

Building the Future of Raasay's Community Stores

Press Pack

A community-led project on the Isle of Raasay



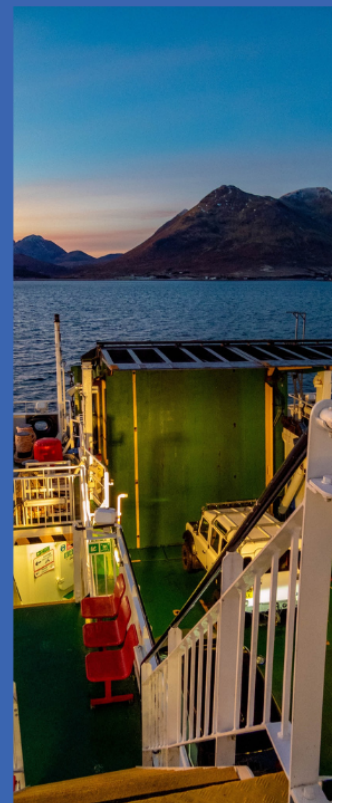
www.raasay.com/CORRA-fundraising

Project Overview

The community on the Isle of Raasay is raising £1.5 million to transform the Old Free Presbyterian Church into a new, expanded community shop and post office.

This is a forward-looking project designed to create a larger, more effective space that reflects the needs of modern island life.

The current shop plays a central role in the community, but its limited size now restricts what it can offer. This development will provide a long-term solution, supporting both residents and visitors for years to come.



ABOUT RAASAY

The Isle of Raasay is a small island off the west coast of Scotland, known for its strong sense of community, rich heritage, and striking natural landscape. At the last official count in 2023 the population was 179.

Island life depends on local services and shared spaces. Community-led initiatives play a vital role in maintaining these, ensuring the island remains a sustainable and vibrant place to live.

In 2025, CalMac ferry carryings data recorded 98,946 passengers travelling on the Raasay route, underscoring significant visitor movement and interest in the island as a destination.



WHY THIS PROJECT MATTERS

The existing shop is an essential part of everyday life but it has reached its limits.

- The space is small and restricts what can be offered
- It limits how people move and interact within the shop
- It cannot fully meet the needs of a growing community

This project provides an opportunity to build something better, a space that works for today and the future.



Our Vision

The project will transform the Old Free Church into a modern, expanded community shop and post office.

The new space will:

- Offer a wider range of goods and services
- Improve the overall shopping experience
- Provide a welcoming environment for locals and visitors

It is a practical and positive investment in the Raasay's future.

Community Impact

This project will deliver long-term benefits for the island:

- Strengthening local infrastructure
- Supporting employment opportunities
- Improving access to essential goods and services
- Enhancing the visitor experience

As a community-owned initiative, it reflects the needs and priorities of the people who live on Raasay.

The latest unofficial population count is 188 (Spring 2026)

For more information on Raasay & its population visit:

Raasay.com/CNIResidents-Survey

Community Voices

“The island shop is vital to a resilient community and our numbers are increasing annually. Our shop needs to be bigger giving more room to be an accessible hub for islanders of all ages and provide space for a bigger range of healthy foods.”

“A large community shop is vital to meet the needs of a growing self supporting island population.”

“I believe the new shop will give new exciting possibilities and opportunities for Raasay. A multi functional space working on all sorts of levels – both practically (providing larger physical space for shoppers)and it could help with mental health/well being (help with loneliness, a beautiful place to meet, to gather and meet new people) and a shop where one can buy wholesome and good quality food. I’m excited to see how the space can be used, not only to provide a much needed bigger shop, but also the space for the community, the new shop will provide – bring it on, yes please!”

“I’m looking forward to visiting a community shop where it will have space and light exhibiting delicious wholesome wares. It will also be such a contrasting work space for our wonderful shop team instead of having to deliver in a cramped; dark space. It’ll also be great to meet for a quick cuppa and chat! As well as showing how a small community business can expand and develop, this move will allow us to grow as a community asset and not just as a business.”

Image Library

A selection of high-resolution images are available to download.

These include:

- Landscapes of the Isle of Raasay
- The current shop
- The Old Free Church
- Community life on the island

DOWNLOAD



Key Facts & Background Information

- £1.5 million fundraising target
- Community-owned project
- Located on the Isle of Raasay
- Redevelopment of the Old Free Church
- New shop and post office

Background Information:

On 17 th June 2024, 47 members of the Raasay Community met at Raasay Community Hall to discuss the decision by the Free Presbyterian Church to sell Raasay Church and Manse.

Those attending represented various community groups including the Community Council, local development trust and organisations that own and operate assets on Raasay. There was also representation from local churches and faith groups. The meeting was followed up by offering the community the opportunity to add their name to a list of supporters and this gathered over 90 signatures. The outcome was a clear desire for the church to be brought into community ownership.

The Community of Raasay Retail Association (CORRA), who operate Raasay Community Stores, supported by the Raasay Development Trust's Development Officer, took forward the task of securing the funding and acquisition of the church.

At the end of March, 2024, CORRA were delighted to announce that they had taken ownership of the Raasay Free Presbyterian Church. The development of the church will allow for a larger, more accessible shop, as well as creating additional space for local suppliers, and for the community and visitors to gather. The renovation of the church will also secure the continued use of one of Raasay's great historic buildings.

The purchase of the church has been supported by a legacy left to CORRA as part of the estate of Margaret Moodie. Margaret, who was a descendent of the Clan MacLeod of Raasay, was a highly respected resident of Raasay for many years. In addition, HIE, The Scottish Land Fund and the Highland Council Community Regeneration Fund provided funding to enable CORRA to reach this stage.

Support

There are several ways to support the project:

- Make a donation
- Organise or take part in a fundraising event
- Purchase items from the project's online shop or in store
- Share our story on social media

Every contribution helps bring the project closer to reality.

Find out more: www.raasay.com/CORRA-fundraising

MEDIA CONTACT

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Building a stronger future for the Isle of Raasay