

# Ardgour Communities Together

## Comments from June 2023 drop-in events



This note contains transcriptions of comments made by people who participated in drop-in community events in June 2023, part of the process of preparing Ardgour Local Place Plan:

- Boathouse Restaurant, Kingairloch (13<sup>th</sup> June, 4pm-6pm) – 4 people
- Treslaig Village Hall (19<sup>th</sup> June, 3pm-7pm) – 12 people
- Clovullin, Ardgour Primary School, Clovullin (21<sup>st</sup> June, 2:30pm-7pm) – 27 people

(People who attended more than one event are only counted at the first event they attended.)

Each event had a series of display boards containing the results of the community survey undertaken in May 2023, plus ideas from schoolchildren. The display boards can be seen online [here](#) (21mb PDF).

Most participants spent considerable time looking at and discussing the survey results. They then had the opportunity to answer questions on four potential action themes which emerged strongly from the survey results. Written comments received on those four potential themes are transcribed on subsequent pages:

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You can also view people's map-based comments, transcribed onto [this interactive map](#).

For more information about the Local Place Plan, see [www.ardgourcommunitiestogether.net](http://www.ardgourcommunitiestogether.net)

# Affordable homes

## Especially for young people and families

To get people thinking, information sheets on solutions from other places were shared ([click here](#) for details on each of these):

- A1: Community-led housing: Ardgeal, Kincaig
- A2: Woodland crofts, North West Mull
- A3: Short-term let control: Badenoch & Strathspey
- A4: Co-housing: Hope CoHousing, Orkney
- A5: Open market purchase: Highland Council

### Which of these solutions could work here?

- Community led housing, land release
- Community purchase of land in the wider area, approach landowners
- Co-housing
- Encourage young families into community with affordable housing
- Community led housing and short term let control
- Open market purchase [by Highland Council]
- Open market purchase [by Highland Council]
- Council could purchase housing > Council has 'no' money. Support for individuals to apply the Rural Housing Burden.
- Affordable housing development is essential and urgent!
- All examples could work. Combination across the peninsula.
- Release of land for affordable housing and work with Communities Housing Trust
- Affordable homes and self build plots. Potential for affordable homes for families to live here.
- Home care scheme – needs staff, who need accommodation
- Support for adapting houses so people can “age in place”

### What else should we do?

- Landowners build affordable homes
- [Smart Clachan](#) housing
- Discussing the wider benefits to the local community. Creating a vision of what benefits it could have.
- Use local contractors to return the money back to local community.

- Approach local community trusts – talk to landowners about ownership
- Access to quality sites for local people
- Whilst I agree with the suggestion of more housing – I personally would not like too much housing as that would change the lochside. We moved here for peace.
- Combination of social rent, rent to buy and self-build plots.
- Community buyout of Ardgour Estate
- District heating options?
- Look at shared equity as Link Housing at Dumbeg. Happy to see more housing but want the village to grow organically rather than suddenly i.e. 6 new houses a time, then pause for 5 years.
- Community buyout of Ardgour or Conaglen Estate.
- Without a doubt – more homes. Then we also do a community buyout of Ardgour Estate.
- We need to conserve the crofting areas but beware of resisting buildings on “good crofting land” as some might not improve their land so that they can build on it!

#### **What support or action do we need from others?**

- Simplified planning process for new residential lets or incentives to local estates to implement.
- Highland Council Planning. Local landowners.
- Clarity from what the wider community wishes for / requires.
- Planning controls to change a home into an AirBNB or short term let.
- Community purchase of land for housing. HC Planning to encourage this type of work. Consideration to what housing ‘stock’ we want in the area.
- Funding towards landlords to build affordable homes for local young people.
- Work with Communities Housing Trust.
- If housing were to increase, the infrastructure – e.g. roads / transport solutions – also needs to improve.
- All homes should be energy efficient (I think have to be these days) for ongoing affordability.
- Approach local Community Housing Trusts. Talk to landowners about ownership.
- Action – project workers – dedicated time. Openness from landowners – cheaper land.
- Owner needs to release land for affordable housing.

*.../continued overleaf*

# Local facilities and services

including shop & cafe, filling/charging station, elderly care, play/recreation

To get people thinking, information sheets on solutions from other places were shared ([click here](#) for details on each of these):

- B1: Jura community shop
- B2: Applecross community company
- B3: Gairloch community/visitor centre & affordable homes
- B4: Boleskine Community Care, Foyers

**Which of these solutions could work here?**

- Community food shop / electric charging points
- Community shop and filling station
- Community café
- Community shop – perhaps make use of Treslaig Hall for this otherwise a mobile shop
- Community shop? Market stall?
- Shop
- Diversity of community owned businesses, i.e. shop, café
- Community shop, rent free accommodation for owners?
- Post office and fuel attract people
- Fuel, post office, community hub
- Buy shops and petrol pumps for community use
- Shop and fibre internet
- Local shop would be good – volunteer staff?
- Not sure a community based model for a shop / charging points etc would work in our community
- Sort out shop building with owners – either sell it or develop it!
- B2
- Community companies can do well but require a big enough populus to generate enough workforce and skills to keep alive
- I had been thinking of BI for Strontian if Alastair sells up
- A mixture of Boleskine / Gairloch community care combined with affordable homes
- Home care scheme – needs staff, who need accommodation

- Support for adapting houses so people can “age in place”

#### What else should we do?

- Bottle bin – replace, perhaps at village hall **+7**
- Community shopping service = someone shopping elsewhere and bringing to central village point for pickup
- Encourage another business or two to set up in the shop – hairdresser (shared space)
- If a shop isn’t viable, how about a weekly farmers market selling local produce? Eggs/veg/ etc Or more of a meeting place, like a heritage centre/café? **+3**
- Open Ardgour Hall as culture tourist centre. Find volunteers.
- Heritage centre
- Nature/heritage centre / trail: wildcats, seagrass, crested newts, pristine lochs, pearl mussels
- Make more use of community halls
- Restore the hall
- Support the community halls by the development trust
- Coffee morning
- A MUGA for the school
- Expand/develop transport for elderly to hospital / medical centre **+1**
- Transport to GP surgeries/hospital etc **+1**
- Community buyout of pub/hotel -> create shop / café / rooms / hub / office working space
- Community owned business ideas which are leased e.g. a garage which someone rents as a business and the community get a share. Could work for a shop/café too.
- Electric charging points for cars
- Work with local pubs / hotels / shops to fit charging points for cars
- Marine and/or visitor moorings in Ardgour
- Set up a “wildcat” style local emergency response service to provide critical care in more remote areas **+3**
- Look at engaging with people who are able to volunteer. See what demand there is for local services. **+1**

#### What support or action do we need from others?

- Land for charging points
- Rent/sale of shop building
- Buildings, land, staff

- Invest in the local hall's facilities to we can keep using it and maximise our opportunities! E.g. new kitchen, new roof [Ardgour]
- Community hub could incorporate cinema – see Better Connections comment
- We are the only village in the area without an all-weather pitch / sports facilities **+1**
- Volunteers! **+2**
- Project worker **+2**
- Fundraising for community hub / shop / petrol pump, look at Lochaline
- Seek funding for community defibs in remote areas **+1**
- Public services – schools/GPs/healthcare – can we have a choice of whether we go to Strontian or Fort William? **+1**
- NHS to review which medical practice residents can register i.e. Strontian would be easier
- Services delivered locally – i.e. opticians, vaccinations, prescription delivery **+1**

*.../continued overleaf*

# Better connections

including the Corran & Camasnagaul ferries, road improvements, safer walking and cycling, possible bridge, bus connections,

To get people thinking, information sheets on solutions from other places were shared ([click here](#) for details on each of these):

- C1: Ulva Ferry Community Transport
- C2: Transport for Tongue
- C3: Ferintosh Wee Bus
- C4: Roadside walking/cycling routes, Islay
- C5: Glenelg community ferry

## Which of these solutions could work here?

- Community run ferry could do well to Fort William if suitable “park and ride” parking at Camasnagaul
- Better access for pedestrian ferry at Camasnagaul
- Bridge at the Corran will stop constant breakdown (weather conditions)
- C1 and C5
- Roadside bike / walking paths
- Love the idea of roadside bike / walking paths
- C4 roadside cycling routes. Clovullin > ferry N Corran
- Wee Bus as in Ferintosh 5 seater with wheelchair space – subsidised from public transport budget
- C3 Wee Bus would work well in Ardgour
- A community bus for Loch Eil area to enable folk to attend events in the hall
- Minibus for outing to events especially for elderly?
- Urram needs to start a car club in Ardgour

## What else should we do?

- Reduce speed limit on lochside road. Speed warning signs at Achaphubuil. **+4**
- Path/pavement from ferry to Clovullin and from Camasnagaul to Achaphubuil.
- Cycle/walk path between ferry and Clovullin. **+2**
- A better standard of ferries. More community cars available for people who are unable to drive.
- Camasnagaul ferry – more regular sailings, local rate, on-demand service, electric ferry?

- Continue extended service at Camasnagaul to support active travel to Fort William.
- Keep the increased sailings on the Camasnagaul ferry. Even better run them every ½ hour all day.
- More ferry times. Current times for Camasnagaul passenger ferry are better than previous. New ferries.
- Lobby at government level, not local Council.
- Volunteers for cars. Lobby at government.
- More buses to and from Fort William and along the lochn.

#### **What support or action do we need from others?**

- Better ferry service at Camasnagaul. Improved vehicle service. Better bus service.
- Wee ferry to run longer to allow people to commute into town and also more frequently
- Extend service to be able to see films at cinema. Culture.
- Renew ferries sooner before breaking point. Sell the ferry.
- Better quality ferries.
- A second diesel MV Corran built and then a low level bridge with tidal generation
- Effective dialogue with Scottish Government and Highland Council
- Funding to employ more staff to run ferries and public transport.
- Improve the A861
- Continue improvements to laybys and corners
- Better support from Sustrans to promote cycle route on A861 to support the Camasnagaul ferry.
- Work with Loch Linnhe Cruises to get the passenger ferry to FW running – use the tourists to support
- Repair sections of tar road rather than just filling potholes.
- Campervans on Kingairloch road are a challenge – the road isn't suitable, especially around the cliff face. Missing layby signs too.
- Funding, Highland Council, volunteers
- Wood for sawmill taken by sea.
- Yes, Yes, Yes – I Agree 100%

*.../continued overleaf*



# Culture, community & landscape

including more events & activities, more paths & walks, safeguard crofting, promote Gaelic

To get people thinking, information sheets on solutions from other places were shared ([click here](#) for details on each of these):

- D1: Tall ana Mara enterprise/culture centre, West Harris
- D2: The Hebridean Community Garden, Lewis
- D3: Broadford & Strath path network, Skye
- D4: Roadside walking/cycling routes, Islay
- D5: Speak up for Gaelic, Portree

## Which of these solutions could work here?

- Walks connecting estates and villages
- Broadford path – path between ferry and Clovullin turn-off
- Paths – church > hotel, hotel > Sallachan shore
- More off-roads paths/tracks
- Improved walks. Removal of non-native rhododendrons (ponticum)
- Rhododendron removal! It's invasive and swallowing the woods
- D2
- Community hub and meeting rooms with café > Lochaline Hub (in Ardgour)
- All community groups (grant available?) to work together and to have events/café in Treslaig Hall which would benefit all ages

## What else should we do?

- Create a heritage centre
- Ardgour Highland Games event
- Joint venture from landlords
- Signs and maps at service points
- More wildlife info on walks. Clearer signage in general.
- Better signage and get the road signs cleaned
- Signage from Corran Ferry for current walks
- Footpath linking North Corran to the avenue and footpath from Clovullin to the ferry. Active travel particularly for school children. +1
- Camping area away from houses

- Tool library / Mens Shed / community garden / allotments
- Better kitchen in Ardgour Hall for lunch clubs, winter suppers etc
- Support local farmers and deer stalkers and learn from their knowledge
- Use technology to store / safeguard our heritage
- Community regenerative tourism
- Make it all visually very pleasing
- More concerns regarding plastic and netting on shorelines from crofts? Fishing lines?

**What support or action do we need from others?**

- Highland Council remember that people live west of Fort Augustus
- More business and planning support from Highland Council for small business and estates to develop
- Highland Council Ranger to identify more Core Paths and support the clearing of them
- Extend ferry service to be able to films at cinema and NT streaming
- Cinema night etc in a new community hub
- More support from Highland Council and all Community Councils working together (not always independently)
- What will happen to the landfill in 2025 when it closes? (to reduce smell) +2

*.../continued overleaf*

# What else?

## Other suggestions from the survey? Extra ideas?

### What else should we do?

- All this will only work if everyone works together! Too many strong views pulling in different directions
- Work to balance the demographic and encourage younger people to live/work in the area
- Amenities for campers. Some of them are a bit of a nuisance in Camasnagaul when they leave dirty tissues etc laid on ground. Maybe a restriction on overnight camping may help!
- We could do with small work opportunities employing two or three people. We certainly don't want "big" initiatives
- Training available is fine to a point but glass ceiling of wages available from training still doesn't support full living costs
- Community owned and run hydro and wind turbines

### What support or action do we need from others?

- We have the talent here, let's show everyone how beautiful it is here
- We need to work with others and get advice and help where we can. Connect to universities, other development trusts. Get inspiration.
- If the plans produce positive outcomes then the tasks need to be divided (shared) around the population with an "input" from the appropriate professional
- It would be lovely if people 'across the water' could accept that this is an extensive area which uses and needs the more urban town area – they tend to forget we exist!
- Getting responses to issues and complaints raised to Highland Council regards noise etc....
- Policing of overnight parking in areas of housing
- Turn street lights off at night