

# THE HIGHLANDS SMALL COMMUNITIES HOUSING TRUST

MAKING  
AFFORDABLE  
RURAL HOMES  
A REALITY

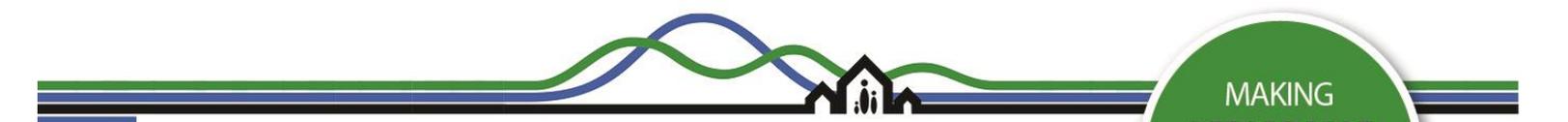


## FACTSHEET: Ardgeal, Kincaig:

The community council contacted us due to concerns over the closure of their local primary school. They wanted to secure new affordable family housing to stabilise the school roll and to keep the community balanced and vibrant.

After a lot of community consultation and work to establish that there was a housing need, we set about on an exciting project which was called “Homes in the Forest”. Following a land audit, an area of land belonging to Forestry Commission Scotland was identified as being suitable, as it was close to the village and it could accommodate the project.

We applied to the National Forest Land Scheme and successfully purchased the land in 2007. From there on, we project managed the building of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of 4 sustainable timber homes, built to minimise their impact on the natural environment. The new home owners all had a local connection to the area, which was a key factor for the community council. The home owners all accessed the Scottish Government’s Rural Home Ownership Grant, to assist them with purchase costs and there is a Rural Housing Burden attached to each title to secure the homes future affordability.



# THE HIGHLANDS SMALL COMMUNITIES HOUSING TRUST

MAKING  
AFFORDABLE  
RURAL HOMES  
A REALITY

Outcome: We have completed a second phase of 6 more homes, totalling 10 homes in the forest. The community's objectives have been met and the primary school remains open with 7 children in phase one alone. We own some additional land and we are exploring options for this including woodland crofts.

Project work facilitated by us:

- Community engagement throughout
- Negotiations with key partners
- Initial land purchase and onward sales of sustainable affordable homes to 10 local families
- Application of the Rural Housing Burden
- Securing all of the development funding to build the homes
- Project managing the development from beginning to end
- Promoting the use of local contractors and material throughout the project

The key difficulties in this project were obtaining the development funding at an affordable rate to allow the development to proceed. The "credit crunch" had just happened and many lenders were closing their doors to projects with any perceived risks. In the end, we received support from the Highland Council, the Highland Housing Alliance and the Royal Bank of Scotland. Funding is an area which changes regularly and without the support of our key partners it would have been more difficult to complete the project.

Outcomes:

- Close links established with key partners, local contractors and the local community
- 10 low-cost homes for purchase: sustainable homes, with low CO2 emissions and low energy costs
- School remains open
- Encouraged the use of local trainees on phase 2 of the project
- Local material used, where possible
- Idea was to create a replicable housing model and to learn from the project
- Homes designed by award winning architects, David Somerville Architects

For further information on the project please contact us for a chat.