



THE HIGHLANDS SMALL COMMUNITIES HOUSING TRUST

Making Affordable Rural Homes a Reality

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COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



We have recently moved office to **7 Ardross Terrace, Inverness**. It is just two doors along from our old office but much more spacious!

If you have community needs or a project you would like to discuss with one of our team or are interested in finding out more about what we do, please feel free to pop into the office. Our kettle is always on and we are always happy to have visitors. Alternatively, you can phone or drop us an email (contact details are at the top of the page).

LOCHABER DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

We are delighted to have recently entered into a 3 year agreement with Lochaber Housing Association (LHA) that will see HSCHT acting as Agents in the development of over 30 affordable homes per year for a 3 year period. These homes will be the first developed in over 2 years by LHA and houses will be delivered at:

- Lochside, Fort William
- Heathercroft, Fort William—Seventeen flats for social rent & four houses for shared equity
- Strontian—Three houses for social rent

Under HSCHT's Rent to Buy and Greener Homes scheme, homes are also being developed in Arisaig, Mallaig, Strontian, Acharacle and Invergarry. We look forward to keeping you updated on the progress of all these developments.

EMPTY HOMES FUND

Following a successful application to The Nationwide Foundation's Empty Homes Funding Programme, HSCHT were pleased to recently receive £120,000, in a mix of grant and loan funding, to bring back into use two empty homes which are currently uninhabitable. Once renovated, these properties will then be rented at an affordable rate to local, low income families.

Throughout the Highlands there are many homes that remain empty. By working through the process of bringing empty homes back into use, HSCHT aims to identify the technical, statutory and financial challenges and make recommendations for solutions that will allow more empty homes to be brought back into use in rural communities.

The project is a collaboration led by HSCHT which is leasing one of the two properties from Acharacle Community Company. Work on this project is due to start Autumn 2014.

HSCHT are in the process of identifying the second empty home to be renovated under the project. If you have a community owned property that might be suitable, please get in touch.



SAVE THE DATE - HSCHT OPEN DAY & AGM

We are holding our annual open day and our AGM on **Friday, 26 September** at the Mercure Hotel in Inverness. The morning session will focus on community empowerment and community housing options. A number of our partner organisations will also be presenting and exhibiting on the day so come along and discuss how we can make rural communities more sustainable by working together. This is a free event and for community groups that are HSCHT members, we will pay for travel expenses for 1 member from each community to attend the event. To reserve your place or to find out about becoming a member of HSCHT, email

eileen.irvine@hscht.co.uk

We would like to thank our sponsors Panasonic Heating and Cooling Systems for sponsoring this year's event again. Full programme details to follow soon.



CAIRNGORMS SKILLS PROJECT (CSP)

Following a number of successful funding applications, the CSP has secured the majority of funding required to allow the project to continue for at least a further 3 years. This great news ensures that the project can carry on assisting young people in the Cairngorms area with training and employment opportunities. Since the project began in 2010, over 60 young people have taken part in the project, 85% of whom have moved into jobs, education or training.

Students for Year 5 of the project have been recruited and are due to start at Inverness College in August. The project is going back to its roots and focusing on construction and forestry related disciplines, giving 14 young people from the Cairngorms National Park area the opportunity to gain a formal qualification at Inverness College whilst also gaining practical experience on work related projects.

We are currently looking at rolling out the project Highland wide shortly and hope to provide further information soon. To keep up to date with all the latest CSP news visit the new website www.cairngormsskillsproject.org

Thank you to the new CSP funders



LOTTERY FUNDED



ARDGEAL, PHASE 2

The six shared equity houses in phase 2 of the Ardgeal project are now finished and this completes the fantastic 10 house development of highly sustainable homes for the Kincaig Community. All six sales will be concluded at the end of this month to Phase 2 residents.

The development encompasses a communal social area and a bus shelter to protect the children while waiting to be picked up by the school bus. The community has also successfully applied for a community orchard and half a dozen fruit trees have been planted in the communal area.

4 trainees gained construction and employment experience during the construction phase. Many thanks to AW Laings for taking our trainees under their wing during this project and providing a great learning opportunity.



SHED BUILDING WORKSHOPS

In conjunction with The Forestry Commission Scotland and The Highland Council, HSCHT hosted two workshops in May for people who wanted to learn how to build woodsheds.

The workshops were held onsite at Ardgeal in Kincaig and there was a great demand for the six places in in each workshop.



Each group built half a shed over the day and learnt about the basics of tool handling, measuring, cutting and safe working.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW EMPLOYEES

We would like to welcome Fiona Sorley and Michael Chisholm to our staff team.

Fiona is our new Project Manager and will be working on a number of projects including the Lochaber Developments. Fiona brings a wide range of technical experience to the team having previously worked and trained as an Architectural Technician

Michael joins us on a one year placement as our new Graduate Development Officer. His post is part of the ScotGrad programme and is part funded by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and European Regional Development Fund. Michael will be working on various projects and watch out for his blog on our new website that we hope to launch in autumn time.

NEW FUNDING FOR RENT TO BUY PHASE 2

Following the success of last years Rent to Buy (RTB), The Scottish Government has awarded a further loan to HSCHT of £2.839 million for a Phase 2 of the scheme. Phase 2 will see the construction of a further 23 units over 12 communities. This initiative scheme is basically cost neutral to the Scottish Government and provides the opportunity for people on modest incomes to become home owners in rural communities.

The RTB scheme essentially allows people to rent a new home for 5 years whilst saving up for a deposit via a cash-back "loyalty" sum to the tenant at the end of their 5 year rental period if they purchase the property. The houses are all new builds and the purchase price is set now - this means that if house prices increase over the 5 years, the purchasers will not have to pay any more and this is an additional incentive of this very popular scheme.

Under Phase 1 of RTB, 14 homes were developed in various locations across the Highlands. Homes in Beauly, Auldearn, Shieldaig and Fodderty are now complete and houses in Dornoch, Gairloch and Lochcarron will be completed soon.

More details to follow soon on the locations of Phase 2 houses and the application process



Beauly



Auldearn



Shieldaig



Fodderty

GREENER HOMES (GH)

Following a joint bid with Highland Council to The Scottish Government's Greener Homes Fund, HSCHT units are currently being developed in Fodderty, Arisaig, Lochcarron and Daviot through a partnership with award winning MAKAR Construction Ltd. The homes are designed and constructed using sustainable Scottish timber and will be built to meet the Scottish Building Standards Silver Active level of sustainability.

Locations for The Highland Council units are; Alness, Dornoch, Glenborrodale and hopefully Strathpeffer. Since the application the HC has asked HSCHT to manage the Alness and Dornoch developments for them. Consequently, HSCHT have negotiated a change to the proposed 2 units under the LIFT scheme for Alness and will now be providing 4 units, increasing the total to 20 units instead of the original 18 at no extra cost.

Similar to the Rent to Buy Scheme, GH tenants will have the opportunity to rent the homes for 5 years before having the opportunity to purchase the property at year 5 and the house purchase prices are also set now.

Sustainability objectives of Greener Homes include:

- To invest in greener technologies, modern methods of construction and modern materials by applying them to new-build homes and retrofitting them to existing homes in Scotland
- To boost economic growth by supporting larger-scale projects, skill development and business
- To modernise and invigorate house building in Scotland
- To reduce carbon emissions in housing and reduce the impact of energy prices on households and the number living in fuel poverty

HOUSING MINISTERS VISIT TO FODDERTY

HSCHT were delighted to welcome the Housing Minister, Margaret Burgess to visit the completed houses in Fodderty at the end of July and meet the new tenants.

The development comprises of 2 Greener Homes (built to Silver Active Standard), and 2 Rent-Buy homes (built to Standard building regulations), and a major reason for doing this was to allow for a like for like comparison between the two standards that will allow us to see what the benefits are for improving future housing options.



GORTHLECK DEVELOPMENT

The much anticipated housing development of affordable housing in Gorthleck is due to commence shortly. HSCHT are working with Albyn Housing Association on this project that will see the delivery of 8 new homes.

HSCHT will be developing 2 of the units on site under the Rent to Buy Scheme, Phase 2. It is hoped that ground works will start on site shortly and the houses will be completed in 2015.

To register your interest in HSCHT units, please contact Morven Taylor for a Rent to Buy Brochure morven.taylor@hscht.co.uk

BUSINESS LINKED HOUSING

We are interested in exploring the need for business linked housing and would like to hear from businesses and local landowners who feel there is a need for this type of housing in the community.

HSCHT has recently partnered Ardtornish Estate in a 21 long lease agreement for two new houses that will revert back to the Estate at the end of the 21 year period. Long leases are a great example of one at least one of the ways in which business and landowners can partner on affordable housing.

Self Build Fund

Are you interested in self build or know someone who needs help go get to wind and water tight stage? If so, our self build fund may be able to assist.

Please contact morven.taylor@hscht.co.uk for further details and a brochure on the fund.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

There are a number of ways HSCHT can support your Community and these include:

- ◆ Working with community groups and landowners to enable affordable housing
- ◆ Assess local community housing needs through various options including surveys and surgeries
- ◆ Support economic and social growth
- ◆ Provide information and support schemes for individuals and communities
- ◆ Help with fundraising for projects

To find out more or to discuss a project, please get in touch.

WOODLAND CROFTS

The Woodland Crofts Partnership Register of Interest is still open and we would like anyone interested in a woodland croft to register their interest via the website www.woodlandcrofts.org

OUR FUNDERS

We have recently received new core and project funding from different funders and would like to thank all our funders who assist us with our aim of **making affordable rural homes a reality**.

