

# Knoydart Foundation

## Developing and Managing Rural Housing

In 1999 the **Knoydart Foundation** led a community buyout of the remnants of the old Knoydart Estate, giving the community control of 16,000 acres, residential properties, a bunkhouse, old farm buildings and a hydro electric plant. All had suffered from years of neglect and were in poor condition.

Since its first business plan was undertaken in 1997, housing has been a key issue for the Foundation, even though it is not the only provider of housing on Knoydart. The housing stock it inherited at the time consisted of 5 residential properties (4 occupied), all in substandard condition.

“Improving the quality of local housing has been vital to support the community. Creating affordable housing has enabled people to stay, live and work in Knoydart.”

**2001** A *Housing and Tourism Survey* was undertaken to pull together community views on these 2 issues. The report highlighted the need for temporary accommodation for people who were here on short term contracts. From this survey a proposal was put forward to build an A Frame providing fully furnished living space for 2 individuals. The property consisted of 2 bed sitting rooms with shared kitchen and bathroom. It was only ever intended as use for temporary workers – although one person did live there for over 5 years! The building was modular to minimise waste and was built by local people who worked for 50% of their normal salary in order to keep the cost of the property down. Following build we found ourselves having to develop an allocation policy to manage who was going to live there.



**2002** This year saw the refurbishment for Stalker’s and Foreman’s, with Foreman’s being split into 2 to provide an additional new property. The work was completed with grant support from the council with the Foundation taking out a mortgage to cover its share of the costs. These buildings have provided long term homes for local residents with the first change in tenancy taking place in 2011.



*Foreman’s and Stalker’s Cottages*

We created a bedsit, a small self-contained property, refurbished in response to the need of some local residents. We started a ***Sale of Land for Homes*** process, with a number of local residents being interested in purchasing land.

**2003** Board agreed sale of land and 3 plots start the process. No conditions attached to sale. We leased land to Knoydart Forest Trust (KFT) to allow them to build another A frame on site for worker and contractor accommodation.

**2004** Sale process continued, allocations undertaken as needed on property, statistics collated. We leased land to a local building contractor to build a third A frame.

**2005** Two new homes were built following sale of land process.

**2006** Our first ***Housing Needs Survey*** was undertaken, including revisiting the *Housing and Tourism* survey to look at progress. A review was undertaken of the sale of land process following a community request for conditions on future sales to protect the Foundation's assets.

We attended a housing conference on Gigha. We developed and formalised and approved our housing policy.

**2007** We apply for ***Rural Housing Body*** status but are not eligible. Discussion starts with Highland Small Communities Housing Trust to see how we can make best use of Title Conditions Act in order to improve our sale of land process. Sale of land policy approved by KF board.

**2008** ***Housing Needs Survey*** updated and used to support submission to the new Rural Homes for Rent scheme. The sale of land policy starts to look at shared equity as the best means of protecting the Foundations assets.

**2009** Our bid to ***Rural Homes for Rent*** is successful – we will be able to build 3 new homes here on Knoydart. Our first shared equity sale starts the sale process.....

**2010** Build starts on site for Rural Homes for Rent, our first shared equity sale goes through. Start housing training through Landlord Accreditation Scotland. Register our properties with Highland council.

**2011** Having served its time, we decommission bedsit and convert to office space. We decide to rent out the A frame as a single unit; rather than shared. Stalker's Bothy has new tenants. We are developing a tenants' pack. More shared equity builds start the paperwork process Plot to be sold on open market to generate funds to allow for refurbishment of Manitoba's.

In addition there are the everyday issues around allocations, reviewing documentation, keeping up to date with policy changes, managing properties – all part of being a landlord.



***New Rural Home for Rent at Ailor, Knoydart***



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