



Impact Report



Eight community groups reducing waste and promoting sustainable consumption in the Highlands



Introduction

Between April 2022 – March 2025, the Highland Community Waste Partnership brought together eight community groups in the Highlands to reduce waste and promote more sustainable consumption.

The partnership was coordinated by Keep Scotland Beautiful and made possible with funding from The National Lottery Climate Action Fund.

Together we worked on three key areas of waste reduction through food waste and composting, share and repair and packaging and single-use. We addressed these key areas through a combination of awareness-raising and engagement activity, a programme of educational events and workshops, as well as more targeted projects, that aimed to provide more sustainable consumer choices.

In this report, we provide an overview of what we've done, what we've learned and where we see this important work going next.

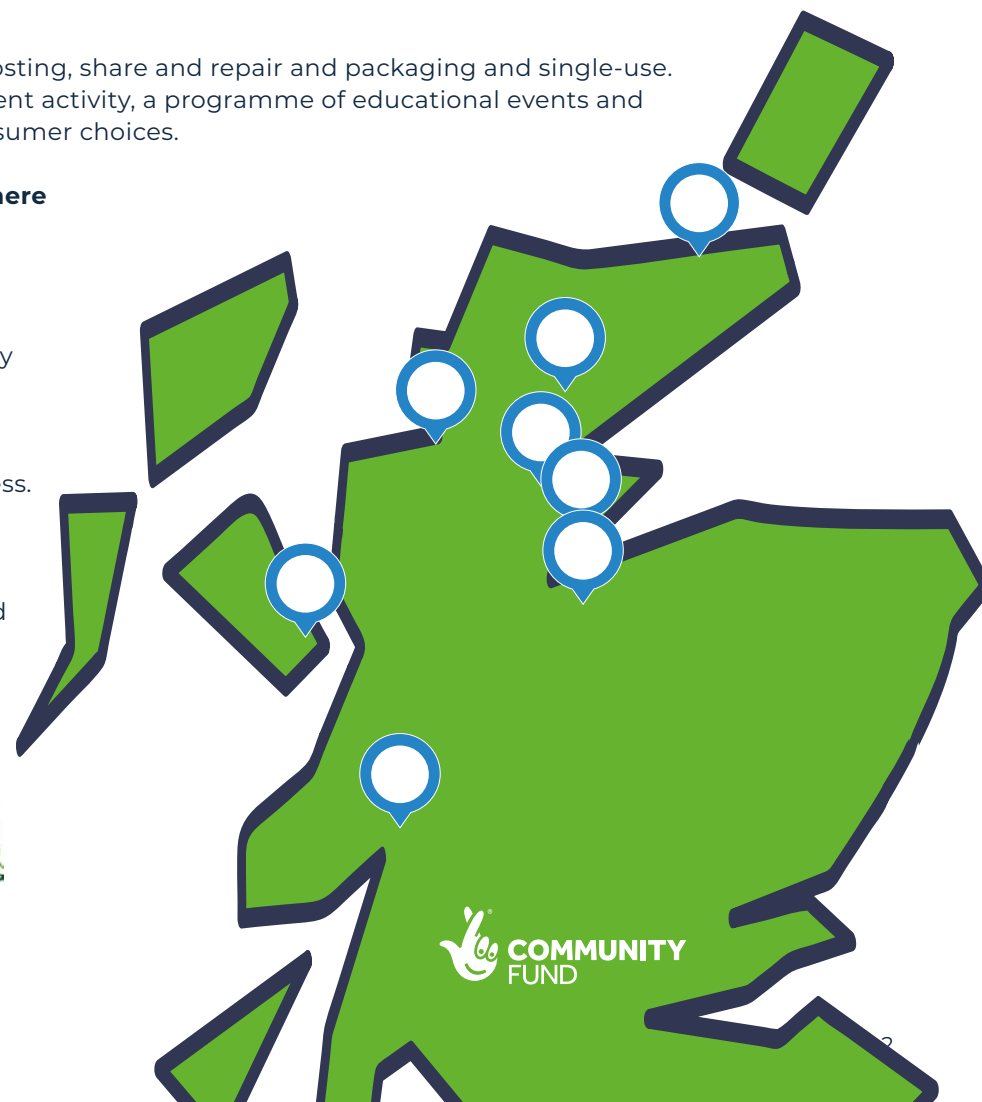
Moving towards a more circular economy

Environmental challenges, be it litter, pollution or climate change, all come back to the way that we consume: that is how we make, sell, buy, use and dispose of things.

In order to address this, we must reduce the intensity and impact of our consumption models by transitioning towards a more circular economy where we both use and waste less.

This is a systemic change, and everyone has a part to play.

The Highland Community Waste Partnership examined the role of local, community-based solutions in supporting this transition, by helping people to use things better, for longer, and working to reduce the impact of waste on our communities.



Impact

831,783

people reached through our communications, campaigns and outreach

740

events and workshops delivered to 10,631 people

500+

businesses engaged around food and packaging waste

53

young people received Climate Emergency Training around waste and consumption



FOOD WASTE
& COMPOSTING

74

tonnes of food waste diverted from landfill, with **248** composters distributed

600+ kg

kg food waste diverted from landfill from **3** community composting projects, serving **47** households

1,200+ kg

food waste diverted from landfill from **8** business composting projects



SHARE
& REPAIR

948

Items repaired

508

Items upcycled

4,158

items shared or swapped

7 sharing libraries and **2** repair cafes set up or expanded.



PACKAGING
& SINGLE-USE

3,958+

single-use cups recycled from **23** cups boxes installed across **18** locations

4,369

single-use items diverted from landfill through local reuse initiatives

200kg

of glass recycled and repurposed locally

6

tonnes of cardboard recycled and repurposed locally



Raising awareness and promoting engagement

Communications, awareness-raising and engagement were a cornerstone of the Highland Community Waste Partnership. Firstly, in terms of delivering education around waste, consumption and climate change; but also in ensuring that activity across the partnership was visible, recognisable and that people were engaged to support it and get involved.

Communications strategy

In Year 1, we worked to create the communications infrastructure that would underpin the project. This included the co-creation of a Highland Community Waste Partnership brand (including a logo, thematic icons, colour palette and fonts), as well as a website and social media channels.



We also worked together to establish processes for ensuring that all Highland Community Waste Partnership activity, across the nine partners, could be captured and publicised, whilst also ensuring a consistency of narratives and messaging around waste and consumption. This meant coordinating across our respective websites, social media channels and regional/local press, as well as through outreach and engagement events.



Broadford & Strath Community Company ran a **regular podcast** on Radio Skye around the 3Rs, reduce, reuse recycle. [You can listen back here.](#)

830,000+
people reached over 3 years

14,660
unique website views

260,561
social media reach
(not including partner channels)

522,566
reach through newspaper
marketing

9,868
people engaged through
local outreach and public
engagement events

Engagement events

Launched in Year 1, our programme of workshops and events focused both on specific skills such as mending or composting, as well as general engagement around waste, consumption and climate change. This included hosting **91 climate conversations with 649 people** and **34 film nights for 561 people**.

These events were designed specifically for awareness-raising and engagement, giving people an opportunity to learn and discuss environmental topics with others in their communities. Many partners signed up to the [Climate Café Hub](#), but we also explored other models, including climate book groups, which proved particularly popular, as well as bringing events online, as a way of increasing accessibility and reaching more people.

Spotlight:



The **Black Isle Climate Café** provided the opportunity for people to engage around topics they were interested in, helping to foster a group of committed volunteers who are keen to continue supporting climate action in the area as a legacy of the Highland Community Waste Partnership.

[Read more](#)

Spotlight:



Lairg and District Learning Centre reflect on the events and workshops they offered as part of the Highland Community Waste Partnership and how this has helped them **embed sustainability and climate change** across all aspects of their activity.

[Read more](#)

Engaging young people

Spotlight:



Our **Youth Climate Advocates** programme delivered accredited Climate Emergency Training to a total of **53 young people**, aged 12-24 and living in the Highlands, with a focus on waste and consumption.

[Read more](#)

In addition Broadford & Strath Community Company also delivered a programme of work to engage pupils in their area with the 3Rs: reduce, reuse, recycle.

Conscious Consumption campaign

Our #ConsciousConsumption campaign provided an umbrella for all of our messaging around consumption and action that could be taken. This included:

Top tips for Conscious Consumption – A social media campaign highlighting key actions that people can take in their day to day lives to adopt more sustainable consumption habits, linking to Highland Community Waste Partnership activity and support.

Conscious Consumption for businesses – A collection of business engagement initiatives including our food waste and packaging work, detailed below, as well as supporting campaigns.

Museum exhibition – In February 2024 we unveiled an exhibition at the [West Highland Museum](#), which then appeared in the partners' locations and at [Belladrum festival](#). Developed under the Conscious Consumption banner, the exhibit provided an introduction to the waste, consumption and the circular economy alongside a number of practical engagement activities.



Food waste & composting



Food waste has a significant environmental impact, as well as being costly and an obvious waste of resources. We worked to reduce the impact of food waste, firstly by preventing it from occurring in the first place through better choices, habits and tips; and then by promoting composting, to ensure that any food that cannot be eaten can be recycled and reused, rather than sent to landfill.

Preventing food waste

Households

Over the course of the project, we delivered numerous workshops aimed at teaching people about food waste and providing them with skills and tools to help prevent this in their own kitchens.

This included engagement with the Zero Waste Scotland [Love Food, Hate Waste](#) resources, as well as a variety of workshops around local food sourcing, foraging, cooking and preserving.

In total, we delivered **91** food waste reduction sessions to **1,038** people across the Highlands.

Spotlight:



The **Zero Waste Food Challenge**, led by Transition Black Isle was a modular course designed to prevent food waste at key stages from planning and shopping, to storing, cooking and finally composting. This was made available both as an online resource and through local, in-person workshops, reaching **99 people**. The resource is also available as a delivery pack for anyone wishing to run it in their community.

[Read more](#)

Communities

A number of partners set up and/or supported the operation of community fridges and larders as a way of ensuring that food that would otherwise be wasted can end up in people's kitchens, both saving money and preventing waste and its environmental impact.

Spotlight:



The Plantation Community Larder, set up with support from Lochaber Environmental Group, served **147 customers** and diverted over **540kg** of food waste from landfill between August – December 2024.

[Read more](#)

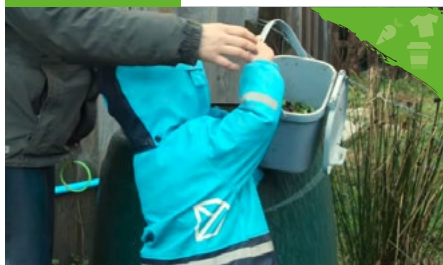
Businesses

In a bid to target hospitality food waste, Highland Good Food Partnership joined forces with Zero Waste Scotland to engage Highland hospitality businesses with their '[One-Month Food Waste Challenge](#)' resource.

This included in-person food waste reduction events with local businesses, delivered via collaborations with business networks including Destination Management Organisations, tourism, retail, food and drink, hospitality. Over **240 businesses** were reached through this activity.

Highland Good Food Partnership worked closely with two businesses to analyse their food waste and implement recommendations for reduction:

Spotlight:



Stramash Nursery were able to decrease their food waste from **212 grams/cover**, to **190 grams/cover**, after understanding some of the main sources of food waste and some of the challenges around addressing it.

[Read more](#)

Spotlight:



The **Old Forge Inn in Knoydart** gained valuable insights into some key sources of food waste, including spoilage, which accounted for **42% of waste** and hinged on seasonal factors.

[Read more](#)

Spotlight:



Engaging with hospitality businesses

Engaging with hospitality businesses is a challenge anywhere, and especially in the Highlands. Drawing on their experience from this work, Highland Good Food Partnership have compiled some of their learning and tips here.

[Read more](#)


Promoting composting

In order to further reduce the impact of food waste, we also looked at promoting composting. There is significant interest and value in local composting solutions in the Highlands, due to the challenges of offering a collection service across this vast and remote region. As such, we worked to promote these in the following ways:

Home composting

First of all, we engaged people to compost food waste at home as much as possible. There are limited opportunities for a food waste recycling service in the Highlands, due to the remote nature of the region, so this was focused primarily on giving people the skills and tools to do it themselves, where possible.

We engaged a total of **332** people to learn how to compost their own food waste at home through a total of **49** composting workshops.

Spotlight:



Lochaber Environmental Group was one of the lead partners for **home composting**. In addition to composting workshops, they collaborated with the local Men's Shed to build and distribute a total of **249 composters** to households across the Lochaber area, diverting an estimated **74 tonnes** of food waste from landfill.

[Read more](#)

However, we also worked to increase engagement with existing food waste recycling services where this was an option.

Spotlight:



Velocity Café and Bicycle Workshop collaborated with Highland Council on a local project to encourage uptake of the council's **food waste recycling** service in the Crown Hill neighbourhood of Inverness. Though door knocking and other engagement they achieved a **10%** increase in uptake and gathered valuable feedback for improving access to the service.

[Read more](#)


Community composting

Home composting is not suitable for all households, such as houses where there is a lack of space, garden access/use, or general capacity. This is where community composting projects can offer a solution, enabling local food waste recycling and generating compost that can be used locally.

Building on the [community composting toolkit](#) developed previously, and working through challenges around permitting and other practicalities, Highland Good Food Partnership led on developing a community composting model that was then rolled out across the partnership.

Spotlight:



Kilmallie Community Fridge and Garden, in collaboration with Lochaber Environmental Group, where **10 local households** funnelled their food waste into the local community garden. Through this project we diverted a total of **585kg** of food waste from landfill, over the course of **12 months**.

[Read more](#)

A variety of compost bins were trialled in subsequent projects, including a 19-household project at the **Holm Grown** community garden in Inverness and another 19-household project in Ullapool, split between two locations. More information at [highlandcompost.scot](https://www.highlandcompost.scot)

Learning – making community composting work:

All of these projects navigated some of the same issues and found solutions that worked for their given circumstances and set-ups. Some key considerations include:

- The type of food waste that will be collected for composting
- The type of compost bins to be used
- The location and access to the composting site
- How the finished compost might be used, community garden site, participant use, etc

It was generally found that projects of **10-15 households** that focused on only fruit and vegetable scraps (i.e. no Animal By-Products or “ABPs”, oil, cooked food etc) were easiest to implement with regards to Scottish Environment Protection Agency and [Animal and Plant Health Agency](#) regulatory requirements.

While ABPs can be included in community composting schemes, the set-up must reliably reach a sustained temperature of **60°C** or over in order to be compliant with APHA regulations. **Starting small with only fruit and veg scraps** allows for a trial and error monitoring period for getting up to temperature.



Larger-scale/ business composting

Finally, we also looked at local composting solutions for business settings. In addition to environmental benefits, this can help cut waste disposal costs, whilst also generating compost for local use.

Spotlight:



From an initial objective to rename a **Rocket in-vessel composter**, Lochaber Environmental Group, in collaboration with the Highland Good Food Partnership navigated the challenges of **larger-scale, local composting solutions** in the Highlands, giving rise to the Ardtornish and Knoydart projects below.

This also led to the creation of an **In-Vessel Composting Common Interest Group** in April 2024, as well as the community composting projects outlined in the previous section.

[Read more](#)

Spotlight:



At **Knoydart Farm**, kitchen waste from The Old Forge CBS was diverted to a Jora JK800 manual composter, saving **180kg** of food waste from landfill over **10 weeks** and with lots of learning generated as to how to best go about this.

[Read more](#)

Spotlight:



At **Ardtornish Estate**, food waste was collected from **10** holiday cottages and **6** holiday apartments to be composted in a refurbished Rocket composter, diverting **814kg** of food waste from landfill in eight months and producing **65kg** of compost.

[Read more](#)


To hear directly from partners about the work outlined in this section, check out the [Food Waste & Composting webinar](#).



Share & repair



This strand of work focused on reducing the amount of ‘stuff’ that we buy new and throw away, from clothes to furniture, tools and electronics. By providing opportunities to repair items, as well as borrow, swap, share or buy and sell second-hand, we help we help individuals and communities get the most out of what they have already, eliminating the need to buy things new and reducing waste from throwing things ‘away’.

Events and workshops

The main way we delivered on this objective was through a variety of events and workshops, including:

- **65** sharing events, reaching **1,647** people and diverting **13,158** items from landfill.
- **173** upcycling workshops, delivered to **1,006** people and diverting **508** items from landfill.
- **141** repair events and workshops, reaching **2,028** people and diverting **948** items from landfill.

*We additionally recorded over **600kg** of items saved through sharing and upcycling events.

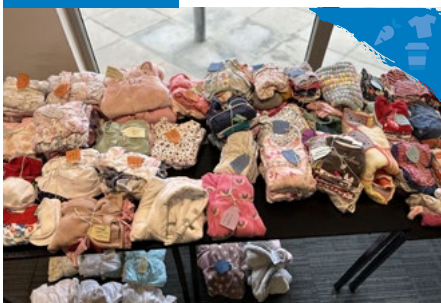
Spotlight:



The **ReLove fair**, developed by Lochbroom and Ullapool Community Trust, proved a successful model for rehoming second-hand items, with **885** items sold across **6** fairs, generating **£8,042** in sales, 90% of which went back to sellers.

[Read more](#)

Spotlight:



Thurso Community Development Trust found that **thematic swap events** worked well, with events focused on “baby articles”, “warm stuff”, “pet accessories”, “plants & gardening tools” and “craft items”, saving **14,022** items from landfill.

[Read more](#)

Community services

Sharing libraries

A great way to share ownership of items that most people generally use only occasionally is sharing libraries. In addition to supporting existing sharing libraries, including the Caithness Asset Bank and Lochaber Bike Tool Library, we also set up a number of new initiatives, including the following:

Spotlight:



Reusable event ware

The Thurso **Party Kit** provides reusable cups, crockery and party decorations for events and has so far diverted an estimated **1,132** single-use items from landfill..

[Read more](#)

Spotlight:



Reusable event ware

The Broadford & Strath **Ceilidh Kit** offers reusable tableware, serving dishes, and event essentials to reduce the need for disposable items at gatherings and has saved over **2,000** single-use items from landfill.

[Read more](#)

Spotlight:



As part of the Highland Community Waste Partnership legacy, Transition Black Isle worked, with support from Circular Communities Scotland, to set up a **Black Isle Library of Things**.

[Read more](#)

Spotlight:



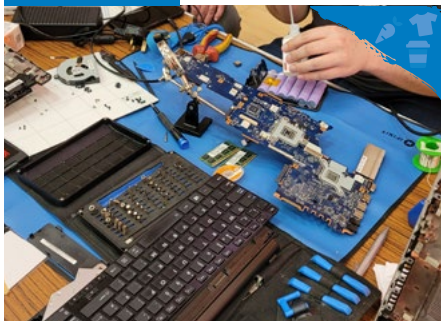
Broadford & Strath Community Company set up the **Green Shed** at their campsite, to allow visitors to borrow items, from reusable containers to bike and tent repair kits, as a way of promoting waste reduction through reuse, repair and borrowing.

[Read more](#)


Repair cafes

In addition to workshops teaching a variety of mending skills, we also established community repair cafes where people could bring broken items to be repaired.

Spotlight:



Over the course of the Highland Community Waste Partnership, the **Black Isle Repair Café (BIRC)**, established by Transition Black Isle in collaboration with the local Men's Shed, delivered **23** roaming repair cafes across the Black Isle region, and repaired **734** items.

[Read more](#)

Lochaber Environmental Group built on the Black Isle Repair Café experience by establishing the [Fort William Repair Café](#). Following this success, Transition Black Isle also collaborated with Circular Communities Scotland to create a **Highland Repair Network**, to support development of this sector. You can learn more about repair café model here: www.repaircafe.org/en/

Spotlight:



In a collaboration led by Lochbroom and Ullapool Community Trust, we created and launched a **Highland Repair Directory**, listing repair services across the Highlands for categories from tools and white goods to clothes and bikes.

Following the end of the Highland Community Waste Partnership, the Highland Repair Directory is hosted by the [Highlands and Islands Climate Hub](#).

[Read more](#)



To hear directly from partners about the work outlined in this section, check out the [Share & Repair webinar](#).



Single-use items and packaging

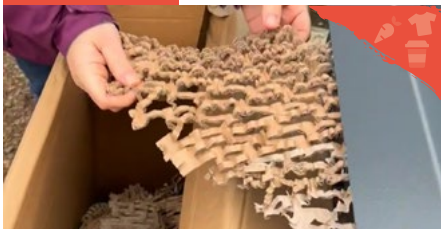


Single-use, 'disposable' items are inherently wasteful, designed and created to be used once and thrown away. We looked at addressing this in a variety of ways and across a range of contexts:

Local packaging waste solutions

From the initial development of the project, Broadford & Strath Community Company were keen to look at local solutions for certain waste streams, converting them into valuable resources for use on the island, whilst also addressing the financial and environmental costs of disposal.

Spotlight:



Broadford & Strath Community Company explored a number of options for reusing **cardboard waste** on the island, ultimately diverting around **6,000kg** of cardboard per year from landfill, with uses ranging from reuse as packaging, to uses in composting and as fuel.

[Read more](#)

Spotlight:



Broadford & Strath Community Company also found a use for local **glass waste**, converting it into sand for the maintenance of local paths, recycling 640 bottles, or **200kg** of glass waste in the first two months at a cost saving of **£500** in path building and maintenance costs.

[Read more](#)

Spotlight:



Meanwhile in Thurso, the **Cycle of Wool** project explored ways to make good use of the abundance of wool in the area that often goes to waste; from crafting to innovations for path maintenance and gardening.

[Read more](#)

Local reuse projects

There was significant interest in addressing food and drink packaging waste and the partnership delivered a number of projects to address this in local contexts:

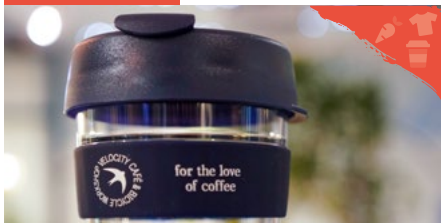
Spotlight:



Broadford & Strath Community Company trialled **reusable pizza boxes** in the closed loop setting of a campsite, to reduce the around **4,000** disposable boxes that are used and thrown away each season.

[Read more](#)

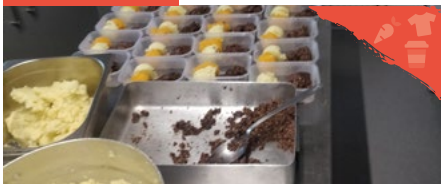
Spotlight:



Velocity Café and Bicycle Workshop implemented a **40p** charge on single-use cups and food packaging, along with a campaign and retailing reusable alternatives, as a way of **promoting reuse in the café**.

[Read more](#)

Spotlight:



Thurso Community Development Trust switched to reusable packaging for their monthly **Meals on Wheels** service, diverting around 75 disposable plastic tubs and bags from landfill per delivery.

[Read more](#)

Spotlight:



Thurso Community Development Trust worked with their local high school to replace single-use food tubs used in **cooking classes** with reusable alternatives where, in combination with their #beasolution campaign, they increased reuse rates by **45%** and diverted **135** single-use tubs from landfill over the two-month pilot period.

[Read more](#)


Regional packaging interventions

Building on Cup Movement® campaign, Keep Scotland Beautiful led on a number of more regional interventions to address packaging waste on-the-go:

Spotlight:



Keep Scotland Beautiful collaborated with the National Cup Recycling Scheme to pilot their innovative **Cup Box** solution for recycling single-use cups in the remote setting of the Highlands. Twenty-three boxes were deployed across **18** locations, with the potential to divert around **10,000** single-use cups from landfill.

[Read more](#)

Spotlight:



Keep Scotland Beautiful also led on a raft of activities to **promote refill and reuse**, including a collaboration with City to Sea to set up local Refill Schemes as well as a reuse campaign and a returnable food and drink packaging pilot with Vytal.

[Read more](#)


To hear directly from partners about the work outlined in this section, check out the [Single-use items & packaging webinar](#).



Partnership working

All we delivered would not have been possible without an effective partnership: the ability to make strategic decisions as a group, share information and ideas, collaborate, and coordinate the work of nine geographically dispersed partner organisations.

When the Highland Community Waste Partnership launched in April 2022, the 'partnership' existed only in principle. Over the coming months and years, we would work together to put this into practice, learning what's important, navigating challenges and finding ever better ways to work as one.

In this section, we reflect on how this journey unfolded and what we learned in the process.

The journey: Partnership development

The Highland Community Waste Partnership was co-developed over the Spring and Summer of 2021. Stemming from a growing recognition of waste and consumption as key drivers of climate change, and recognising the opportunities to address this in the remote communities of the Scottish Highlands, Keep Scotland Beautiful worked with a number of community groups to scope out areas of interest and lead the co-development of the funding proposal that formed the basis of our programme plan.



Year 1 (April 2022 – March 2023): Building a foundation

In our first year of working together there was, necessarily, a significant focus on partnership development. Delivery was centred around our programme of events and workshops, whilst we worked in the background to establish essential infrastructure for partnership working, including team-building activities, a governance structure and platforms and processes for collaboration and communications, including Microsoft Teams channels, and a Highland Community Waste Partnership brand, website and social media channels.





Year 2 (April 2023 – March 2024): Focus on delivery and collaboration

With the bulk of partnership development out of the way, in Year 2 we were able to focus more on delivery, moving towards more collaborative working and launching a number of bigger projects. At the same time, we identified areas for development and improvement at the start of the year, that we worked through in Year 2, aiming to rationalise and simplify our processes, provide more clarity around roles and responsibilities, strengthen relationships internally and externally and scale up delivery.



Year 3 (April 2024 – March 2025): Wrapping up and legacy

By Year 3, with the development priorities identified in Year 2 addressed, and relationships well-established, the partnership was running smoothly and organically. Similar to the previous year, we kicked off with an in-person meeting to reflect on progress, challenges and learning, as well as an initial discussion about the legacy of the Highland Community Waste Partnership, to ensure that all we achieved would live on after our final year.

In the following months, we identified legacy priorities and a plan for achieving these. We agreed to conclude delivery by the end of the calendar year, with a number of new initiatives launched, as well as tried and tested models rolling out across the partnership. In our final months, we focused on legacy activities, including securing future funding and collaborations, as well as production of a [legacy video](#), case studies and [webinars](#) for sharing learning, and our final report.



Partnership working: What we learned

1. Partnership development takes time

A significant proportion of our three-year project was taken up with the important work of developing and fine-tuning the partnership itself, in order to ensure the collaboration and coordination that would underpin delivery of our programme of work. This included time to get to know each other, forge relationships, and arrive on a clear and shared understanding of what we were working towards, as well as how we would do this.

2. Diversity is a strength and a challenge

Our partnership brought together individuals and organisations with a wide range of backgrounds, experience and skills. There is tremendous value in joining forces and learning from each other, indeed a key premise of the partnership. However, we've also had to navigate differences in our approaches and ways of working: aligning IT setups and different work patterns, creating processes that work for everyone; as well as differences in perspective and interpretation, in order to build a shared vision of the project and clarity around roles and responsibilities.

3. Change is part of the process

By the time the Highland Community Waste Partnership launched in April 2022, the programme plan that we co-developed for the funding proposal was nearly a year out of date. Both the people involved and the (post-Covid) landscape against which it had been developed had shifted. It was therefore important to review this, both with individual partners and as a partnership, to ensure that it was accurate, realistic, relevant and achievable. Thanks to flexibility from our funders, we were able to rationalise and amend objectives and revise targets as needed, helping the project adapt and align to changing circumstances and enabling partners to focus on meaningful delivery.

4. Relationships are crucial

Internally within the partnership, it was not until the team had formed independent interpersonal relationships that collaboration started to flow organically and grow exponentially. Good relationships allowed for better communication, decision-making and overall cohesion and clarity as a result.

Equally, external relationships have been crucial for the partnership, helping to ground our work within a local context, as well as supporting our Highland-wide ambitions. This includes both local community networks, delivery partners like other community groups and businesses, as well as more strategic partners, like the council, the Highlands and Islands Climate Hub, Zero Waste Scotland and Circular Communities Scotland, who supported and amplified our work.

5. Clarity and simplicity are key

One of the challenges with a project of this scope and scale is the sheer amount of information that needs communicated as things take shape. Whether it's about deliverables, roles and responsibilities, collaborative processes or simply project and activity requirements, it is important to understand and prioritise what is important and necessary, in order to keep things as clear and simple as possible. This was an iterative process that got easier over time and made a huge difference to how we worked together once achieved.





Top tips for partnership working

In our final in-person meeting, we reflected on practical learning that we could pass on to others embarking on partnership projects. Here are our top tips:

- 1. Factor in development time** – whether setting up infrastructure, building relationships or arriving at shared vision and understanding, allow ample time for this essential groundwork before focusing on delivery.
- 2. Start with relationships** – prioritise site visits, in-person meetings and team building activities; the rest will follow.
- 3. Understand your differences** – partnerships bring together a variety of backgrounds, skills and setups and although there is value in this, it will also present challenges. The better (and earlier) you understand how you are different, the better you can bridge the gaps and work together.
- 4. Build a brand** – collaboration is important, but it's equally important to coordinate communications and outputs, in order to maximise impact on a wider scale. A brand and joint communication strategy and channels help achieve this.
- 5. Review the programme plan** – make sure everyone is clear on what they're doing individually and collectively, at an early stage; and that the programme and project plans reflect this. This will also form the basis for good project management going forward.
- 6. Keep it real** – the bigger the project, and the more moving parts, the easier it is to overestimate what can be achieved. It's best to focus on quality over quantity to avoid getting too scattered. Regular review and evaluation can help keep things in check. Focus on goals and outcomes and be prepared to adapt how you get there.
- 7. Keep it simple** - beware the admin and double-handling that comes with coordinating a partnership. Whether it's compiling reporting evidence or sourcing communications content, align with existing processes as much as possible and keep things manageable by prioritising and focusing on the essentials.
- 8. Allocate resource** – our team of Delivery Officers was a crucial asset, but things like local management and communications are also worth properly resourcing, to enable and support Delivery Officers to focus on delivery. This will need factored in at the development stage.
- 9. Assign leads** – there is a time and a place for co-development, but in some cases it is best to let one person lead, leaving others to tailor and cascade across the partnership and in their respective communities and networks.
- 10. Use the partnership** – try things, share learning, don't reinvent the wheel. In addition, make use of the clout and influence that comes from being part of something bigger.
- 11. Look outwards** – build relationships with external stakeholders to maximise influence, reach and impact. By linking in with other community groups, you can ensure you're complementing rather than competing with each other's work.
- 12. Consider your legacy** – all projects will come to an end. It can be hard to predict what exactly the legacy of a project can or should be but keeping an eye on the future as much as possible can help make the most of it.

Legacy

The Highland Community Waste Partnership set out to reduce waste and build a movement for more sustainable consumption in the Highlands. This aim has certainly been achieved.

However, with the project now complete, it's important to look at where this leaves individual partners and how the progress and learning achieved can continue to contribute to the wider transition towards a circular economy.

In this section, we reflect on the value of the partnership, **looking beyond the waste reduction and engagement achieved during its lifetime**, to what we were leaving behind, and what we can build on in the future.

Ongoing projects – much of the work delivered through the Highland Community Waste Partnership was bound to the funding, however, we have also established a number of initiatives and projects that will continue to operate, either with the support of local volunteers, through local delivery partnerships, and/or new or supplementary funding. Some examples include the **repair cafes** and **sharing libraries** established, as well as the **Highland Repair Directory** and **Highland Repair Network** that will continue with the support of Highlands & Islands Climate Hub and Circular Communities Scotland respectively; the **community composting** projects established and, hopefully, new ones that will follow their example; the ongoing use of the **composting skills and composters** provided through our workshops; the **reuse and recycling solutions implemented**. And finally, we have put waste and consumption on the radar, feeding it into local discussions and decisions, and hopefully, inspiring others to replicate some of our work.

Learning around what works – having three years of funding, as well as a host of partners to draw on meant that we were not only able to share ideas, but both take risks in trying new things and also learn from each other's mistakes. The progress and learning generated from this partnership project is thus far greater than could have been achieved through shorter-term, independent work. This is something that partners can build on going forward and we are also sharing this with others, through this report, the associated case studies and our legacy webinars and website.

Lasting relationships - relationships were a central part of the Highland Community Waste Partnership, not only between partner organisations but also in terms of the wider external networks that we built through this programme of work. This included delivery partners like other community groups, local facilitators and local businesses partners, as well as more strategic supporters like the council, local and national environmental agencies and other special interest groups. These relationships will persist and continue to add value beyond the lifetime of the project.

Engaged communities – beyond the environmental benefits of the Highland Community Waste Partnership, our activities were a galvanising force for community engagement, attracting and connecting people to learn, collaborate and share. In addition to stronger community cohesion, this also leaves behind a legacy of people and communities that are engaged around waste and consumption and keen to continue driving action.



As part of the Highland Community Waste Partnership legacy we commissioned public polling in order to gain insights and understanding around public perceptions and behaviours, in relation to waste, consumption and our three key topics. The results have been distilled into a series of infographics, which are available on our legacy website,

[Read more](#)

Conclusion



**PACKAGING
& SINGLE-USE**

The Highland Community Waste Partnership has generated important activity, impact and learning over the past three years, around reducing waste and promoting more sustainable consumption.

We have shown that local, community-based action has an important role to play in this process; both in terms of supporting the implementation of regional solutions and interventions; and in terms of generating robust, local solutions, designed by and for the communities they serve.



**SHARE
& REPAIR**

We have also shown the value of longer-term, larger-scale and partnership projects, and the richness of progress, learning and impact that these can generate.

The Highland Community Waste Partnership leaves behind a strong legacy. However, there is still more to be done, both for the individual partners and for the overall transition towards a more circular economy.



**FOOD WASTE
& COMPOSTING**

Our current consumption models and habits need to change and it is essential that work like this remains a priority and continues to be resourced, ensuring the scale and continuity required to find effective solutions and build new systems that work better for both people and planet.



Partner showcases

Have a closer look at what individual partners have been up to as part of the Highland Community Waste Partnership.



Bradford & Strath Community Company



Highland Good Food Partnership



Lairg & District Learning Centre



Lochaber Environmental Group



Lochbroom & Ullapool Community Trust



Transition Black Isle



Thurso Community Development Trust



Velocity Café & Bicycle Workshop



Broadford & Strath Community Company



Over the past three years, the Highland Community Waste Partnership project has been a catalyst for transformative action on waste reduction and sustainable living across Skye and Raasay. Through a diverse and locally tailored programme of initiatives, the project has empowered communities to rethink waste, reduce consumption, and embrace a circular economy approach.

At the heart of the partnership has been a collaborative ethos, with community groups working together to deliver practical, engaging solutions to waste challenges. The Green Shed became a hub for reuse and upcycling, diverting large volumes of materials from landfill while offering skills-based workshops and promoting a culture of repair. This ethos was echoed in our sewing repair workshops and clothes swaps, which encouraged textile reuse, community sharing, and a move away from fast fashion.

Our **bike repair programme** revitalised unused bicycles, promoting active travel while preventing waste. Alongside this, the cardboard and composting project and composting workshops supported more sustainable food systems and waste management, educating households and community growers on reducing food waste and enriching local soil health.

The introduction of **reusable pizza boxes** was a simple but innovative step towards tackling single-use waste in the hospitality sector, demonstrating how small changes can lead to system-wide shifts. Similarly, the Ceilidh Kit provided a shared resource for hosting low-waste community events, enabling celebrations without disposables.

Our **glass crusher project** offered a local solution to glass waste, repurposing crushed glass for landscaping and other community uses, while reducing transport emissions associated with glass recycling. The Sustainable Skye events programme brought together residents, visitors, and stakeholders to explore sustainability themes through creative engagement, talks, and workshops, fostering a sense of collective responsibility and optimism for the future.

Across all of these projects, the Highland Community Waste Partnership has fostered behaviour change, built local capacity, and provided scalable, replicable models for waste reduction. With a strong foundation of community involvement and innovation, the partnership has not only reduced waste but also strengthened social cohesion, skills development, and environmental awareness across the Highlands.

What is the legacy of the Highland Community Waste Partnership for your organisation?



The Highland Community Waste Partnership has helped us grow stronger roots in our community—bringing people together, sharing skills, and showing that small, local actions really can make a big difference.



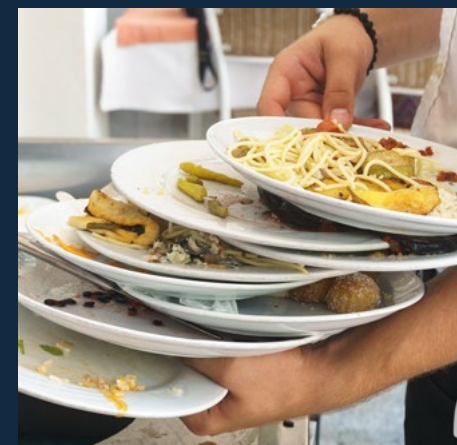
Highland Good Food Partnership



- Engaged with 250+ hospitality businesses across the Highlands around food waste reduction
- Worked closely with ZWS to deliver on three collaborative events around food waste reduction
- Distributed 5 sets of scales to Highland businesses to help them complete the Zero Waste Scotland one month food waste challenge
- Kilmallie Community Centre pilot project set up with eight members and has composted over 600 kg of food waste to date
- Resources developed for other community composting projects
- Worked closely with two businesses to measure and analyse their food waste
- Continue to develop the highlandcompost.scot site with updated case studies and resources

What is the legacy of the Highland Community Waste Partnership for your organisation?

“Our involvement in the Highland Community Waste Partnership has been invaluable in strengthening networks and inspiring innovative solutions for a more sustainable Highlands. Our cross-collaboration with other Highland Community Waste Partnership partners has been crucial in getting projects off the ground and ensuring their continued success. As an organisation that spans the entire Highlands, these connections are essential to grounding our work in the needs and aspirations of local communities.”



Lairg & District Learning Centre

Since beginning the Highland Community Waste Partnership project in early 2022, we have hosted many events; where it has been possible to collect data, the ticketed events have shown that **610 people** have attended our classes during the span of the project.

In early 2022, we kicked the project off with some thrift flip sewing classes, where participants would learn how to use old clothing to make something new and created the 'Maker's Space'. We did the same with woodworking, and began to use off-cuts from a local sawmill so attendees could re-use the materials for projects. We continued these classes all the way through the project, which has enabled a large amount to be diverted from landfill.

The ethos from these staple classes spilled over into cookery classes and other workshops, then we kicked off a series of 'Grow Your Own' classes and diversified into making pickled and fermented vegetables and oats, cordials, etc. The shift to sustainable eating seemed to bring in a different crowd of people, so it was nice to attract participants from further afield with different insights.

During 2022/23, we joined forces with a young charity 'Sutherland Girls on Boards', using discarded or damaged wetsuits, we started creating 'SUP and sew' classes which was a morning paddleboarding session and then a thrift flip sewing class. Because of our support, the girls continued with their success and have now gone on to collaborate with other larger watersporting companies in the area. They also continue to implement a second-hand wetsuit swap.



What is the legacy of the Highland Community Waste Partnership for your organisation?

“The legacy of the partnership for us is a continuation of all the efforts and lessons we've gained through the project. It has been interesting to work as a partnership, and we would be more inclined to work this way on future projects after seeing what works well and what doesn't. Not only does it help with reach, but also impact.

Without the support of the Highland Community Waste Partnership, we might not have changed our own sourcing practices and ethics so it really has altered our entire way of working as an organisation. It would be tricky to go back after having done this for three years. We hope to continue the work that the Highland Community Waste Partnership has started in our area.

”

Lochaber Environmental Group



Throughout the project we have focused on Food Waste and Composting, delivering 24 workshops to 247 people. We are also pleased to be part of the group which instigated and developed the Plantation Larder, with it opening in August 2024. Between its launch and the end of December 2024, it redistributed 540kg of food with over 147 customer visits.

We have seen continued uptake of home composters, with 249 provided over the three years. Using an average of 2.54kg per week per bin (from our final compost survey in 2025) this means that over 30 tonnes of food waste a year will be diverted from landfill or transportation out of the Lochaber area.

Alongside and complementary to this has been the rehoming and refurbishment of the Rocket food waste composter to one of the more remote areas of Lochaber which will enable food waste to be processed at Ardtornish Estate. Additional larger scale composting pilots are just underway, and we are hopeful that the enthusiasm and interest sparked for each of these will lead to further larger scale composting solutions.

The reprint of Spirit of the Soil is another cause for celebration as an output and legacy from the programme. The Spirit of the Soil, written by John Wombell, was originally published in 2003, and focuses on traditional practices in Lochaber to enhance soil fertility and was based on interviews with a number of crofters and professional gardeners across the area.

The Fort William Repair Café is another remarkable success from the project, bringing together different groups and individuals who volunteer at the café, repairing a wide variety of household items. To date they have repaired 79 items from eight events, and we believe that as more people become aware of the Repair Café this number will continue to increase.



What is the legacy of the Highland Community Waste Partnership for your organisation?

Lochaber Environmental Group have been focussing on the reduction of waste for over 25 years and the Highland Community Waste Partnership has provided the opportunity to renew contact with people across Lochaber to engage with activities that make sense of a more sustainable use of resources.

We have shared learning with seven other community groups Highland-wide. These relationships will continue after the Highland Community Waste Partnership ends.

Elements of this project will provide a more longer lasting legacy; these include the Plantation Community Larder and the continuation of the Fort William Repair Café.

In relation to composting, we will have a number of larger scale composting initiatives in operation with relevant case studies and information posted to both the Highland Community Waste Partnership legacy and the Highlandcompost.scot websites. We have also worked with the Highland Good Food Partnership to set up the Highland In-Vessel Composting Network Facebook group.

Finally, the Spirit of the Soil reprint and radio programme will still be available for those interested in soil fertility and traditional growing practices.



Lochbroom & Ullapool Community Trust



Running the Re-Love Clothing Fairs helping to change perceptions about pre-loved items and bring people together.

Launching Ullapool Community Composting project creating an opportunity to reduce the amount of food waste ending up in landfill and recycle it into a useful resource.

Upskilling the community by hosting a variety of workshops including fermenting, composting, upcycling, sewing and mending helping attendees build confidence so they can continue at home and share new skills with others.

Campaign encouraging the use of reusable coffee cups and takeaway containers in the village targeting locals and visitors. Posters displayed in cafes, information included on the most recent tourist map and postcards printed to distribute to hotels, B&Bs and self catering accommodation to raise awareness.

Working with LUCT Sustainable Futures working group to come up with ways to encourage reusable coffee cup use in the village and working with businesses to try and implement ways to reduce single use cups including returnable reusable coffee cups in cafes around the village or charging extra for a single use cup.

Series of film screenings looking at the fashion industry and sustainable fashion.

Funding a local compost expert to help the allotments improve their composting system.

Working with other partners to run a series of online Highland-wide events including a film screening of the Nettle Dress and a survival sewing skills workshop with Repair What You Wear, where participants received a basic sewing kit & instructions in the post in advance of the workshop.

Working with other partners to bring together a 'Conscious Consumption' museum exhibit with the aim of raising awareness around the three themes of the Highland Community Waste Partnership. This was displayed at various locations around the Highlands including at the Macphail Centre in Ullapool.

Attending outreach events including Ullapool Village Hall market and Belladrum Music Festival.

Working with event organisers to look at alternative solutions to single-use cups & plastic bottles at events.

What is the legacy of the Highland Community Waste Partnership for your organisation?



The Highland Community Waste Partnership has enabled us to reach a wider section of our community. Clothing fayres and fermentation workshops, especially, have helped us turn the tide and change minds - waste reduction is for all - not just the already converted. The ethos of collaborative and partnership working and shared knowledge is now embedded in our Trust's work, with several collaborative initiatives under way. Sustainability has always been at the heart of our organisation, but the three-year Highland Community Waste Partnership project has renewed, strengthened and expanded this core theme.



Transition Black Isle



Celebration event on the 8 March showcasing the activity and initiatives created from the Highland Community Waste Partnership project covering all three project strands.

Three rounds of Zero Waste Food Challenge workshops (supported Contin, Jamestown & Tarvie Projects group in Contin to deliver their Zero Waste Food Challenge).

Climate Cafe Black Isle Film Nights (September 2024 to March 2025).

Black Isle Repair Cafe's second birthday celebration in June 2024 with wider activities involving other black isle based community groups.

Highland Climate Festival event with the Black Isle Repair Cafe in September 2024.

Developing the Black Isle library of Things with two areas to share assets being delivered in Rosemarkie and Longhouse Cottages (Black Isle Yurts) site, and one in progress with Fortrose Leisure Centre.

Initiatives around packaging and single use items uptaken in No19 Cafe Avoch, Fortrose Library with the National Paper Cup recycling boxes, and Rosemarkie Beach Cafe who are part of Refill, The Highland Cup Movement, and taken on initiatives under the #choosetoreuse initiatives.

What is the legacy of the Highland Community Waste Partnership for your organisation?

The Highland Community Waste Partnership project has been transformative for Transition Black Isle, leaving a lasting legacy across the three key areas of focus—Food Waste and Composting, Share & Repair, and Packaging & Single-Use Items. It has deepened our community's understanding of sustainable practices and provided us with a robust foundation to continue advocating for waste reduction and reuse. The partnerships, resources, and knowledge shared through Highland Community Waste Partnership have empowered us to expand local engagement initiatives, inspiring positive behaviour change and paving the way for a more sustainable future in the Black Isle.





Thurso Community Development Trust



Our partnership with the Highland Community Waste Partnership allowed us to build on the climate change projects that the organisation had already put in place, namely Thurso Eats which targeted food waste and Thurso Grows a community garden project. During the course of the project we had the resource to be able to reach many more people as well as trial a number of initiatives. We also strengthened our partnerships with a number of different organisations including Thurso High School, Dunnet Community Forest and Castle of Mey.

Party Kit – a pack of reusable party items available for loan by members of the community to reduce the use of single use items. The pack was incorporated into our Community Asset Bank which held a variety of items that organisations might only need for one of occasions, eg, Marquee, Gazebos, PA system, cameras, projector and screen, megaphone, litter pickers, etc.

- Swap/Swish events – a number of these events were held throughout the project for items including party clothes, warm items, Christmas Decorations and kitchen equipment.
- Repair Cafes – with a number of seasonal events held throughout the year e.g. spring garden tool repair.
- Reusables for community meals- a successful trial to switch to reusable containers, saving hundreds of tubs from going to landfill.
- Promoting reuse at Thurso High School – including through the Beasolution Campaign, art competition, soft plastics collection and a switch to reusable containers in hospitality classes.
- Fashion Show – in partnership with the local Cancer Research Charity shop, to promote pre-Loved clothing through a range of quality outfits.
- The Cycle of Wool project which looked at a variety of different ways to repurpose local sheeps fleeces.

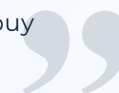


What is the legacy of the Highland Community Waste Partnership for your organisation?

Thurso Community Development Trust has always been very conscious of the environment and the effects of climate change, our newly published strategy includes as one of the core values that as an organisation we are “Environmentally responsible and sustainable”

We intend to continue the projects that we currently have resource for, eg Repair cafes and use the learning from the various pilot projects throughout the 3 years when we are developing new activities.

We also hope that the Cycle of Wool project has raised awareness of the various uses of fleece as well as the sustainability of woollen garments and will encourage more people to use or buy these products.



Velocity Café & Bicycle Workshop



Velocity Café and Bicycle Workshop sadly went into liquidation at the end of 2024. However, up until that point they had made invaluable contributions to the Highland Community Waste Partnership, including the highlights below:

- Promoting reuse, both in Velocity Café, through implementation of a charge on single-use items and supporting campaign and by supporting others to do similar, e.g. working with Eden Court to trial a reusable cup scheme.
- Delivering a number of innovative and successful waste reduction events, including the jumble trail, arts material swap and monthly climate book group and mending circles.
- Working with Highland Council to promote food waste recycling in the Crown Hill area of Inverness
- Working with the Highland Good Food Partnership to establish a community composting project at the Holm Grown community garden.
- Representing the Highland Community Waste Partnership to showcase local waste reduction initiatives for the Green Scotland [BBC Alba documentary](#).



We know that Velocity Café is sorely missed in the Inverness community and hope that their work can continue in some form in the future.





Keep Scotland Beautiful

We developed and delivered Carbon Literacy Project accredited Climate Emergency Training to 53 young people across the Highlands as part of our Youth Climate Advocates project, educating them about climate change and how this links to consumption and waste and encouraging them to take action in their communities.

We piloted the National Cup Recycling Scheme Cup Box model for recycling single-use cups in the Highlands. Boxes were rolled out to 18 locations, including coffee shops, workplaces and community hubs, to recycle up to around 10,000 cups. Over the course of the pilot we collected 3,532 single-use cups for recycling.

We also worked to promote refillable and reusable alternatives to single-use. Our #TryRefill campaign promoted packaging-free shops in the region and our #ChooseToReuse campaign supported businesses to promote reusables to their customers. We also worked with Vytal to pilot returnable food and drink packaging.

What does it mean to your organisation to be part of the Highland Community Waste Partnership?

“The Highland Community Waste Partnership has been an opportunity to build ground-up learning around our ongoing work to address single-use packaging, and deepen our understanding of how interventions can work in remote areas like the Highlands. We will continue to build on this going forward.

In addition, the Youth Climate Advocates training developed will be adapted for a wider audience and rolled out to other parts of Scotland as an opportunity for accredited Carbon Literacy training and meaningful action in their local communities.”



www.KeepScotlandBeautiful.org/highland-community-waste

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