

COMMUNITY*
LAND SCOTLAND

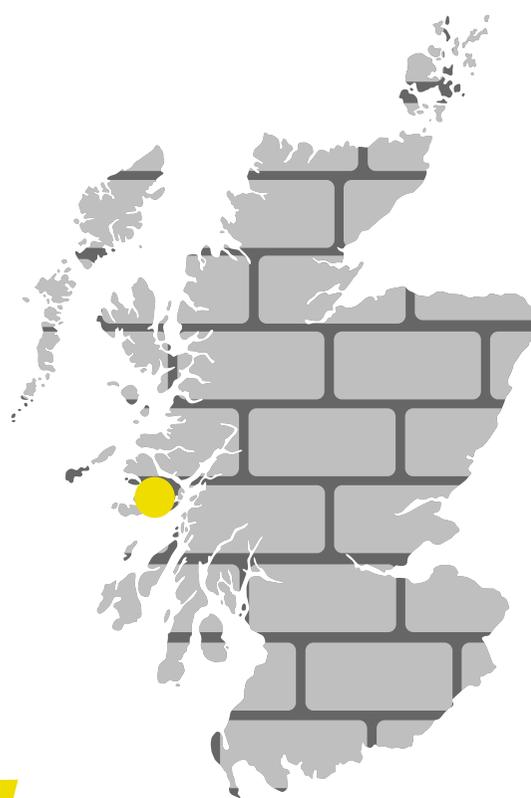


Sealladh Loch Tuath, Ulva Ferry Isle of Mull

2 new build houses by Mull and Iona Community Trust
Completed June 2017

Location

Sealladh Loch Tuath,
Ulva Ferry Isle of Mull



Background

The threatened closure of Ulva Primary School, in the remote community of Ulva Ferry on the Isle of Mull, was the catalyst for residents to address the widespread social and economic issues of long-term depopulation. Research found that a lack of suitable, affordable housing was impacting the sustainability of the area, however the local organisation, Ulva School Community Association (USCA) did not have the expertise or capacity to take their aspirations to build affordable rental housing forward.

USCA approached Mull and Iona Community Trust (MICT) in 2013. They went on to secure a Scottish Land Fund grant to purchase a plot of land adjacent to Ulva Primary School, and additional revenue funding to appoint a project officer. A priority of the community was to tackle the issues of fuel poverty that was prevalent in local housing stock, a sustainable design that sat well in the remote landscape, and to appoint local contractors. A local architect, builder and sub-contractors were appointed to deliver two Passive House standard family sized homes.

Community involvement in this project was key from the outset: all community members had the opportunity to input into the building designs, allocation policy and management approach that would be used.

Priorities

- **Sustaining the primary school**
- **Reversing population decline**
- **Tackling fuel poverty**

Funding

The funding package for this project was complex, including grants from Argyll & Bute Council, the Trusthouse Foundation and Quaker Housing Trust, along with a mortgage from Triodos Bank, and nearly £60,000 in donations. The launch of the Rural Housing Fund in February 2016 was fortuitous for this project, as they were facing a crisis point in securing the last brick funding needed to appoint their contractor. MICT was the first applicant to the new Fund and the award in May 2016 completed the funding package, enabling work to start immediately. The two houses were completed in just 9 months and tenants moved in, including 6 young children, in June 2017.

Support

USCA approached MICT to help take their plans forward, recognising community members did not have the capacity to take it on themselves. A dedicated project officer appointed in 2014 was able to manage the project through to completion thanks to funding from the Scottish Land Fund and Highlands & Islands Enterprise. Community members did not want direct involvement in choosing tenants, so West Highland Housing Association assisted with the allocation process, and now provide ongoing out of hours emergency services, and advice to tenants, while day to day management is undertaken by the Trust itself.

Image credit:
Helen MacDonald,
Mull and Iona Community
Trust

Architect:
Thorne Wyness Architects



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“Our second phase project was tailored entirely round the Rural & Islands Housing Fund criteria, and their officers have been extremely supportive”

**Helen MacDonald,
Housing Project Officer,
Mull and Iona Community
Trust**

Outcomes

For the tenants, after years of moving from one private let to another, they now have a secure home which ensures stability for their families. The Passive House style has enabled heating bills of just £350 per year, which along with social rent levels, ensures the homes are truly affordable to live in. For the community, the houses have led to a 50% increase in the primary school roll and a 16% increase in working age adults locally, but moreso a pride and confidence in community members in achieving their aspirations, and seeing directly the positive impact just two new homes have made locally. The consistent employment of a project officer was also key to ensuring the delivery of the project, as a lack of capacity and experience of local volunteers was identified as an early barrier to the project.

Future Plans

The project was a huge learning curve, and that learning was put to good use when MICT and USCA decided to embark on a second, more ambitious, project to deliver a further four houses. This second time round, the project was tailored to the requirements of the R&IHF, and support from the Fund's officers was very positive. The robust feasibility work undertaken for this project, enabled by the RHF Feasibility Fund, was key to submitting a successful application to the main Fund, and the overall success of the project. These 4 units are due for completion in spring 2021 and the current interest list stands at 50+ people.

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