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# Community Ownership in Scotland 2022

3 October 2023



# Community Ownership in Scotland 2022: Land, Buildings and Other Assets Owned by Community Groups

## Key Points

This annual publication provides summary statistics for 2022 of assets owned by community groups in Scotland. It is usually published in the autumn of the following year the statistics refer to.

At December 2022:

- There were 754 assets in community ownership in Scotland, an increase of 16 (2%) from 738 in 2021. These are owned by 505 groups.
- Most assets in community ownership are land and buildings. These cover an area of 212,342 hectares, which is 2.7% of the total land area of Scotland.
- Na h-Eileanan Siar contains 153,630 ha of community owned land, 72% of the total land area in community ownership.
- The Highland and Argyll and Bute local authorities together contain 274 assets, 36% of all assets in community ownership.
- There are 26 assets which are not land or buildings. These include a ferry, a small boat, a pontoon for berthing watercraft, a single car transporter and salmon fishing rights for a river.
- The performance of the National Indicator on community ownership is maintaining, as the increase in the number of assets was less than 3%.

# Introduction

This publication reports the number of assets in community ownership which are recorded by the Scottish Government.

There are several initiatives which have been put in place to enable community ownership. The [Scottish Land Fund](#), as it is now known, was founded in 2001. It now supports both rural and urban communities to become more resilient and sustainable through the ownership and management of assets. Legislation concerning land reform commencing in 2004 and 2016 enhanced existing community right to buy.

[The Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) introduced new legislation giving communities the right to request to buy, lease, manage or use land and buildings belonging to local authorities, Scottish public bodies or Scottish Ministers.

Due to increased focus on community ownership the Scottish Government asked the [Scottish Land Commission](#) to review existing community right to buy mechanisms and recommend how best to enable community ownership.

Following the recommendations of the Scottish Land Commission a [National Indicator on community ownership](#) was developed and included in the [National Performance Framework](#) in 2019, and which is informed by this publication.

As at December 2022 the performance of the [National Indicator on community ownership is maintaining](#), as the increase in the number of assets was less than 3%.

Please note that the statistics within this report which are for 2021 and earlier years have been revised taking into account updates which have been made to the underlying data. The statistics may therefore differ from those published in previous reports. No comparison should be made between the statistics presented in this report and the statistics from previously published reports.

These statistics are designated as Official Statistics in accordance with the Statistics and Service Registration Act 2007. They have been produced to high professional standards set out in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

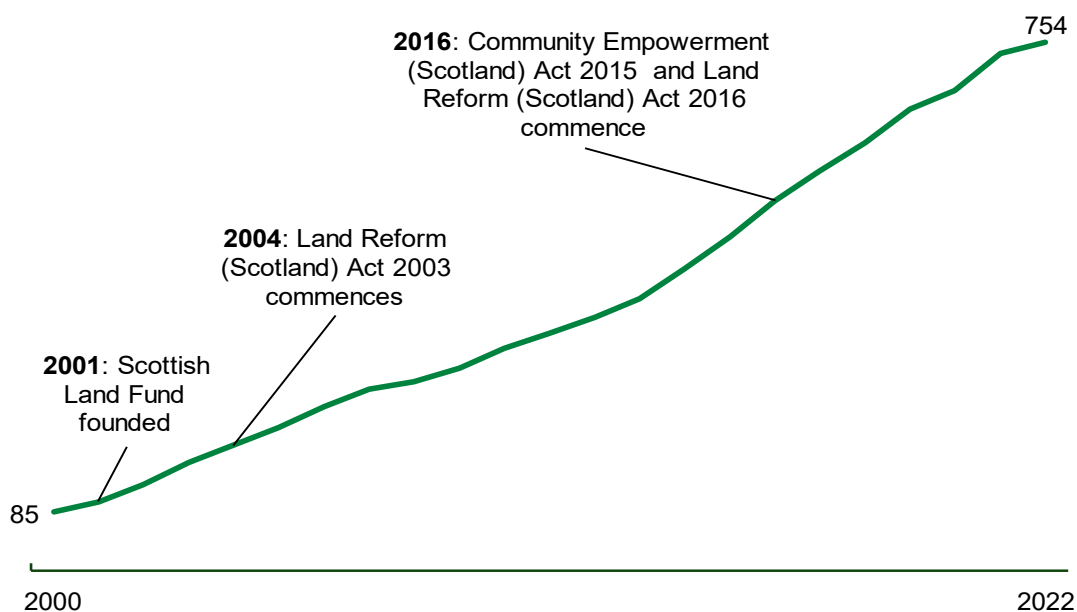
Further information on Official Statistics is published by the [UK Statistics Authority](#).

# Assets: changes over time

Assets in community ownership in 2022: 754

**Figure 1: A steady upward trend in community owned assets has been seen since 2000**

The number of community owned assets recorded in Scotland as of 31 December 2022 by year ownership was taken, from 2000 to 2022



Assets where the transfer date is unknown or earlier than 2000 are included in the total for 2000. This accounts for 9% of the assets in community ownership as at December 2022.

The figure is available in the [Figures](#) supporting document.

The number of assets in community ownership in 2022 was 754, 16 (2%) higher than in 2021. There has been an increase in recent years with over half of assets (437) acquired after 2010. The figure shows the initiatives and legislation coming into effect in 2001, 2004 and 2016, which supported community ownership.

The process of taking an asset into community ownership can be complex and lengthy. Most community groups apply for funding to help with the purchase, for example from the [Scottish Land Fund](#). This generally requires them to present evidence of community engagement, support for the proposed acquisition and that the current owner is willing to sell.

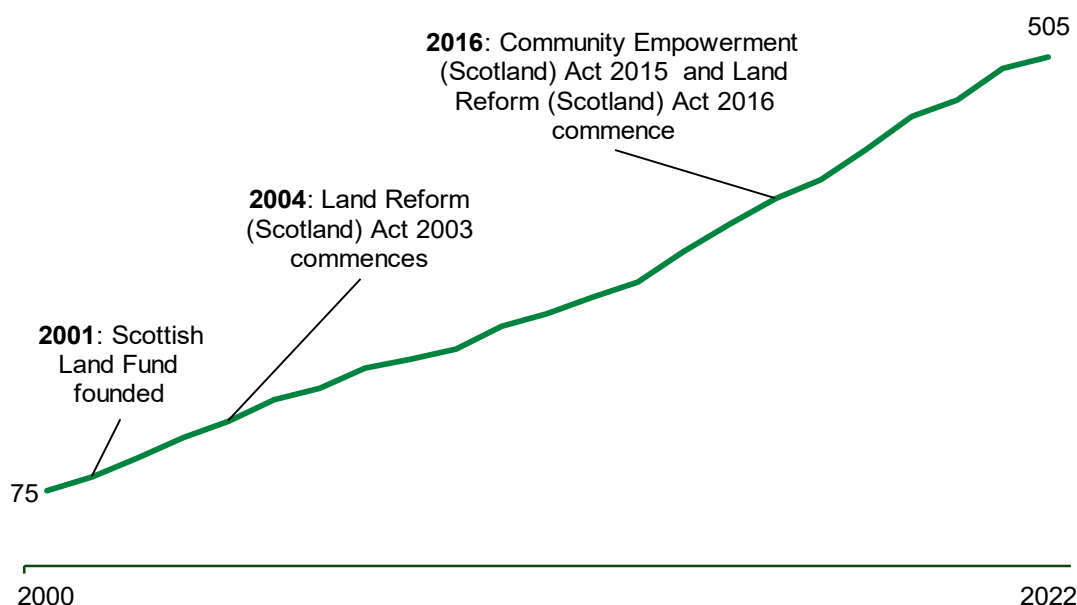
There can be a delay between the introduction of an initiative to support community ownership and the resulting asset purchase.

# Community Groups Owning Assets: changes over time

Number of community groups in 2022: 505

**Figure 2: More than sixfold increase in community groups owning assets since 2000**

The number of community groups owning assets recorded in Scotland as of 31 December 2022 by the earliest year the group acquired the assets currently owned, from 2000 to 2022



Note the figure does not indicate the number of groups which owned assets during this period. Community groups are excluded where, as of 2022, they no longer own any assets.

The figure is available in the [Figures](#) supporting document.

The number of groups who own assets in 2022 was 505, compared to 75 groups in 2000 or earlier. This trend is similar to that of the number of assets with a steady increase observed from 2000, reflecting that most groups own only one asset.

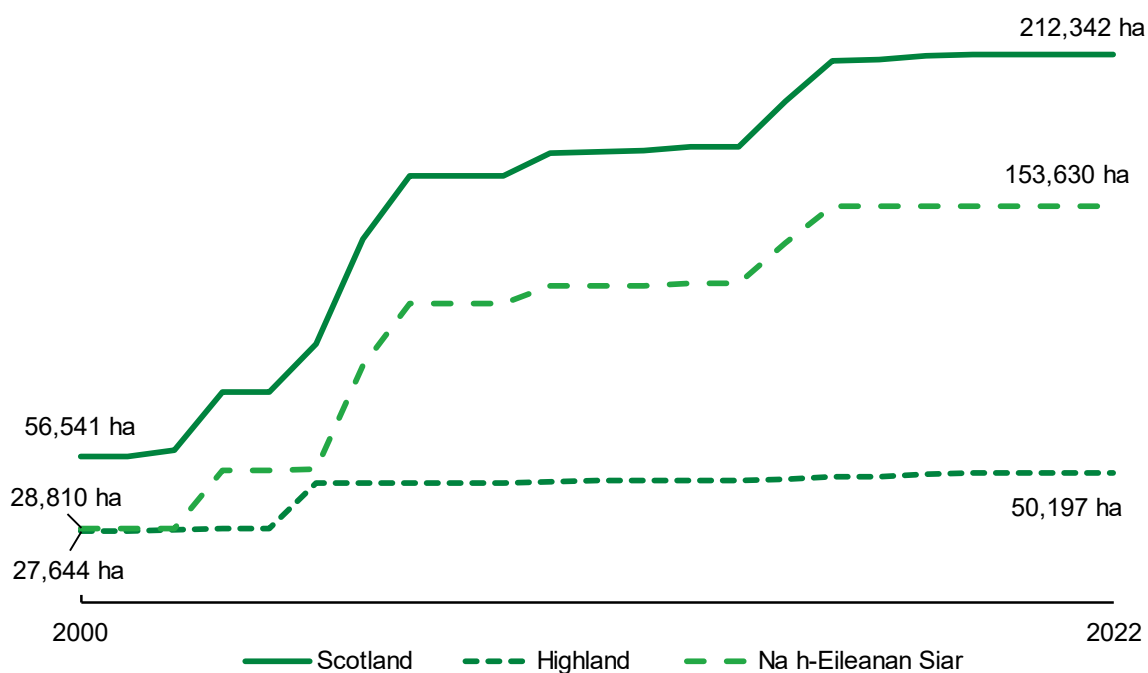
There are 130 groups which own more than one asset; the most assets owned by a single group is 13. The local authorities with the most community groups are Highland (127, 25%) and Argyll and Bute (58, 11%).

# Area in Community Ownership: Changes over time

Area in community ownership in 2022: 212,342 hectares

**Figure 3: There is approaching four times as much community owned land compared to 2000**

The area of land in community ownership recorded in Scotland, Highland and Na h-Eileanan Siar as of 31 December 2022 by year ownership was taken, from 2000 to 2022



The figure is available in the [Figures](#) supporting document.

The area of land in community ownership in 2022 was 212,342 hectares, an increase of 16 hectares from 212,326 hectares in 2021.

The area of land in community ownership has increased by 155,801 hectares compared to 2000.

There are considerable differences in the increase in area from year to year, due to the purchase of a small number of very large estates. These large estates are located in Na h-Eileanan Siar and Highland.

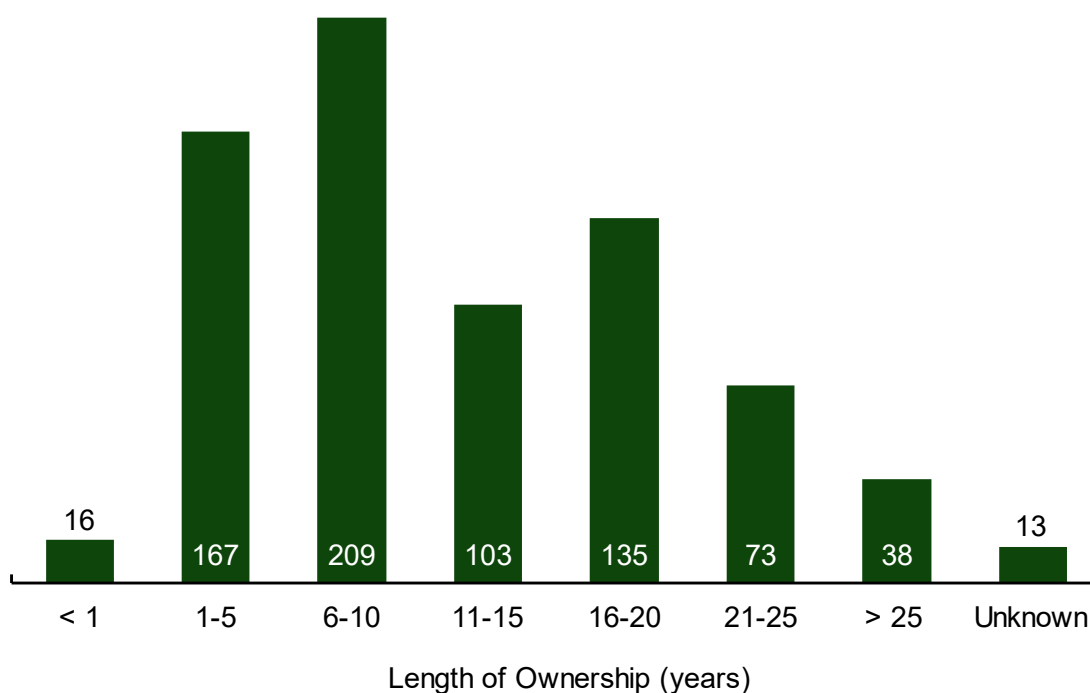
The area in community ownership in the rest of Scotland has also started to increase. In the last ten years the area of community owned land in the rest of Scotland has increased by almost three quarters.

# Assets by Length of Ownership, 2022

New assets in community ownership in 2022: 16

**Figure 4: Just over half of assets have been owned for 10 years or less**

The number of community owned assets recorded in Scotland as of 31 December 2022 by length of ownership



Length of ownership is calculated using the year an asset was transferred to community ownership. Should a transfer date later come to be known or changed from its current value, the data will be revised.

The figure is available in the [Figures](#) supporting document.

Of the community owned assets in 2022, 392 were acquired in the last ten years, with 38 (5%) acquired more than 25 years ago. Just over a fifth of assets (167) were acquired between one and five years ago, with 2% (16) acquired in the last year.

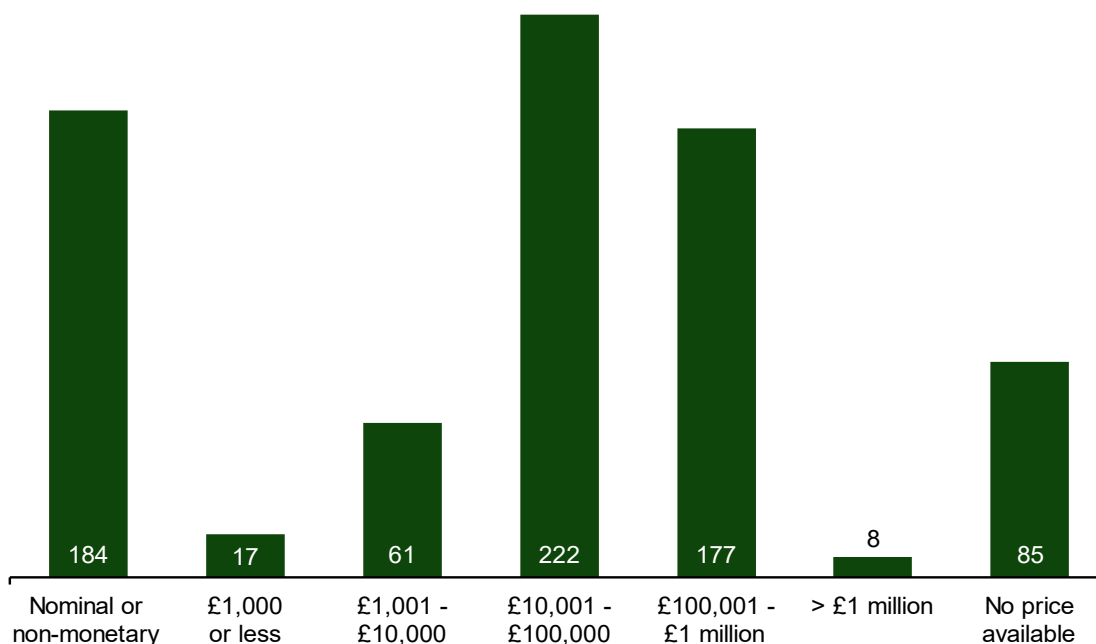
There were 13 assets (2%) where the year of ownership is unknown or currently unavailable. It is likely that these are longstanding community owned assets as it is more difficult to find the year of ownership for older records that are not on the Land Register.

# Assets by Purchase Price, 2022

The most common price category was £10,001-£100,000: 222 assets

**Figure 5: Prices paid for community owned assets range from no cost or a nominal amount to over £1 million**

The number of community owned assets recorded in Scotland as of 31 December 2022 by price paid (converted to 2022 prices)



The figure is available in the [Figures](#) supporting document.

The non-monetary category consists of a variety of legal processes by which an asset can be transferred without money being exchanged, e.g. a gift or legacy. Prices under £100 are taken to be nominal.

To give a fair comparison over time all purchase prices have been converted to 2022 prices.

Excluding non-monetary transactions and nominal amounts, a total of £1.9 million was paid for the 16 assets acquired in 2022.

The price of an asset can range from its market value down to a nominal sum paid or a non-monetary transaction. Most prices have been verified against the Land Register. Of the 112 land based assets not on the Land Register, 79 do not have price information available. For the remaining 33 assets, prices have been taken from the original source.

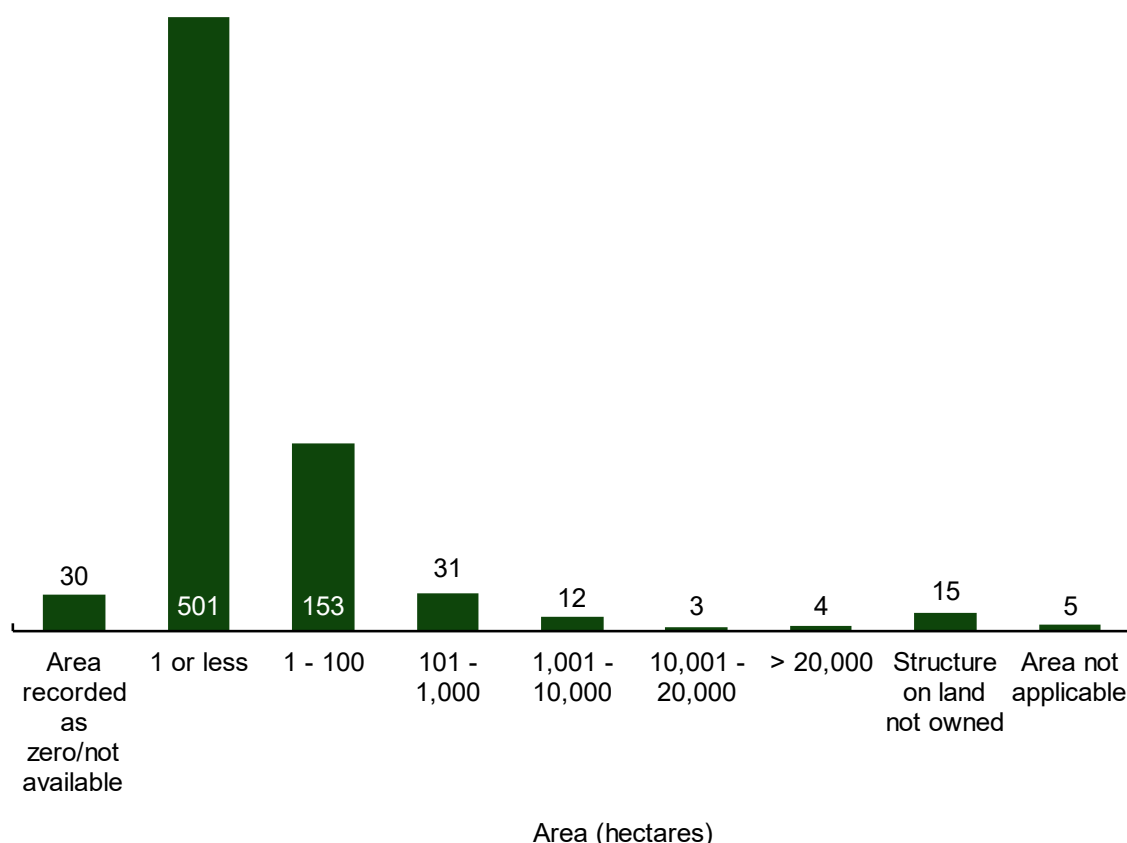


# Assets by Size, 2022

Assets one hectare or less in size: 66%

**Figure 6: Four assets comprise 52% of the land area in community ownership**

The number of community owned assets recorded in Scotland as of 31 December 2022 by area (hectares)



The figure is available in the [Figures](#) supporting document.

More than half of the area of land in community ownership is comprised of four assets, each greater than 20,000 hectares.

By contrast 66% of assets have an area of one hectare or less, with a combined area of less than 0.05% of the total area. This reflects that most of the land area in community ownership has been acquired in the form of whole estates.

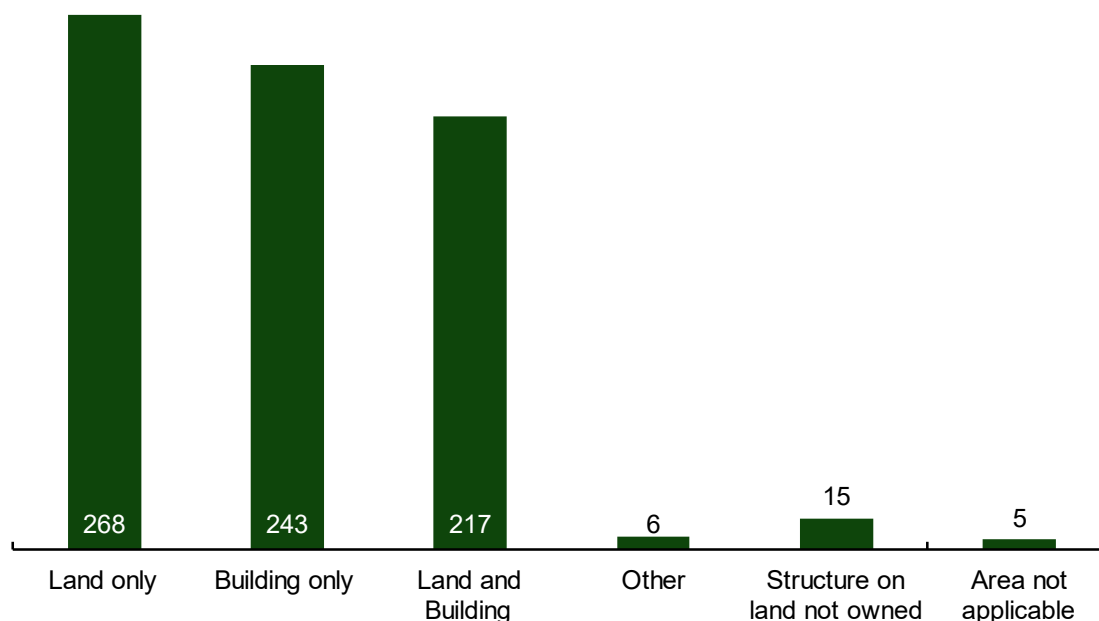
The assets with the area recorded as zero or not available are recorded on the paper based General Register of Sasines, where area figures are not readily available, and it has not been possible to find the area from another source.

# Assets by Type, 2022

Community owned assets which are exclusively land: 268

**Figure 7: Almost all community owned assets are land and/or buildings**

The number of community owned assets recorded in Scotland as of 31 December 2022 by asset type



The figure is available in the [Figures](#) supporting document.

Of the 16 assets which came into community ownership in 2022, eight were land and buildings, four were buildings, three land only and one was a structure on land not owned.

There are 268 (36%) land only community owned asset, with just under a third (243) just buildings and 217 land and buildings.

Most assets will fall into the category of land, buildings or both. There are six assets categorised as 'Other' which are either piers, slipways, reservoirs or water intakes. The five non-land based assets are a ferry, a small boat, a pontoon for berthing watercraft, a single car transporter and salmon fishing rights for a river.

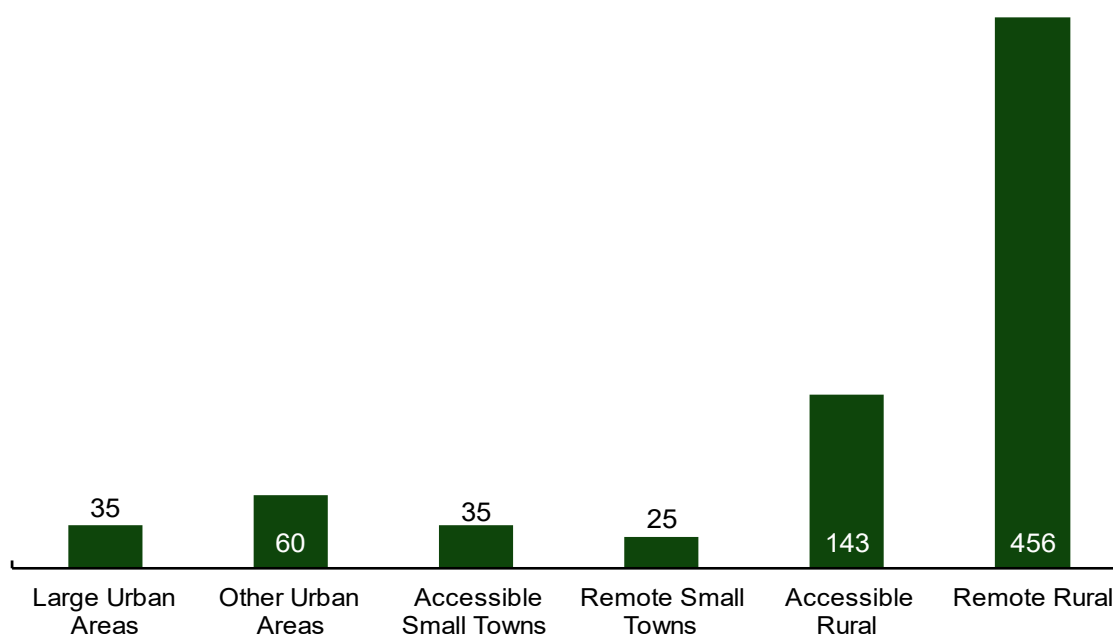
There may be a degree of subjectivity in how categories have been assigned, e.g. a building with a very small area of land. The classification of an asset may also change after a community group takes ownership.

# Assets by Urban Rural Classification 2020, 2022

Community owned assets in remote rural areas in 2022: 456

**Figure 8: Six out of ten community owned assets are located in remote rural areas**

The number of community owned assets recorded in Scotland as of 31 December 2022 by Six-fold Urban Rural Classification 2020



The figure is available in the [Figures](#) supporting document.

Of the 16 assets which came into community ownership in 2022, six were in remote rural areas and five in accessible rural areas. The remaining five were spread across urban areas.

Remote rural areas contain 60% of community owned assets (456) and 98% of community owned land. A further 143 assets (19%) are in accessible rural areas, comprising just over 1% of the land area.

While 21% of assets (155) are located in urban areas, these assets only comprise less than 0.5% of the area in community ownership.

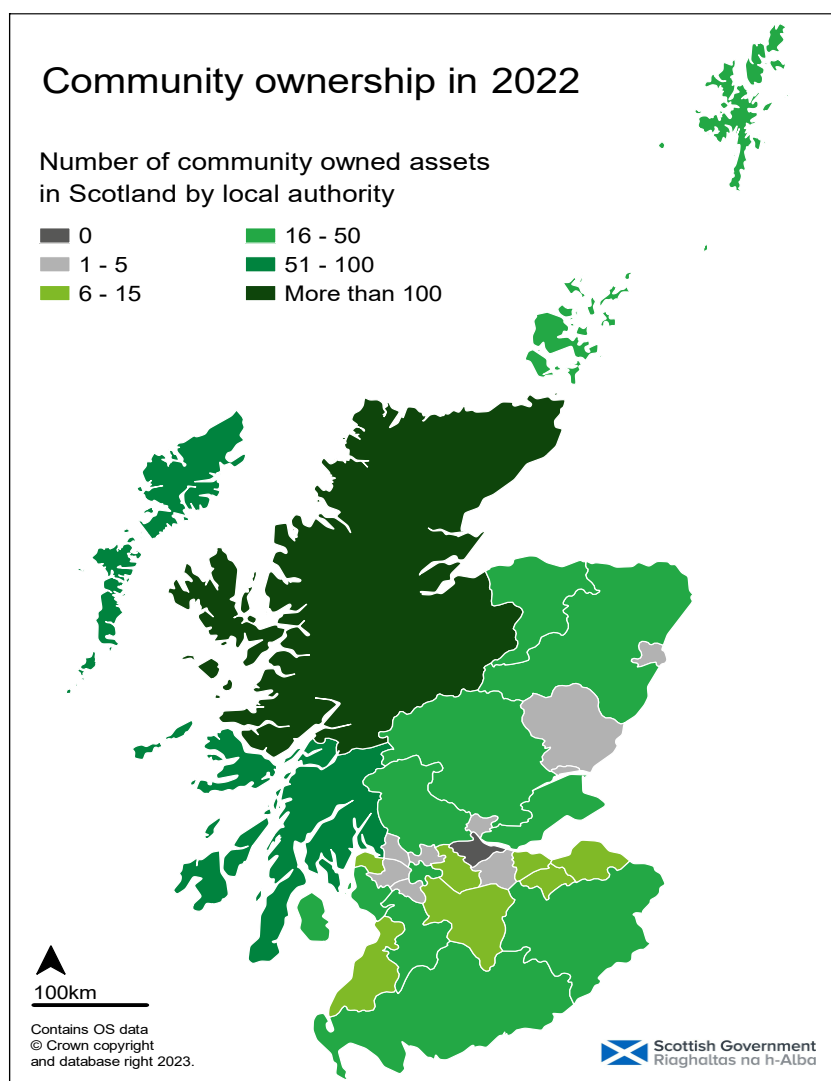
The Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification is assigned according to the address/location of the asset. Assets with large areas may straddle multiple classes. Further information on the [Classification](#) can be found on the Scottish Government website.

# Assets by Local Authority, 2022

Community owned assets in Highland and Argyll and Bute: 274

## Figure 9: Community ownership is spread across almost all local authorities

The number of community owned assets recorded in Scotland as of 31 December 2022 by local authority



The figure is available in the [Figures](#) supporting document. The figure is also available separately in the [Map](#) supporting document.

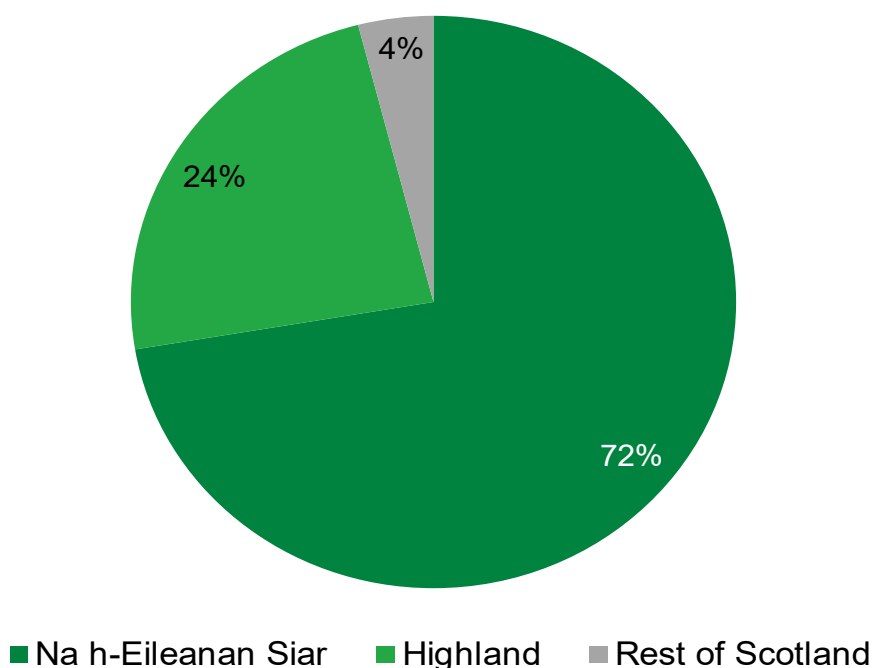
The local authorities with the most community owned assets currently recorded are Highland (177) and Argyll and Bute (97); Falkirk is the only local authority with no community owned assets currently recorded. The map shows that there are fewer community owned assets across the central belt. The map also illustrates that most community owned assets are in rural areas.

# Area of Assets for Na h-Eileanan Siar, Highland and the Rest of Scotland, 2022

Community owned land in Highland and Na h-Eileanan Siar: 203,827 hectares

**Figure 10: The vast majority of community owned land is in Highland and Na h-Eileanan Siar**

Percentage Share of Community Owned Land recorded in Scotland as of 31 December 2022, for Na h-Eileanan Siar, Highland and Rest of Scotland



The figure is available in the [Figures](#) supporting document. A breakdown of the area by all local authorities is available in Table 11a of the [Tables](#) supporting document. Additional geographical breakdowns are available in Tables 12, 13 and 14.

For Highland its share of the land area is approximately equal to its share of number of assets (177, 23%) and community groups (127, 25%).

By contrast Na h-Eileanan Siar has 69 assets (9%) and 35 community groups (7%). This is a reflection that all four of the largest assets (above 20,000 hectares) are located within Na h-Eileanan Siar.

Over half of the land area in Na h-Eileanan Siar is community owned.

# Glossary

## **Community**

This term means a place where people live which can be clearly defined, such as the boundaries of a specific town or village or specific postcode units. Community groups must draw their membership from a community defined in this way.

## **Community Group**

This term means a group where membership is open to a local community, any membership fee is only a nominal amount, the group has a defined aim of benefiting the local community and is non-profit making.

The specific legal status of groups can vary, dependent on the scale of the projects they wish to undertake. Only groups actually owning assets are included in this report.

## **Ownership**

Ownership is defined in the legal sense: A legal title coupled with exclusive legal right to possession. This excludes instances where a community group rents or leases an asset or any other arrangement where a community group has the use of an asset, but ownership is not held by a community group.

## **Asset**

This term is used to describe areas of land, buildings and anything else of substantial value a community group may own. This is to reflect that is it not just areas of land that can bring benefits to a community.

An asset is counted where it is the subject of a single transaction. Where assets are acquired in a series of transactions, e.g. areas of land which are next to each other and are acquired over time, the assets in each transaction will be counted separately.

## **Transfer Date**

This is the date at which a community group took ownership of an asset, either by purchase or as a gift, legacy or other non-monetary transaction.

# Data and Methodology

This data has been collected from a variety of sources: bodies providing funding to community groups to purchase assets, details of asset transfers from relevant public sector organisations and directly from community groups. The data has been collated and quality assured against the [Land Register](#) held by Registers of Scotland.

Further information on the data sources and methods to compile the data can be found in the accompanying [User Guide](#).

We are aware there may be instances of community ownership which are not currently included in this publication. Please use this [form](#) to report assets which are in community ownership so they can be considered for inclusion in the next Community Ownership in Scotland statistical publication.

Please tell us what you think of the publication by completing our [user survey](#).

## Data tables and figures

The full set of data tables are available online in the [Tables](#) supporting document. The figures in this publication, and the data used to create them, are available online in the [Figures](#) supporting document. The [Map](#) is available in a separate supporting document.

The dataset used to produce the statistics will be published following publication of this report. The timescale for this is yet to be determined but users will be informed once it is published via [ScotStat](#). This dataset will be prepared so as to exclude any information which must remain confidential. The dataset will contain the following information for each asset included in the statistics:

- name of the group owning the asset
- name of the asset
- postcode of the asset
- local authority of the asset
- area of asset (where applicable)
- asset type
- year of transfer

# Tell us what you think

We are always interested to hear from our users about how our statistics are used, and how they can be improved.

## Feedback survey

We would appreciate it if you would complete our short [feedback survey](#) on this publication.

## Enquiries

For enquiries about this publication please contact:

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