

GAIRLOCH

Achtercairn, Gairloch, Highland, IV21 2BP



Gairloch

Summary:

Situated in the Wester Ross village of, Gairloch sits the development of Achtercairn. This prominent brownfield site now houses twenty homes which have been delivered in two phases by, Albyn Housing Association (8 homes for rent and 4 low cost homes) and The Highland Council (8 homes for rent). A local business (the Farm & Garden Store), a social enterprise (Gairloch and Lochewe Action Forum or GALE) and a community organisation (the Air Training Corps.) have been incorporated into the development to achieve an attractive village focal point and a place to visit. To complete the final stage, HSCHT intends to build some homes in 2016 and the Air Training Corps will build a new training facility adjacent to the building which they previously leased.

Community involvement:

The community has been the key driver in the process of developing and improving Achtercairn from the outset. The community themselves established the Achtercairn Development Group (ADG) early in the process, inviting members of the local business association, community groups, neighbouring landowners, the local authority, councilors and Albyn Housing Association, to be involved in regenerating this centrally located brownfield site to provide wide reaching social and economic benefits. The ADG influenced the masterplan layout: instead of housing at the front of the development, this area now accommodates local businesses including a Tourist Information, which encourages visitors to stop and it attracts around 40,000 visitors a year. Gairloch and Loch Ewe Action forum, or GALE, are a social enterprise who successfully opened their sustainable timber building in May 2012 after securing funding from the Big Lottery and other sources.

The ADG remains a working steering group and will provide input to the final stages of development until its completion in 2016.



Location

Gairloch, Ross-shire

- ⇒ **20 affordable homes (16 social rent and 4 low-cost home ownership)**
- ⇒ **40,000 visitors per year at GALE Tourist Information Hub, University of the Highlands and Islands centre, shop and café**
- ⇒ **New Farm & Garden Store**
- ⇒ **New Air Training Corps. purpose built training facility**
- ⇒ **Local construction firms employed**

~

The Highlands Small Communities

Housing Trust

7 Ardross Terrace, Inverness, IV3 5NQ

01463 233 549

info@hscht.co.uk

hscht.co.uk



The community were the main drivers of the redevelopment of this site through the Achtercairn Development Group



Around £7 million inward investment to Gairloch

Gairloch

Successes:

HSCHT chaired the ADG and the other partners for their guidance in the preferred direction of the project. This had many benefits; as the community themselves are not set up as a community company, HSCHT were the vehicle used to purchase several sections of land to amalgamate the site; the ADG sought the expertise of others to deliver housing; local businesses could attract funding to their own projects which otherwise may not have been possible if the funding requirements were presented as one package.

The community took ownership of many aspects of the development, such as providing street names which acknowledge one of the main local contributors.

Challenges:

New developments can divide opinions and existing businesses can feel threatened or displaced. While this was a factor in the early stages of the ADG this was carefully worked through with the community and the partners involved. The ADG steering group was a strength in negotiating through any difficulties which arose and giving everyone a platform to voice any concerns. As an objective contributor it was useful for HSCHT to be involved in helping to move forward with an agreed plan.

Future:

The Gairloch Heritage and Museum are hoping to relocate and regenerate a war time building next to Achtercairn, which is owned by the local authority and currently houses the roads depot. The success of the GALE project has inspired the museum and we hope that they will be able to transform this building into another showstopper for Gairloch. GALE are continuing to develop and expand their social enterprise, the Farm & Garden Store has started trading this year from their new facility and the Air Training Corp will relocate to their new building shortly. Two neighbouring landowners now have access to their land and the potential to develop their large sites by Achtercairn.



Opportunities:

- ⇒ **An excellent example of a multi-partner development to attract investment**
- ⇒ **Additional land being considered for up to 4 new homes**
- ⇒ **2 adjacent landowners have vehicle access to their land for future development**
- ⇒ **An exemplar rural re-development project**
- ⇒ **Wide social, environmental and economic benefits to the area**
- ⇒ **Excellent community focus and drive to complete the project**

~

**The Highlands Small Communities
Housing Trust**

7 Ardross Terrace, Inverness, IV3 5NQ

01463 233 549

info@hscht.co.uk

hscht.co.uk

