

Colonsay

Community-led housing initiative

July 2023



- > CHT supported the community, via the Colonsay Community Development Company, to purchase two pieces of land and now project-manage the development
- > One site will provide up to 24 affordable homes of mixed tenures (self-build, Low Cost Home Ownership, social rent), expanding the island's housing stock
- > The other site will provide 2 business units, studio and work space
- > Project will help grow and sustain the island's population and wider economy, retaining or attracting younger people in a live/work situation
- > Houses are suitable for elderly people and will reduce social isolation and fuel poverty
- > An excellent example of community-led housing turning around a fragile situation

Colonsay is one of the more remote Scottish islands, with a small, aging population of 130 people and a worrying lack of young people. This is due in part to a lack of affordable housing and over 40% of the island's houses being used as holiday or second homes. On the rare occasions homes are offered for sale they are often priced above the means of the local people.

For many years, the Colonsay Community Development Company (CCDC) has been attempting to rectify this by trying to purchase land on which to build affordable housing and business units.

With the help of the Communities Housing Trust (CHT), the purchase of two pieces of land was completed in April 2020, one on the south side of Scalasaig to provide up to 24 affordable homes of mixed tenure, and the other on the north side of Scalasaig to build 2 business units.

Colonsay: Community-led housing

Community and partner involvement

CHT is project managing the development on behalf of CCDC & MOWI. The two pieces of land at Scalasaig were purchased with funds from the Scottish Land Fund, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Argyll and Bute Council and MOWI.

Employers who cannot expand or establish businesses when there is nowhere to house new employees, are also keen for new housing on Colonsay.

Rural and Islands Housing Fund (RIHF) have joined the project as an industry partner, contributing substantially to development costs. Three of the houses will be on land leased by the community to MOWI to accommodate their local workers.

If and when these properties are no longer required by MOWI, an agreement is in place to implement a model whereby the housing will revert to community ownership, offering further affordable accommodation to the island population.

The project has also benefitted from an Inspiring Scotland grant, to support the supply of electricity to the new homes, as part of the £2m Islands Green Recovery Programme (Prògram Ath-Shlànachaidh Uaine nan Eilean).

Future

Construction began in early 2022.

CHT continue to project manage and progress the project on behalf of CCDC, and it is hoped this will provide the opportunities for growth and development on the island that have been needed for so long, to ensure the economic and social wellbeing of the community well into the future.

The development will provide homes for rent and also for sale under the Scottish Government New Supply Shared Equity Scheme (NSSE).

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