

Community Ownership Case Studies

Contents

Action Party, Portobello

Aigas Community Forest

Carloway Estate

Colintraive and Glendaruel Development Trust

Findhorn Conservation Company

Garbh Allt Community Initiative

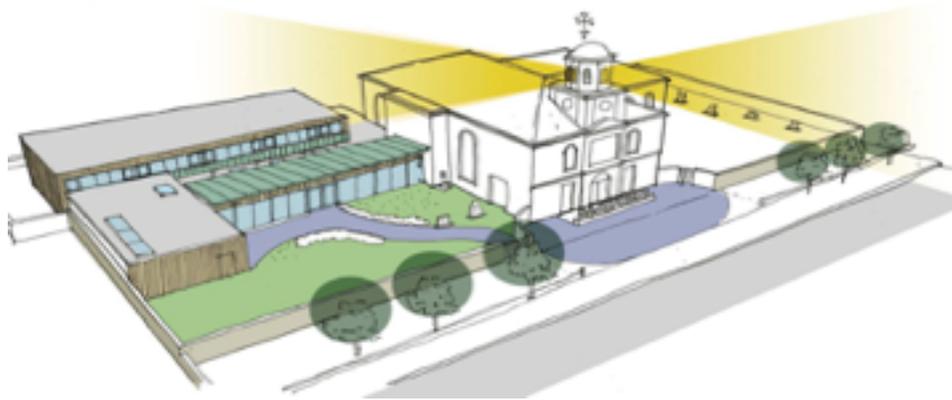
Kilfinan Community Forest

North Harris Trust

The Pairc Trust

South West Mull and Iona Community Development Trust

Urras Bharabhais



Action Party

Portobello

Action Party

Website: www.bellfield.scot

Contact:

**Development Manager: Emma Griffiths
emma@actionparty.com**

**Action Party Chair: Justin Kenrick
justin@actionparty.com**

Scottish Land Fund grant - £647,500

Projects and activities:

In September 2017 Action Party took over Bellfield church and grounds in Portobello order to enable weekly classes and one off events that are accessible, affordable and community building. This was the first Urban Community Right to Buy in Scotland and secured a vital community resource in a context of a rapidly expanding population and vanishing community resources.

Main successes so far?

We have mobilised the community, and brought the community together to save this vital community resource. Our classes and events are proving successful, and this is becoming a key community hub. For example, our anchor tenant – Edinburgh Youth Theatre – is providing a vital, affordable and accessible enabling environment.

Main challenges so far?

1. Despite being essentially very sound, the building required more care and attention than we'd expected, and new standards of safety

were required to be put in place, in particular fire detection and protection. This delayed our opening from December 2017 until June 2018, since Action Party wanted to ensure the building was as safe, and accessible, as possible. In addition there are levels of protection for listed buildings, like Bellfield, and in Conservation Areas. This requires additional consents and sensitive design interventions subject to scrutiny and approval from local authority and Historic Environment Scotland. These have cost implications commissioning appropriately skilled design teams, as well as in phasing, and crucially funding and financing repairs, improvements and alterations to make spaces work better, be fully accessible, and regulation compliant.

2. The other major challenge has been that we have been in need of far more paid human resource to manage the whole process. We have keen volunteers but only one paid staff who has to manage events, bookings, development, grant applications, volunteers, etc.

Any advice for groups thinking of taking on land assets?

Go for it!

But know the resource you are taking over,
and know the regulations that you will need to
adhere to, so you know what needs doing,

and

Seek to secure sufficient funding for paid staff
so that you can really take off and begin turning
a profit and becoming sustainable swiftly.



Asset: Aigas Forest, 703 acres, in Lower Strathglass, Beauly, Inverness-shire, purchased in March 2015 through the National Forest Land Scheme

Community Ownership Case Study

Aigas Community Forest

Website:

<http://www.aigasforest.org.uk>

Contact:

Helge Hansen, Forest Manager:

helge@aigasforest.org.uk

Scottish Land Fund grant – £740,000

Projects and activities:

- Opening up paths through the forest
- Designing and constructing challenging all-ability tracks and activities
- Establishing an outdoor venue and programme of artistic and cultural events

Main successes so far:

- Established a small fire wood business with volunteers
- Started converting some of our Scots Pine stands to continuous cover forestry
- Provided chain saw training for local people

...and challenges?

- Managing deer population to move towards continuous cover forestry

Any advice for groups thinking of taking on land assets?

- Be ambitious but also have realistic targets of what can be achieved



Asset: 11,491 acres – Carloway Estate, Isle of Lewis. Purchased in 2016 from private landowner.

Community Ownership Case Study

Carloway Estate

Website:

www.carlowayestatetrust.co.uk

Contact:

**Sally Reynolds, Development Officer
- sally@carlowayestatetrust.co.uk**

**Scottish Land Fund grant - £207,500
<https://youtu.be/GzL1Z6TdM3o>**



Pictured: 'The Walking Theatre Company performing 'A Wiz Around Oz' in Stronafian Community Forest, Glendaruel'

Community Ownership Case Study

**Colintraive and Glendaruel
Development Trust**

Website:

<http://cgdt.org/>

Contact:

**Charles Dixon-Spain (Chair – Development Trust)
– charles.dixonspain@cgdt.org**

Scottish Land Fund grant – £311,500

The Colintrave and Glendaruel Development Trust purchased Stronafian Forest under the National Forest Land Scheme (now known as the Community Assets Transfer Scheme).

Projects:

Greener Colglen - funded by the Climate Challenge Fund, included a community food-growing project, project aimed at improving home energy efficiency and local recycling/composting project

Cowal Way - funded by the Coastal Communities Fund, an upgrade of 57 miles of long distance footpath

Clachan Community Hub - funding from BIG Lottery to carry out feasibility study

Mini hydro scheme - to generate income to support development projects

River Ruel Access - improvement of access along the riverside and interpretation



Asset: Novar estates land - 4149 acres, near Findhorn, Moray, acquired in 2016

Community Ownership Case Study

The Findhorn Village Conservation Company

Scottish Land Fund award:

**Jo Harris, Secretary, Findhorn Village Conservation Co
findhornvcc@gmail.com**

Projects and activities:

Current: Acquisition and improvements to Armstrong garages site, Seaforth Lane, for improvement/redevelopment and leasing to local small businesses, workshops etc.

Housing survey carried out and results analysed to inform future development proposals

Ongoing/in development:

Economic

- Wayleave and lease renegotiations
- Car parking fees
- Motor home site
- Concessions
- Allotments
- Rental from foreshore access
- Camping facilities
- Garages
- Business workspaces
- Beach huts
- Renewable energy project
- Joint commercial projects

Environmental

- Volunteer groups/work parties
- Environmental survey work
- By laws for the intertidal area
- Interpretation
- Habitat/access projects
- Education facility, wildlife watching
- Climate change projects
- Ecosystem services

Amenity

- Village masterplan
- Signage and interpretation
- Promenade improvements
- Entry point
- Village maintenance regime
- Coastal protection

Demographic

- Community events
- Friends group
- Heritage recording
- Play areas
- Day care
- Minor ailments surgery
- Housing

Assets

900 hectares of Amenity land in and surrounding Findhorn Village

0.1 hectare Armstrong Garage Site (previously known as Linksvie View Garage site)

Main successes so far

The acquisition of the residual estate owned land in 2016 and the purchase of the Armstrong Garages in 2018, lying close to the Findhorn Village Centre and Church.

The village has pulled together to support these acquisitions and give their time to consultation including a feasibility study, options appraisal, housing and workshop survey, planning for real and all our public meetings have been really well attended, since the inception of the Company in 2011. We are now at the stage of project planning and implementation.

We have also had financial support from our members when asked, initially for the land, and this year small interest free loans for the shortfall in funding for the Garage Site (to be repaid in 5 years), we reached our target and repaid the Social Investment Scotland bank loan in full (SIS interest rate was 8%).

.....and challenges

The Findhorn Village Conservation Company Board has missed out on the funds for a development officer in the past having done various applications. We were told this was because we owned land rather than buildings.

As a result the Board find themselves with a large work load and feel stretched without the resources to organise volunteers, we now laugh at being offered an unlimited number of free training courses for third sector support, all run by paid organisations, we do not have the time to attend.

We already put into the company a lot of hours each month, and attend many meetings.

Now we own the Garage Site we have been given the funds to employ a part time development officer for 2 years.

Advice for groups thinking of taking on land assets.

We told our members when we bought the land that we would not act in haste and were given this advice by another community company who had sold land early on and regretted the decision later. In our early years before we owned any land, board members did have time to visit other communities and this was really useful. Also attending Community Land Scotland AGM and hearing other stories and advice, was invaluable research.

We are aware of setting precedents that we might not want to honour in the future. Our main expenditure has been our solicitor's advice, and has been a large drain on our finances, dealing with historical issues we inherited with the land. We were lucky to have had a small fund for this from our members.



Asset: 3000 acres – Helmsdale, Sutherland, purchased in 2018 [tbc], acquired by negotiation from Sutherland Estates. Includes crofting townships of Portgower, Gartymore, West Helmsdale and Marrel.

Community Ownership Case Study

Garbh Allt Community Initiative

Facebook:

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/garbhalltcommunityinitiative/>

Contact:

Carolyn Smith – Secretary: secretary.garbhallt@gmail.com

Scottish Land Fund grant – £273,000

Projects and activities:

Plans in hand to:

- re-establish the green roads network
- peat management and
- carry out works to improve and protect an area of SSSI.



Asset: Acharachan Forest, 1067 acres purchased from the Forestry Commission in 2010 and 2015

Community Ownership Case Study

Kilfinan Community Forest

Website:

<http://www.kilfinancommunityforest.com/>

Contact:

Nikki Brown, Director - nikki@kilfinancommunityforest.com

Scottish Land Fund Grant: £750,000

<https://youtu.be/WayhsspPMH8>

Current projects and activities:

- Sawmill operation providing rough sawn and planed timber to the local community and beyond
- Community allotments managed by Kyles Allotment Group
- Timber harvesting operation delivering vital investment income
- Community activities, events and volunteering
- Workshop rental to local woodworkers and craftsmen
- Development of a forest playground
- Three woodland crofts now registered and in development
- New 'hot tunnel' to be built to grow out of season produce utilising sawmill waste as an innovative heating system
- Aspirations of woodland burials, event space and camping area
- Affordable housing plots
- Summer Forest School
- multi purpose facility funded by HIE and the Climate Challenge Fun, intended to be used as a space for training, community events and a forest nursery
- Youth forest skills development programme
- Path improvement and promotion of walking routes
- Forest hydro-electric scheme – generates revenue
- Local woodfuel sales and delivery service
- Community composting facility

Main successes so far,

- Now a sustainable community enterprise which employs staff and supports a wide range of community activities;
- Established a successful volunteering programme which involves diverse groups of people from all corners of the community; includes workshops and training events which enhance people's skills and encourage new hobbies.
- Became the first community organisation to successfully complete two community buyouts via the National Forest Land Scheme and the Scottish Land Fund;
- Has now registered three woodland crofts, with crofting families living locally and starting to develop their crofts.
- Now a producer of renewable energy, having installed a 70kW micro-hydro scheme using in-house expertise to keep installation costs down.
- Has supported five annual youth skills development programmes, giving young people useful skills for their personal development;
- Award winning enterprise, having won Scotland's Finest Woods Awards twice, been shortlisted for Social Enterprise of the Year, and won various other accolades, including an award for supporting volunteers.

Challenges

- Cash flow is often tight and good financial discipline is required to manage the finances effectively and ensure that several months of cash reserves for salaries can be maintained.
- Lack of succession planning to replace key staff / Board members.
- West Coast weather when trying to complete building projects!
- Getting the community onside.
- Difficulty in assigning operational duties to non-revenue generating activity, e.g. amenity improvements.
- Small team of staff managing multi-faceted business; limited time/resources to complete projects and develop new initiatives.

Advice for other groups looking to buy land?

- Develop a good feasibility study, business plan and community consultation (seek external consultancy where necessary), which reflect the aspirations of the community; the outcome must be focused and realistic goals to work towards. There is no use producing aspirational documents if the resources aren't there to deliver; think about your community, where the gaps are, and where skills and expertise exist to make a difference.
- Develop and maintain a five year development plan so you know you are on track to reaching your goals.
- Seek diverse skillsets from within the community to form your volunteer board - e.g. HR, finance, operations, fundraising. Encourage your board members to focus on different areas of the enterprise, but remember that a board member must have an ability to see the overall picture.
- Look to raise funding for a development post from the outset - with the best will in the world, you cannot rely on volunteer boards to manage the day to day of a community enterprise.
- Communicate with your community on a regular basis (e.g. via newsletters/ social media), and encourage people to join your membership - good community backing is vital. Also request a pledge of support from your local community council and development trust (if there is one). Ensure your goals are closely in line with theirs.
- Don't spread yourself too thin - focus on key activities which fulfil your social goals, and put everything else on the backburner.



Asset: North Harris Estate, 25,900 acres, purchased in 2003. Scalpay Island (1750) acres purchased in September 2013 with funding from Scottish Land Fund of £60,330. Includes An Cliseam (Clisham) (highest mountain in the Western Isles).

Community Ownership Case Study

North Harris Trust

Website:

<http://www.north-harris.org/>

Projects and activities carried out in recent years including:

- Construction of Eagle Observatory in Glen Meavaig
- Isle of Harris Mountain Festival
- Hushinish Gateway Project
- Two new affordable homes built Scalpay
- North Harris Ranger Service
- Construction of 3 Business Units at east Tarbert

General estate management including:

- deer management
- invasive species management
- native woodlands planting
- path restoration work

Renewable energy projects including:

- wind turbines
- biomass
- hydro

Main successes so far:

Since the initial purchase of the North Harris Estate in 2003, the adjacent Loch Seaforth Estate was purchased in 2006 at the request of the local community and in 2013 following a generous offer from the then landowner the community of the neighbouring Island of Scalpay also asked to become part of the North Harris Trust. This means that now all of North Harris is in community land ownership at the request of the local community.

Challenges

Securing funding to take forward our many projects remains one of our biggest challenges.

Advice for other groups looking to buy land?

Go for it, we believe that the future of the land should be in the hands of the community and so as we mark 15 years of community land ownership in North Harris we would encourage other community group of the same mind to persevere and take full advantage of all the help available to them.



Asset: Pairc Estate, South Lochs, Uist - 26,755 acres, purchased in 2015

Community Ownership Case Study

The Pairc Trust

Website:

<http://www.pairctrust.co.uk/>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/PaircTrust/>

Contact:

**Fiona Stokes, Estate Office Manager,
The Pairc Trust info@pairctrust.co.uk**

Projects:

Affordable Housing – funding from Scottish Land Fund for purchase of former care unit at Gravir, for affordable housing. Funding from Muaitheaval Community Windfarm Trust to carry out housing needs analysis.

Steimreway walk – funding from Tesco Bags of Help, and Scottish Landfill Fund, to create picnic area, interpretation and fencing for the walk to Steimreway (deserted village).

“Our long term vision is to reverse a century of population decline in South Lochs, by providing additional local jobs, more affordable good housing, and improved community facilities to improve the quality of life for all local residents.”

Current priorities:

- Tourism
- Housing
- Renewable Energy
- Permanent Base for Trust Office
- Crofting administration



Asset: Tioran Forest, 1956 acres purchased in 2016 from the Forestry Commission, through the National Forest Land Scheme

Community Ownership Case Study

South West Mull and Iona Development

Website:

<https://swmid.co.uk/>

Contact:

Morven Gibson, General Manager - mgibson@swmid.co.uk

Scottish Land Fund grant - £750,000

Projects and activities:

- Woodland Crofts - plans being taken forward to develop between 6 and 10 woodland crofts
- Volunteering opportunities
- Cycling and walking routes through forest
- A wide variety of community activities and events including wildlife walks, children's events, craft events etc

...and improvements like this one:

Drystone wall seating, part of landscaping improvement project





Asset: Barvas Estate, 34,580 acres, purchased April 2016

Community Ownership Case Study

Urras Bharabhais

Website:

<http://www.urras-bharabhais.org/>

Contact:

David Macmillan dmac17@btinternet.com

Scottish Land Fund Grant – £750,000

Projects and activities:

Housing - the Urras is working with Herbridean Housing Partnership to look at potential social housing projects within the Estate.

Energy Efficiency - the company is also working with Tighean Inse Gall on an energy efficiency programme for existing houses, involving installation of measures and advice.

Fire Safety - working with the Fire Service and other community landowners to discuss what opportunities there would be to work with each other to provide safer communities

Main successes so far:

Renewable energy - Working with Community Energy Scotland on a project to supply electricity to the Barvas Hatchery, via a private wire.

Have secured funding from the Western Isles Development Trust and the Rural Energy Challenge Fund to develop a wind turbine energy generation system with local storage.

Deer/rabbit/goose management initiatives - the company is working with neighbouring estates and landowners to manage and control their numbers

Peatlands - have applied to Scottish Natural Heritage to appoint a project officer to carry out a feasibility study into peatland restoration

...and challenges?

Have been unable to secure funding to purchase fishing rights on the estate (currently being marketed along with some residential accommodation on the estate).



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

© Crown copyright 2019

OGL

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.scot

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-78851-841-3 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, February 2019

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS400766 (02/19)

W W W . g o v . s c o t