



- > **Community driven project**
- > **10 sustainable homes for low-cost home ownership**
- > **Land purchased through Forestry Commission Scotland's National Forest Land Scheme for affordable housing**
- > **Primary school remains open**
- > **Timber provided for school project**
- > **Local timber and materials used**
- > **Low carbon footprint**
- > **Worked with 39 local companies**
- > **Employment and training opportunities during build**
- > **A housing model which may be used in other communities**
- > **Additional land being considered for a forest croft**

Set in the heart of the Cairngorms National Park on land previously owned by Forestry Commission Scotland, Ardgeal is now a thriving addition to the community of Kincaig.

This community driven project was delivered over two phases. Ten sustainable timber homes were built by local contractors A W Laings, and designed by award winning architect, David Somerville.

Local trainees were involved in the construction of six homes, with much of the felled timber being reused on the site. Local materials were used where possible to minimise impacts on this environmentally sensitive area.

The tenure of the homes is low cost home ownership, with a Rural Housing Burden with a pre-emption right and an equity share (8 homes @ 65% and 2 homes @ 70%) that protects the ongoing affordability if they are sold in the future.

## Community involvement

The Kincaig Community Council approached the Communities Housing Trust (CHT) in 2006 following concerns over the closure of the local primary school. This sparked a survey of local household need, to establish the most suitable house sizes and tenures, followed by a search for suitable development sites. Ardgeal was identified by the community who were involved in all of the key stages of development, such as; the successful application to the National Forest Land Scheme; density of homes; selection of the architect; review of phase 1; design of phase 2 and the community provided strong support for planning applications.

When the first phase of four homes was developed, the community agreed a suitable allocations policy with CHT, which was used for both phases. Households with a local connection are now living in all of the homes which has satisfied the brief of sustaining the primary school roll.

The community council chose the name "Ardgeal" by referring to old maps of the area. The name is Gaelic and "àrd" means height or promontory, and "geal" means white.

## Successes

The regular attendance at community council meetings was a key factor in effective community engagement. This route allowed the members of the community council and local people to discuss the elements of the project together with staff from CHT. This gave the community a voice and the end result is a more engaged and involved community and a good relationship with CHT into the future.

Local materials and trades were used which presented employment and training opportunities.

The community councillors acted as an intermediary for the residents who had questions throughout the process and they continue to be involved and engaged.



## Challenges

Time had to be allowed to engage properly with the wider community throughout the project. Adding consultation and trying to reach consensus is a slow process. In the first phase, changes to the layout and specification of the homes was required to meet the budget, and this had to be carefully explained and discussed. The main challenges were finding a suitable funding mechanism to deliver the first phase of the project. There were many economic changes at this time which impacted its delivery, and the second phase was initially postponed due to changes in grant funding and finance.

