

## COMMUNITY UPDATE

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# New Affordable Housing for Rannoch?

## RCT to carry out feasibility study of Bunrannoch Hotel site

Rannoch Community Trust (RCT) have successfully secured over £22,000 of funding from the Scottish Land Fund and the Rural Housing Fund to carry out a feasibility study on acquiring and developing the site of the former Bunrannoch Hotel, in the centre of Kinloch Rannoch, for affordable housing.

Following a competitive process, [Community Housing Scotland](#) (part of the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust) have been appointed to carry out the feasibility work which is expected to take four months to complete. The RCT Board are keen to set up a small sub-group of about 3 or 4 volunteers from the community, plus a couple of Board members, to work with Community Housing Scotland and act as a sounding board as proposals for the site are developed, and to advise on community communication, consultation and involvement. **If you are interested in becoming involved in this exciting project or would like more information please email [projects@ourrannoch.co.uk](mailto:projects@ourrannoch.co.uk) or call David Lyon on 07503 958291.**

As well as setting up a sub-group the Board also intend to hold a larger consultation event in June/July as the proposals from the feasibility study start to take shape.

### Why affordable housing?

The Board of RCT decided to apply for feasibility funding to look at affordable housing following the completion of a Housing Needs Survey last summer that showed clear evidence that sections of the community were struggling to find suitable accommodation. Of the 300 households in the area 90 completed the survey (a response rate of over 30%), 20% of whom stated that they were in some form of housing need. In addition, analysis of local authority and housing association waiting lists showed that there a further 39 households looking for accommodation in



*The Bunrannoch Hotel was demolished nearly 20 years ago following a serious fire. The site has lain empty ever since.*

the Rannoch area. (Further detail about the results of the survey can be found on page 3)

There was also a common perception shared by many respondents that local authority and housing associations gave insufficient priority to local people when letting houses. The Board therefore believe that a community owned affordable housing development would be the best way to meet local housing need. Furthermore, the potential availability of grants from the Scottish Land Fund to help fund the cost of acquiring a site and from the Rural Housing Fund to build houses for affordable rent or low-cost ownership, means that there is a significant opportunity to bring some much needed investment into the area and meet a real community need.

### Why the Bunrannoch Hotel site?

The site has lain empty for nearly 20 years since the hotel was badly damaged in a fire and subsequently demolished. It's location in the centre of Kinloch Rannoch and the fact that it has previously received planning approval (now lapsed) for residential development made it an obvious choice for a potential affordable housing development. RCT approached the owners who indicated that they were open to offers to buy the land.

## What happens next?

Community Housing Scotland will start the feasibility work this month (May) with community consultation events starting to take place in late June or early July. The feasibility study should be completed by early October 2019 and the results shared with the wider community thereafter. At the end of the study Community Housing Scotland will have produced the following:

- A market valuation of the site .
- An early assessment with recommendations as to whether the site should be developed solely for affordable housing, or, whether it also has the space to accommodate some form of community hub sometime in the future.
- Recommendations on the number, type, size and tenure of houses in the development.
- A costed site plan and outline design for an energy efficient, affordable housing development.
- A detailed business plan covering the funding, financing and management of the affordable housing development. The business plan should include a full financial appraisal covering the lifetime of any loans required to help finance the development. The business plan will also include details of how any low-cost home ownership properties will be retained as affordable housing for the long term.



*New affordable housing in Kinraig in the Cairngorms, developed by Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust in partnership with Kinraig Community Council in response to concerns about the closure of the local primary school.*

If the business plan for developing the site stacks up financially, and if there is community support for the proposals to develop the site for affordable housing, and if a sale price can be negotiated with the owners, then RCT can apply to the Scottish Land Fund for a grant to help buy the land and to the Rural Housing Fund for a grant to help meet the costs of building the houses.

## What is the Rural Housing Fund?

The [Rural Housing Fund](#) (RHF) is a Scottish Government fund that has been set up specifically to support the development of affordable housing in rural areas. Although the Scottish Government has an ambitious programme to deliver 50,000 new affordable homes by 2021 most of this new housing which is being delivered by councils and housing associations, tends to be concentrated in centres of population. (This is the case in Rannoch where the Council has confirmed there is no new affordable housing planned for the area.) The Scottish Government also recognises that there are other challenges to developing affordable housing in rural areas such as lack of suitable land, and higher construction and infrastructure costs. The RHF is therefore targeted at community led organisations to help them develop affordable housing to meet local housing need. It also provides higher levels of grant than is typically available for affordable housing developments to reflect the higher costs of building in remote rural areas. As well as providing grants to help meet construction costs the RHF also provides feasibility funding to help assess the cost and financial viability.

## What is the Scottish Land Fund?

The [Scottish Land Fund](#) (SLF) is funding from the Scottish Government to support community ownership of land and land assets (buildings, forests etc...). The fund is administered in partnership with the National Lottery Community Fund (formerly the Big Lottery) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. It offers grants of up to £1 million to help communities acquire land and buildings which can be developed to meet local needs or create community benefits. The SLF provides up to 95% of project or acquisition costs and also provides funding for feasibility work to enable communities to assess whether their projects are both technically and financially viable.



# Housing Needs Analysis

In June 2018 the RCT Board commissioned [Rural Housing Scotland](#) to carry out a Housing Needs Survey of the Rannoch and Tummel area. Of the 300 households in the area, 90 (30%) responded, 18 (20%) of whom stated that they were in housing need. In addition, the HNA identified a further 39 people on social landlord waiting lists seeking accommodation in the Rannoch area.

Other issues identified in survey include:

- The lack of housing options for those who cannot afford to buy is even more acute for those households living out with the main population centre of Kinloch Rannoch, with private rented or tied accommodation being the predominant forms of tenure.
- Households in private rented or tied accommodation were twice as likely to state that they had housing needs, with poor conditions, insecure tenancies, expensive rent and heating costs as primary reasons for requiring alternative housing.
- Amongst older households, health and mobility, alongside the expense of heating their homes were the most common reasons for wanting to move.
- Two thirds the older households who responded to the survey were interested in moving to smaller properties in the social rented sector.
- Turnover in the social housing stock in Rannoch is low (8%) and there has been no new affordable housing in the area for the last 15 years and none is being planned.
- House prices although comparatively low are not affordable to those in housing need.

Based on the evidence from the HNA it is estimated that there is a need for at least 12 affordable houses, the majority of which would be for affordable rent, although there is also an interest in low cost home ownership. The survey revealed a high level of support for more affordable housing and a strong desire for greater priority to be given to local people in the allocation of affordable housing. A further survey of local employers in March of this year also provided evidence of that the lack of affordable housing was having an impact on employment with over half saying they had experienced difficulties in recruiting or retaining staff due to a lack of suitable housing. The results of the Housing Needs Survey have been shared with Perth & Kinross Council and they are supportive of a potential community led affordable housing development for Rannoch.

The Board would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the housing needs survey (and those who distributed it) and the employers survey. The information that you provided has proved invaluable in helping access funding for the feasibility study.

## Rannoch Community Trust

The Rannoch Community Trust (RCT) was formally established in January 2017 as a Company Limited by Guarantee and is also a registered charity. Our purpose is to be an anchor organisation for Rannoch and Tummel by working with and supporting local community groups and organisations to promote the community life and the social and economic regeneration of the area as detailed in the Rannoch & Tummel community plan '[Delivering Rannoch's Sustainable Future](#)'. **New members are very welcome—if you would like to join us please use the form overleaf.**

Directors: Richard Barclay (Chair), David Holland (Secretary & Treasurer), Kate Duncan, Gordon Brown, Ali Penman, Barry Foley.



**Rannoch Community Trust**  
Camusaine, Bunnannoch, Place Kinloch Rannoch, Pitlochry,  
PERTHSHIRE PH16 5PZ



# Rannoch Community Trust

## Membership Form

(For individual membership only)

Thank you for becoming a member of the Rannoch Community Trust. Please complete this form and return to the address at the bottom of the form.

We offer 3 categories of membership as detailed below. Please tick the category which applies to you. If you are uncertain, leave blank and we can check on the basis of your address and whether it is your main residence. There is a one off membership fee of £1 for all categories of membership.

<b>ORDINARY:</b> you are ordinarily resident within the boundaries of the Rannoch & Tummel Community Council area and are entitled to vote at a local government election in a polling district that includes the Community or part of it;	
<b>ASSOCIATE:</b> you support the organisation but are not ordinarily resident within the boundaries of the Rannoch & Tummel Community Council area;	
<b>JUNIOR:</b> You are aged between 12 & 17	

Title:	
First Name:	Surname:
Address	
	Town:
Is this your main residence? YES / NO	
Email:	
Contact Phone	Other phone: (optional)
Are you over 18? YES / NO	If under 18 please provide date of birth:
Can we send you email updates about the work of the Trust and community and social events in Rannoch? YES / NO	
Signature*	
Date:	
Paid £1: YES / NO	

Please return your form (and £1) to any of the following: Gordon Brown, Kate Duncan, Richard Barclay, Ali Penman, David Holland, Barry Foley, or post to Rannoch Community Trust c/o Camusaine, Bunrannoch Place, Kinloch Rannoch, Pitlochry, PH16 5PZ, or email: [projects@ourrannoch.co.uk](mailto:projects@ourrannoch.co.uk)

For official use only
Added to DB
Initials/date