

# Rothiemurchus, Aviemore

## Self-build development

Sept 2019



**Situated in the heart of the Cairngorms National Park sits the Old Sawmill site in Rothiemurchus.**

- > **Innovative 'no public subsidy' model to provide affordable housing on redundant brownfield site**
- > **4 local families purchased affordable self-build plots & are able to remain in the area**
- > **2 open market plots sold by the Estate**
- > **Sensitively developed within landscape, using local and sustainable materials**
- > **Replicable model for other areas with few affordable homes to rent or buy**
- > **An excellent example of a collaborative approach to secure affordable housing using self-build**

Driven by the Sawmill Co-operative co-housing group, facilitated by the Communities Housing Trust and working closely with the Rothiemurchus Estate, this project is an excellent example of a successful collaboration on estate land within the Cairngorms National Park, with six homes awarded planning consent.

In 2011, several local families approached the Rothiemurchus Estate wishing to build their own homes as land in the locality was difficult to source, especially on an affordable basis. The Estate agreed to sell plots at a discounted price and CHT finalised the terms of the agreement.

This has resulted in a win-win cross-subsidy solution, providing four affordable homes and two open market plots for the Estate and ultimately, a reduced price plot for each family to purchase. The co-operative sought their own planning consent for the six plots and met all associated costs, along with the costs of providing an access road and utilities to the site.

## Community involvement

CHT arranged to service the sites on behalf of the Sawmill Co-operative prior to selling each family their plot. This process was facilitated by the Dr & Mrs Steven Faulds Memorial Fund, administered by CHT. This fund is dedicated to buying land, servicing plots and facilitating self-builds in rural Scotland, and the Rothiemurchus co-operative is the first project to benefit.

The affordable plots each have a Rural Housing Burden attached, a legal title condition to protect the property's affordability in perpetuity, and to prioritise the local community if sold on in future.



## Successes

This project housed local families who may otherwise have had to leave the area, while meeting the objectives of the Local Authority and Scottish Government.

The innovative replicable 'no public subsidy' model, now tried and tested, can be used in other areas,

The high-quality family homes use local and sustainable materials where possible, and embody the Rothiemurchus vernacular with larch cladding and tin roofing.

The homes, each built to individual specifications, are highly energy-efficient and air-tight for environmental reasons and to reduce running costs, another aspect of affordable homes, with air-source heat pumps. There is also a 12-year tree-planting plan on the site.



## Challenges

The main challenges revolved around planning, as a sensitive brownfield site and redundant former sawmill within the Cairngorms National Park. This meant the project timeline was extended to overcome planning concerns. The formal planning process began in 2012 and was awarded consent with rigorous conditions in 2016. The specific skillsets of the future residents ensured that the conditions could be met.