

# Achiltibuie Old Schoolhouse

Achiltibuie, Coigach, Highland

May 2023



- > **Excellent community driven project by Coigach Community Development Company**
- > **Conversion of an old schoolhouse into two affordable flats to rent**
- > **An exemplar rural housing project**
- > **Wide social, environmental and economic benefits to the area**

**A community-owned disused schoolhouse in the remote community of Achiltibuie, Coigach, Wester Ross has been given a new lease of life.**

The Coigach Community Development Company (CCDC) is delighted with the renovation of the old schoolhouse, which had not been used in over five years.

The Highland Council transferred the building to the community via the CCDC, after they submitted a proposal to develop the building into two comfortable housing units to serve the community.

## Partners and funders

The Scottish Governments Rural Housing Fund, The Nationwide Foundation Empty Homes Fund, Highland Councils Empty Homes Grant, Highland Council Discretionary Fund, and Highlands & Islands Enterprise



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## Aims

The project aimed to provide the community of Achiltibuie with two new affordable flats to rent, transforming the property into two flats instead of one large dwelling to maximize the potential to provide local housing for key workers and local people, in a community which is severely lacking affordable housing.

Award-winning David Somerville Architects redesigned the property, improving the standard with increased insulation and a responsive heating system resulting in low running costs. The finished property consists of one 2-bedroom property, and one 1-bedroom property.



## Funding model

The conversion was made possible by the Communities Housing Trust (CHT) receiving funding from the Nationwide Foundation, through its Decent, Affordable Homes strategy. This funding took the form of both grant and loan funding, and also contributed towards the completion of another property last year, Druim Garbh, owned by the Acharacle Community Company.

Working in partnership, additional funding was secured from the Highland Council, in the form of an Empty Homes Grant, as well as through their Ward Discretionary Fund. An application was then made to the Scottish Government's Rural Housing Fund, with the hope that funding could be applied for to cover the funding shortfall in the project. The Scottish Government's new Rural Housing Fund was instrumental in funding this Achiltibuie renovation. **This is the first successful project to be completed with assistance from the Rural Housing Fund.**

Working with The Scottish Government, the Nationwide Foundation and The Highland Council has allowed CHT and CCDC to bring about one of the many pipeline community-owned housing projects in the Highlands. Achiltibuie has benefitted greatly from two new fit-for-purpose affordable homes. The project demonstrates the great benefits derived from cooperation with the community and the wider partnership of those involved.

## Future

The project is now complete, and both homes have been allocated to locals within the community. A minute of agreement and a lease is in place between CHT and CCDC. This allows CHT to manage the property on their behalf for a period of 21 years after which the home reverts to the control of the community company. CHT intends to lease the home to tenants which fit with the agreed allocations policy on a Short Assured Tenancy basis.

