designed to celebrate the anniversary of 400 years of Crathes Castle and community life in Banchory. Energised by the success of the play, which involved 200 local people in its making and presentation, a small committee of local residents, artists and supporters took over the Barn, and began the long journey of transforming the former farm site into, what is now, Aberdeenshire's leading multi-arts venue, welcoming artists, performers and visitors from across the world. The Barn now offers venue hire for bespoke corporate events, weddings and private parties.

Dalduff Luxury Barn Weddings, Ayrshire

<https://www.dalduffweddings.com/>

Dalduff started with a farm shop, butchering their own meat. Later, this family-owned business diversified into weddings creating a blank canvas for brides to put their own stamp on their big day. The farm offers 2 dutch barns, a dining/party barn and various accommodation including the farmhouse and a log cabin. The farm has its own kitchen and provides the catering for their events.

Ashridge Estate, Devon

<http://www.ashridge-court.co.uk/the-great-barn.html>

Ashridge Estate had an old long-barn, traditionally build of cob, a rustic mixture of soil, straw and lime on a stone base. This magnificent structure was over 45m long with gently curving walls to follow the line of an ancient farm track. However, it was unsuitable for modern farming uses and had fallen into serious disrepair. Too beautiful to demolish, but too costly to fix without function, they set about creating a commercial events and wedding venue.

A feasibility study looked at access routes, fire regulations, parking provision, inserting toilet facilities and design layouts. To make it viable the build cost needed to be low, at around £160/sq.m. This suited a light-touch restoration of the rustic structure to expose its vernacular heritage and making best use of its setting in beautiful Devon countryside as the backdrop for peoples' 'big day'.

The design removed unnecessary additions to reveal the form of the original barn, utilised existing openings and created new ones to gain views and improved access. Internally spaces were opened to create a grand venue, with sustainable loos and services at the other end. The walls were restored using natural materials and traditional techniques by local craftsmen. Windows, doors, and shutters were fabricated using timber grown and seasoned on the estate and left to weather naturally.

As well as being a successful wedding venue, the estate offer use of the barn for community events and as a base for running ecological training workshops.

Bachilton Barn, Perthshire

<https://www.bachiltonbarn.co.uk/>

Robert Burns Ellisland Trust

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Bachilton Barn is a uniquely rural, modern wedding venue located on 700 acres of stunning Perthshire courtyard. The converted barn is the perfect blank canvas venue. All of their wedding packages include 2 nights in the cottages and yurts sleeping up to 40 people.

Harelaw Farm Weddings, near Glasgow

<http://www.harelawcountryweddings.com/>

The 18th Century buildings that make up Harelaw Farm were extensively refurbished in 2010, providing a modern home whilst retaining many original features. Milking byres and the original stable were incorporated into the home, allowing for large rooms with beautiful beams and high ceilings— with a large, two-storey master bedroom perfect for bridal suite pictures and a games room to entertain the stags.

Two barns are available for hire, alongside the exclusive use of the large lawn for a marquee. The Wedding Byre is set up to host the wedding ceremony which seats approximately 150, with room for more to stand at the back. This former milking byre enjoys a rustic feel, with exposed stone walls and original wooden beams. For smaller weddings, the Byre can be used for both the ceremony and reception. With extensive lawns, Harelaw Farm can offer outdoor ceremonies. The Hay Barn provides a large space, which can seat up to 250 guests. This space comes with a stage, dancefloor, and light canopy, as well as the adjacent 'Sow's Ear' bar.

Roodlea Barn, Ayrshire

<https://roodleabarn.co.uk/>

A recently converted rustic barn-style venue providing a blank canvas space for weddings and events.

Appendix 7. Annual income and expenditure, years 1 – 5

Year Ending December	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Annual Income Statement					
Revenue					
Core income and costs	150,000	150,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Retreats	90,000	117,000	186,667	221,667	281,750
Residences and accomodation	173,687	170,002	166,318	162,634	160,945
Events and festivals	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Weddings, private dining, and hir	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Café	228,662	242,437	264,890	287,839	311,036
Retail	82,999	87,999	96,149	104,479	112,899
Museum entries	322,000	322,000	338,100	355,120	372,600
Total Revenue	1,087,348	1,129,438	1,192,123	1,271,738	1,379,229
Cost of Goods Sold					
Retreats	(59,500)	(77,350)	(95,200)	(113,050)	(124,950)
Residences and accomodation	(10,421)	(10,200)	(9,979)	(9,758)	(9,657)
Weddings, private dining, and hir	(16,650)	(16,650)	(16,650)	(16,650)	(16,650)
Café	(80,032)	(84,853)	(92,712)	(100,744)	(108,863)
Retail	(41,500)	(43,999)	(48,074)	(52,239)	(56,449)
Museum entries	-	-	-	-	-
Total Cost of Goods Sold	(208,102)	(233,053)	(262,615)	(292,441)	(316,569)
Gross Margin	879,246	896,386	929,508	979,297	1,062,660
Net Operating Expenses					
Core income and costs	(431,943)	(431,943)	(431,943)	(431,943)	(431,943)
Café	(96,913)	(96,975)	(105,956)	(115,136)	(124,415)
Retail	(24,900)	(26,400)	(28,845)	(31,344)	(33,870)
Museum entries	(48,389)	(48,389)	(48,389)	(48,389)	(48,389)
Total Salaries & Wages	(602,145)	(603,706)	(615,132)	(626,811)	(638,615)
Core income and costs	(135,000)	(135,000)	(135,000)	(135,000)	(135,000)
Retreats	(16,200)	(21,060)	(33,600)	(39,900)	(50,715)
Residences and accomodation	(84,184)	(82,681)	(81,178)	(79,674)	(78,985)
Café	(34,299)	(36,366)	(39,734)	(43,176)	(46,655)
Retail	(4,150)	(4,400)	(4,807)	(5,224)	(5,645)
Museum entries	-	-	-	-	-
Total Operating Expenditure	(273,833)	(279,506)	(294,319)	(302,974)	(317,001)
Net Operating Expenses	(875,978)	(883,212)	(909,451)	(929,785)	(955,616)
Net profit	3,267	13,173	20,058	49,512	107,044

Appendix 8. Quarterly income and expenditure, first two years

Quarter Ending Quarter	Mar-28 Q1	Jun-28 Q2	Sep-28 Q3	Dec-28 Q4	Mar-29 Q1	Jun-29 Q2	Sep-29 Q3	Dec-29 Q4
Income Statement								
Revenue								
Core income and costs	37,500	37,500	37,500	37,500	37,500	37,500	37,500	37,500
Retreats	18,000	27,000	27,000	18,000	27,000	36,000	27,000	27,000
Residences and accomodati	23,996	46,806	75,481	27,403	23,106	44,811	75,481	26,604
Events and festivals	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Weddings, private dining, an	9,300	9,300	2,100	9,300	9,300	9,300	2,100	9,300
Café	14,106	69,426	117,088	28,043	14,955	73,608	124,141	29,732
Retail	5,120	25,200	42,500	10,179	5,428	26,718	45,060	10,792
Museum entries	20,304	97,502	164,450	39,744	20,304	97,502	164,450	39,744
Total Revenue	130,826	315,234	468,619	172,669	140,094	327,939	478,233	183,173
Cost of Goods Sold								
Core income and costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Retreats	(11,900)	(17,850)	(17,850)	(11,900)	(17,850)	(23,800)	(17,850)	(17,850)
Residences and accomodati	(1,440)	(2,808)	(4,529)	(1,644)	(1,386)	(2,689)	(4,529)	(1,596)
Events and festivals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Weddings, private dining, an	(5,025)	(5,025)	(1,575)	(5,025)	(5,025)	(5,025)	(1,575)	(5,025)
Café	(4,937)	(24,299)	(40,981)	(9,815)	(5,234)	(25,763)	(43,449)	(10,406)
Retail	(2,560)	(12,600)	(21,250)	(5,089)	(2,714)	(13,359)	(22,530)	(5,396)
Museum entries	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Cost of Goods Sold	(25,862)	(62,582)	(86,185)	(33,474)	(32,210)	(70,636)	(89,933)	(40,274)
Gross Margin	104,964	252,651	382,434	139,195	107,884	257,303	388,299	142,899
Net Operating Expenses								
Core income and costs	(107,986)	(107,986)	(107,986)	(107,986)	(107,986)	(107,986)	(107,986)	(107,986)
Café	(8,702)	(27,771)	(46,834)	(13,607)	(8,702)	(27,833)	(46,834)	(13,607)
Retail	(2,236)	(7,135)	(12,033)	(3,496)	(2,369)	(7,577)	(12,750)	(3,704)
Museum entries	(6,975)	(16,235)	(17,700)	(7,478)	(6,975)	(16,235)	(17,700)	(7,478)
Total Salaries & Wages	(125,899)	(159,127)	(184,553)	(132,566)	(126,032)	(159,630)	(185,269)	(132,774)
Core income and costs	(33,750)	(33,750)	(33,750)	(33,750)	(33,750)	(33,750)	(33,750)	(33,750)
Retreats	(3,240)	(4,860)	(4,860)	(3,240)	(4,860)	(6,480)	(4,860)	(4,860)
Residences and accomodati	(13,120)	(22,427)	(34,126)	(14,510)	(12,757)	(21,613)	(34,126)	(14,185)
Events and festivals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Weddings, private dining, an	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Café	(2,116)	(10,414)	(17,563)	(4,206)	(2,243)	(11,041)	(18,621)	(4,460)
Retail	(256)	(1,260)	(2,125)	(509)	(271)	(1,336)	(2,253)	(540)
Museum entries	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Operating Expenditu	(52,482)	(72,711)	(92,425)	(56,216)	(53,882)	(74,220)	(93,611)	(57,794)
Net Operating Expenses	(178,381)	(231,838)	(276,977)	(188,782)	(179,914)	(233,850)	(278,880)	(190,569)
Surplus (deficit) from Ope	(73,417)	20,814	105,457	(49,587)	(72,030)	23,453	109,419	(47,669)
Total Depreciation & Amortis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
EBIT	(73,417)	20,814	105,457	(49,587)	(72,030)	23,453	109,419	(47,669)
Net Interest Expense	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net Profit Before Tax	(73,417)	20,814	105,457	(49,587)	(72,030)	23,453	109,419	(47,669)
Tax Expense	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net Profit After Tax	(73,417)	20,814	105,457	(49,587)	(72,030)	23,453	109,419	(47,669)
Error Check	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Business Units Surplus / Deficit Reconciliation								
Core income and costs	(104,236)	(104,236)	(104,236)	(104,236)	(104,236)	(104,236)	(104,236)	(104,236)
Retreats	2,860	4,290	4,290	2,860	4,290	5,720	4,290	4,290
Residences and accomodati	9,436	21,571	36,826	11,248	8,962	20,509	36,826	10,824
Events and festivals	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Weddings, private dining, an	4,275	4,275	525	4,275	4,275	4,275	525	4,275
Café	(1,649)	6,942	11,710	415	(1,224)	8,972	15,237	1,259
Retail	68	4,205	7,092	1,084	74	4,446	7,527	1,152
Museum entries	13,329	81,266	146,750	32,266	13,329	81,266	146,750	32,266
Business Units EBITDA	(73,417)	20,814	105,457	(49,587)	(72,030)	23,453	109,419	(47,669)