Community Land Scotland

Results of Pilot Study of Social Impacts of Community Land Ownership

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1.   Introduction

In late 2014/ early 2015 Community Land Scotland commissioned a piece of work examining the economic impacts of community land ownership which identified a wide range of benefits including population retention and growth, job creation, increased investment and improvements to physical infrastructure from housing to piers. To complement this work, the organisation is interested in capturing some of the wider social benefits associated with community land ownership. This is a more challenging proposition as there is little physical or financial evidence to track and as such requires more work on baseline data collection and analysis.

The approach taken has been to identify a range of typical indicators of social trust, belonging, activity and participation where there is data available for the wider UK/ Scottish population, through earlier household and social attitudes surveys, and compare the results from this wider cohort with responses to the same questions from community land owning areas. It should be noted that while these surveys take place every year different sub sets of questions are asked at varying intervals which means that some of the data sets used are older than others. Also while summary information is available for some more recent surveys the underpinning datasets are not yet available for wider public use.

This work has been carried out to test this methodology used and to inform a more comprehensive piece of work which will take place in 2015. Due to tight timescales and a limited budget only 2 community land owning areas were included in the study at this stage. Eigg and Knoydart were therefore selected on the basis of availability of email addresses for all residents being available.

The survey (developed using Survey Monkey) was issued to all residents, over the age of 16, of the two areas (totalling 150; 79 in Eigg and 71 in Knoydart) during the week commencing 27th November 2014 by staff from Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust and the Knoydart Foundation. Reminder emails were issued approximately half way through the process and the online survey closed on 15th December 2015. An incentive of a £30 voucher was offered in order to encourage a wider range of potential respondents to participate. Of the 150 residents who could have completed the survey a total of 59 (40%) did so, this is a relatively high return rate for this type of survey and therefore gives a statistical reliability of 95% (+/- 10%) for the size of population[1].

2. Survey Results

The results of the survey have been presented on a question by question basis and results are initially given for the entire set of respondents and a comparison given with the wider UK/ Scottish

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[1] http://www.greatbrook.com/survey_statistical_confidence.htm

response asked identical questions in earlier household or social attitudes surveys. The majority of data relating to previous surveys has been extracted from http://ukdataservice.ac.uk, which is an ESRC funded research resource for social science based research and policy making. Where relevant i.e. where there is a marked difference between different sub-sets of respondents (e.g. residents of Eigg or Knoydart) these figures are further analysed. Selected highlights from text based responses are presented in the main body of the report to illustrate key types of feedback given. Question 1 is not analysed as this asked for respondents' names.

Those questions where only one answer was allowed have a 'Total' box at the bottom of the table, however a number of questions allowed respondents to select all or a specified number of responses and in these instances no 'Total' box is supplied. Not all respondents completed all questions and where this is the case the number of actual respondents will be clearly stated.

2.1 Question 2 – Geographical Area

Which area do you live in?	Response Count
Eigg	28 (47.6%)
Knoydart	31 (52.5%)
Total	59 (100%)

The total number of responses received was 59 from a total of 150 across the two areas giving a response rate of around 40% overall. The response rate from Knoydart was slightly higher with 31 from 71 residents responding (44%), while the response rate from Eigg was 35% (28 from 79).

2.2 Question3 – Residency at Purchase

Were you a resident at the time of community purchase?	Response Count
Yes	24 (40.7%)
No	35 (59.3%)
Total	59 (100%)

The majority of responses (almost 60%) to the survey are from more recent residents in the two communities with the figures being consistent across both Eigg and Knoydart however this could be attributed to the population growth and demographic shift experienced in both communities since community purchase.

2.3 Question 4 – Gender of Respondents

What is your gender?	Response Count
Male	24 (40.7%)
Female	34 (57.6%)
Prefer not to answer	1 (1.7%)
Total	59 (100%)

The majority of respondents (~58%) to the survey were women with an equal number of female respondents from both Knoydart and Eigg (17 each). However fewer men from Eigg (10) participated than from Knoydart (14).

2.4   Question 5 – Age of Respondents

What is your age?	Response Count
16 to 24	3 (5.1%)
25 to 34	5 (8.5%)
35 to 44	10 (17%)
45 to 59	24 (40.7%)
60 to 74	14 (23.7%)
75 plus	2 (3.4%)
Prefer not to say	1 (1.7%)
Total	59 (100%)

As could be expected the majority of respondents to the survey were aged 45 and over although around 30% were under 45. This reflects the general population distribution in rural Scottish communities and in both Eigg and Knoydart. There was little variation in the population spread of respondents between Eigg and Knoydart.

2.5   Question 6 – Can People be Trusted

Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?	Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2010 [*]	Response Count
Most people can be trusted	582 (39%)	49 (83.1%)
Can't be too careful in dealing with people	896 (60%)	7 (11.9%)
Don't know	15 (1%)	1 (1.7%)
Would prefer not to answer	2 (n/a)	2 (3.4%)
Total	1495	59 (100%)

[*] Data sourced from http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk

This shows a marked difference in social trust between the wider Scottish population and residents of the two community owned estates with a much higher percentage of the population on Eigg and Knoydart (83%) indicating that most people can be trusted as compared to only 39% of the wider Scottish population. There was a slight variation here between Eigg and Knoydart with 92% of Eigg respondents indicating that most people can be trusted while only 74% of Knoydart residents selected this option.

2.6   Question 7 – Neighbourhood Pulls Together

To what extent would you agree or disagree that people in this neighbourhood pull together to improve the neighbourhood?	Citizenship Survey 2009-2010 *	Response Count
Definitely Agree	3063 (20%)	20 (33.9%)
Tend to Agree	6952 (43%)	29 (49.2%)
Tend to Disagree	3132 (19.4%)	8 (13.6%)
Definitely Disagree	1466 (9.1%)	2 (3.4%)
Nothing Needs Improving	154 (1%)	0
Don't Know	1373 (8.5%)	0
Total	16140 (100%)	59 (100%)

*Data sourced from http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk

The figures in the table above show that again there is a stronger sense that the community pulls together more in the pilot study areas (83% Definitely or Tend to Agree) as compared with 63% in the wider UK cohort from the 2009-2010 Citizenship Survey. The variation is most marked in the Definitely Agree category. Again there are variations between response from Eigg and Knoydart. The largest number of respondents in Eigg selected the 'Definitely Agree' category (14 or 50%) while the largest number of Knoydart respondents selected the 'Tend to Agree' (17 or 55%) with 8 (26%) Knoydart respondents selecting one of the 'Disagree' options.

2.7   Questions 8 & 9 – Influencing Decisions

How important is it for you personally to feel that you can influence decisions in your local area?	Citizenship Survey 2009-2010 *	Response Count
Very Important	4501 (27.9%)	37 (62.7%)
Quite Important	6747 (41.8%)	18 (30.5%)
Not Very Important	3124 (19.4%)	4 (6.8%)
Not at all Important	1187(7.4%)	0
Don't Know	581 (3.6%)	0
Total	16140 (100%)	59 (100%)

*Data sourced from http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk

Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?	Citizenship Survey 2009-2010 *	Response Count
Definitely Agree	1079 (6.7%)	20 (33.9%)
Tend to Agree	4956 (30.7%)	28 (47.5%)
Tend to Disagree	5467 (33.8%)	7 (11.9%)
Definitely Disagree	3483 (21.6%)	3 (5.1%)
Don't Know	1155 (7.2%)	1 (1.7%)
Total	16140 (100%)	59 (100%)

*Data sourced from http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk

Two consecutive questions were asked regarding the importance and ability of affecting decisions relating to your local area. While a clear majority of respondents in both the UK and community land owning cohorts felt it was important to be able to influence decision making this was considerably more marked in the community land owning cohorts; 93.2% of Eigg and Knoydart respondents indicated that they agreed to some extent that it was important to be able to influence decisions affecting their local area as compared to 69.7% of the wider UK population. Only 6% of those respondents from the case study areas felt this wasn't important as compared to almost a third (30.4%) of respondents to the UK study.

The second question asked whether respondents actually felt that they could influence decisions affecting their local area and here there is a more stark contrast between the two groups. A majority of respondents to the UK wide survey clearly feel that they do not or do not know whether they can influence decisions (62.6%) while a majority (81.4%) of those respondents to the same question from community land owned areas feel that they CAN influence decisions to some extent. While there is some variation between Knoydart and Eigg here with 71% of respondents from Knoydart and 93% of respondents from Eigg feeling they can influence decisions that affect their local area both figures are around twice as high as that for the wider UK cohort.

2.8   Question 10 – Satisfaction with Local Area

Overall. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?	Citizenship Survey 2009-2010 *	Response Count
Very Satisfied	5404 (33.5%)	30 (50.9%)
Fairly Satisfied	7958 (49.3%)	23 (39%)
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	1557 (9.6%)	1 (1.7%)
Fairly Dissatisfied	836 (5.2%)	2 (3.4%)
Very Dissatisfied	331 (2.1%)	2 (3.4%)
Don't Know	54 (n/a)	1 (1.7%)
Total	16140 (100%)	59 (100%)

*Data sourced from http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk

The vast majority of respondents to both surveys, over 80% in both cases, have indicated that they are either 'Very' or 'Fairly' satisfied with their local area as a place to live. The greatest variation here is that in the community owned estates the majority are 'very' rather than 'fairly' satisfied with the opposite being the case for UK wider respondents. There is a slight variation here with both Eigg respondents as a whole and respondents of both Eigg and Knoydart who were resident at the time of purchase being more likely to say they are 'Very Satisfied' with their local area (over 60% in both cases).

2.9   Question 11 – Registering an Interest in an Issue

In the last few years, have you ever done any of the things listed below as a way of registering what you personally thought about an issue? If yes, which ones?	Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2005 *	Response Count
No, have not done any of these	391 (26%)	2 (3.4%)
Contacted an MP or MSP	411 (26%)	28 (47.5%)
Contacted a government department directly	195 (12%)	15 (25.4%)

In the last few years, have you ever done any of the things listed below as a way of registering what you personally thought about an issue? If yes, which ones?	Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2005 *	Response Count
Responded to a consultation document	201 (12%)	47 (79.7%)
Attended a public meeting	470 (29%)	51 (86.4%)
Contacted radio, TV or newspaper	156 (10%)	8 (13.6%)
Signed a petition	880 (56%)	47 (79.7%)
Raised the issue in an organisation I already belong to	137 (8%)	31 (52.5%)
Gone on a protest or demonstration	180 (12%)	9 (15.3%)
Attended an event organised as part of a consultation exercise	158 (10%)	34 (57.6%)
Spoken to an influential person	283 (17%)	24 (40.7%)
Formed a group of like minded people	77 (5%)	13 (22%)
Joined an existing organisation	127 (8%)	20 (33.9%)
Actively took part in a campaign (e.g. leafleting, stuffing envelopes, etc.)	145 (9%)	8 (13.6%)
Given money to a campaign or organisation	387 (25%)	26 (44.1%)

*Data sourced from http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk

The figures above show a marked variation in social participation between the wider Scottish population and residents of community owned estates in the pilot study. The most notable point is that only 3% of respondents from Eigg and Knoydart did not participate in any of the activities listed where 25% of the wider Scottish study did not participate. The top five activities undertaken by Eigg and Knoydart respondents are compared in the table below against the top 5 activities from the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2005; activities are listed in order of participation.

Eigg & Knoydart	% Response	Scottish Social Attitudes Survey	% Response
Attended a public meeting	86.4%	Signed a petition	56%
Responded to a consultation document	79.7%	Attended a public meeting	29%
Signed a petition	79.7%	Contacted an MP or MSP	26%
Attended an event as part of a consultation exercise	57.6%	Given money to a campaign of organisation	25%
Raised the issue in an organisation I already belong to	52.5%	Spoken to an influential person	17%

2.10   Question 12 - Belonging to Your Local Area

How strongly to you feel you belong to your local area?	Citizenship Survey 2009-2010 *	Response Count
Very strong	5455 (33.8%)	30 (50.9%)

Fairly strong	7213 (44.7%)	24 (40.7%)
Not very strong	2713 (16.8%)	3 (5.1%)
Not at all strong	633 (3.9%)	2 (3.4%)
Don't Know	125 (0.8%)	0
Refusal	1 (n/a)	n/a
Total	16140 (100%)	59 (100%)

*Data sourced from http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk

A very high proportion (over 75%) of respondents in both surveys feel a strong connection to their local area although the connection is more strongly felt in the community owned estates surveyed, with over 90% feeling a strong connection. The strength of connection is further pronounced when looking at those respondents who were resident in Eigg and Knoydart at the date of purchase with 70.1% of these respondents indicating a 'Very strong' feeling of belonging to their local area.

2.11   Questions 13 to 15 – Volunteering

During the last 12 months, have you done any unpaid (voluntary) work for clubs, charities, campaigns or organisations??	Scottish Household Survey 2007/2008*	Scottish Household Survey 2012+	Response Count
Yes	1406 (20.9%)	2868 (29%)	50 (84.7%)
No	5314 (78.9%)	7022 (71%	8 (13.6%)
Don't Know	11 (n/a)	n/a	1 (1.7%
Total	6731 (100%)	9890 (100%)	59 (100%)

*Data sourced from http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk

+ Data sourced from http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/08/6973

If you answered yes to the previous question, in the last 4 weeks how many hours have you spent volunteering/ doing unpaid work	Scottish Household Survey 2012*	Response Count
Less than 1 hour	81 (3%)	8 (16%)
Between 1 and 5 hours	1345 (50%)	16 (32%)
6 to 10 hours	484 (18%)	11 (22%)
11 to 15 hours	215 (8%)	6 (12%)
16 to 20 hours	215 (8%)	2 (4%)
21 to 35 hours	188 (7%)	2 (4%)
36 hours or more	161 (6%)	5 (10%)
Total	2,690 (100%)	50 (100%)

* Data sourced from http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/08/6973

People do unpaid work or give help to all kinds of groups for all kinds of reasons. Thinking about all the groups, clubs or organisations that you have helped over the last 12 months, did you start helping them for any of the reasons listed below? Pick the reasons that were most important to you. You can choose up to five reasons.	Citizenship Survey 2008/2009*	Response Count
I wanted to improve things/ help people	3188 (58.2%)	42 (76.4%)
I wanted to meet people/ make friends	1608 (29.3%)	4 (7.3%)

People do unpaid work or give help to all kinds of groups for all kinds of reasons. Thinking about all the groups, clubs or organisations that you have helped over the last 12 months, did you start helping them for any of the reasons listed below? Pick the reasons that were most important to you. You can choose up to five reasons.	Citizenship Survey 2008/2009*	Response Count
My friends/ family did it	1021 (18.6%)	7 (12.7%)
I felt there was a need in my community	1479 (27%)	41 (74.6%)
I thought it would give me a chance to learn new skills	988 (18%)	12 (21.8%)
I thought it would give me a chance to use my existing skills	1475 (26.9%)	24 (43.6%)
It helps me get on in my career	430 (7.8%)	2 (3.6%)
It's part of my religious belief to help people.	1108 (20.2%)	2 (3.6%)
It gave me the chance to get a recognised qualification	163 (3%)	1 (1.8%)
I had spare time to do it	1565 (28.6%)	22 (40%)
I felt that there was no-one else to do it	532 (9.7%)	18 (32.7%)
I had received voluntary help	207 (3.7%)	n/a
The cause was really important to me	2115 (38.6%)	n/a
It's part of my philosophy in life to help people	1282 (23.4%)	n/a
It was connected with the needs of my family and friends	1286 (23.5%)	n/a
None of these apply/ Does not Apply	137 (2.5%)	4 (7.2%)
Total Number of Respondents	5479 (100%)	55 (100%)

* Data sourced from http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk

A series of questions were asked regarding volunteering to explore the extent of voluntary activity and the reasons behind people making this kind of commitment. While there is significant variation in the percentage of respondents taking part in volunteering in the two types of studies there is a much smaller variation in the levels of commitment given by those who actually take part in unpaid work. In the two pilot study areas there was a very high incidence of voluntary work with 85% of respondents indicating some level of regular voluntary commitment as compared with a baseline of between 20 and 30% in the wider Scottish population (and a similar figure is found in comparable English and UK studies). The findings of this study is similar to many others (including the 2012 Scottish example used here) which demonstrates that approximately half of those who volunteer gave less than 10 hours over a four week period with the other 50% giving in excess of ten hours over the same period.

Analysis of the reasons behind volunteering shows some different trends. Many of the reasons given are ranked similarly as indicated in the table below which gives the top five reasons given by the different cohorts. Here clearly a desire to help people and having both the time and relevant skills are a factor in shaping the ability to volunteer. However there are some marked differences too; respondents from Eigg and Knoydart are clearly driven by a sense of a community need (74.6% as compared to 27% across the UK cohort) and the sense that there was no-one else to do the work (32.7% as compared to 9.7% across the UK cohort). Personal drivers appear to be more important across the wider UK study sample with 29.3% of respondents hoping to make friends and meet people which is clearly less of a driver in a small community such as Eigg or Knoydart where this was driver for just 7.3%. Similarly volunteering as part of a religious belief system was more important at

a UK level (20.2%) as compared with the respondents from the pilot community land owning areas (3.7%).

Eigg & Knoydart	% Response	Citizenship Survey	% Response
I wanted to improve things/ help people	76.4%	I wanted to improve things/ help people	58.2%
I felt there was a need in my community	74.6%	The cause was really important to me	38.6%
I thought it would give me a chance to use my existing skills	43.6%	I wanted to meet people/ make friends	29.3%
I had spare time to do it	40%	I had spare time to do it	28.6%
I felt there was no-one else to do it	32.7%	I thought it would give me a chance to use my existing skills	17%

2.12   Questions 16 & 17 - Threats/ Problems

To aid the planning work of the two community land owners participating in this study respondents were then asked to identify the top three threats or problems for their areas both at the time of purchase (if they were resident at that time) and now (all respondents). All 24 respondents who were resident at the time of purchase provided at least one response to the first question with a total of 68 responses given. Of the 59 respondents who completed the survey 53 respondents gave at least one response to the second question regarding current threats/ problems with a total of 143 responses provided overall.

These responses have been analysed and a summary of the key threats both at purchase and now have been provided to the partner organisations. The analysis undertaken shows that while some issues have been addressed, such as those around lack of security of tenure which affected domestic and business properties, a growing population in both areas has meant a continued shortage of affordable housing for young people. While previously there were issues around lack of control or influence over local decision making now there is evidence of robust and challenging debate associated with choosing specific options for the future with legitimate differences emerging. However there continues to be challenges around the provision of services, including transport, medical and postal, to remote island and peninsula communities where decisions on service levels are taken centrally and which often have a much greater impact than might be felt in easier accessed or larger communities.

2.13   Question 18 – Any Other Impacts

Finally an open question was asked in order to capture any issues around the social impacts of community ownership that hadn't already been identified and a total of 38 respondents provided feedback. These captured a mix of sentiments the majority of which reflect the very positive impact that community purchase has had on both individual and community life. Having said that there are still challenges facing community owned estates largely around achieving sustainability and also in

meeting the expectations of a much more engaged community. Given the very personal nature of many of these comments and the size and nature of the communities it is not appropriate to reproduce any direct quotes. This decision has been taken to protect the anonymity of respondents.

3.   Conclusions

This study has explored the potential of using tried and tested survey methodology, relating to the measurement of a limited set of indicators of societal wellbeing, to identify the social impact of community land ownership. This has been tested with the intention of informing any future in depth studies on the subject.

Two sets of conclusions can be drawn, the first relates to the process of carrying out such a study and the second relates to the identified social impacts of community ownership of the two community estates used in this pilot.

Firstly, the measurement of societal wellbeing and social impacts is a complex area with a multitude of methodologies and approaches. Due to the nature of this study which was limited in its scope due to tight timescales and budgets there was a need to restrict the approach to being an online survey which used questions that were drawn from previous surveys in order to provide some form of baseline for comparison. Any future research in this area should consider the potential use of social indicators to inform the ongoing work of community landowners and needs to consider what data would be useful to groups in their day to day work and in developing priorities for future action. It is just as important for community landowners to look at longitudinal changes in feedback from their own area as it is to consider variations with wider society. It should also be noted that the comparison made with a wider Scottish or UK cohort while useful may not represent a true picture of the relative impact of community land ownership. It is likely that there will be different baseline responses from rural and urban communities to the questions asked and therefore to get a true sense of impact then the comparison for current community land owners should be with comparable rural areas. Unfortunately the lack of data availability at this level restricts this type of analysis.

Some consideration should also be given to the changing nature of the population within these community estates. It could be argued that as these estates often have growing populations it is clear that people are making an active choice to live on community owned estates. This could then mean that responses could automatically be skewed by having a significant cohort who having made an active choice to live in an area they would then be more likely to participate or engage. However having analysed responses from those respondents in the survey who were resident at time of purchase by the community and those who have moved to the areas post purchase there are no marked differences in participation. Indeed where there were differences in relation to 'satisfaction with the local area' a higher level of satisfaction was felt by those who had been resident prior to community purchase. This is however an area that might warrant greater study in the future.

Secondly the results set out in Section 2 demonstrate clear differences in social trust, belonging, activity and participation between community owned estates and the wider population. In every case there is a higher level of participation whether that be in volunteering or seeking to influence decision making and a stronger sense of belonging and satisfaction with their local area from

respondents located in community owned estates in comparison with the wider populace. This does not necessarily mean that everyone agrees with all decisions as has been reflected in responses to later open text questions which clearly show that there are some quite heated debates on both specific issues and decision making processes and long standing problems regarding service provision, housing and employment. What is important and what is demonstrated by this study is that all residents of these two community owned estates have an opportunity to contribute and participate and that they actively do so, at a level and in ways simply not available in previous ownership arrangements, all of which benefits wider society.

4. Acknowledgements

5. Response from Community Land Scotland

The following text has been provided by Community Land Scotland in response to the findings of this report.

Community Land Scotland commissioned this small piece of work to be able to explore a potential and practical working methodology through which to test how it may be possible to explore and measure dimensions of social benefits deriving from community ownership. The initial work has revealed within the two areas concerned some striking differences in belief and attitudes of people living in the two community owned estates involved, and social attitudes more widely. Community Land Scotland is **not** drawing any conclusion or suggesting that these results are in any way or necessarily representative of other community owners, nor is it drawing any conclusion that this shows that community owners are necessarily in any way distinct as a group from any others. The study of residents within these two community owners is however both interesting and revealing, and raises wider questions: among other things, as to whether the results might be as much a function of the characteristics of these two communities in particular, within the group of community owners, or whether they are a function of remote rural living, as distinct from any ownership type? Community Land Scotland would like to see the work explored here taken further to test these and other questions more fully.