Applecross Community Company - Applecross Forum Update 11-2020

It has been a busy year for Applecross Community Company, and we are delighted with the progress of our projects and the community's support. A big thank you to our members, the wider community and local organisations for your support and enthusiasm this year. In addition, we would like to welcome four new directors to the board who were elected at our September AGM: Kenny Gillies, Rose-marie De Loor, Chris Ward and Duncan Fraser.

Below is a brief outline of our current projects. If you would like more information, you can check out our website (https://www.applecrosscommunitycompany.org/), sign up for our regular newsletters or have a chat to one of our LDOs/or directors.

1. **Camusterrach Housing Project**

The land is now community owned and our housing project is underway! Planning permission has been granted and the building warrant application is currently being processed. We expect construction to start mid-December or early January. ACC now need a name for the housing development, and we plan to launch a name competition in the upcoming weeks.

2. **Affordable Housing Project (Hydro field)**

ACC was awarded funding in September 2020 from the Scottish Land Fund to purchase the "hydro field". This land purchase was then approved by ACC member's vote at our recent AGM in Sept 2020. Land acquisition is now in process and expected to be concluded by March 2021.

3. **Community Woodlands**

ACC was awarded funding in September 2020 from the Scottish Land Fund to purchase the 14ha Torgarve Woodlands. The decision to purchase the woodland was approved by a community ballot in May (ballots were distributed to all residents (211 over 16-year olds) and of these, 137 were returned completed (a 65% return rate) and 82% of respondents voted in support of the proposal). It was then approved by ACC member's vote at our recent AGM in Sept 2020. Land acquisition is now in process and expected to be concluded by March 2021. After this ACC will arrange for the clear felling of Torgarve Woods and this is estimated to take place Summer 2021.

The "community woodland group" has now formed a steering group, new members are welcome. Megan MacInnes has taken on coordination of this

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project, on a voluntary basis supporting ACC, until funding is available for a new Development Officer.

4. Appleseed Allotments

ACC was delighted to be successful in the Climate Challenge Fund funding for the Appleseed Community Garden and Allotments project. The two-year project got underway in April 2020 and ACC are very pleased with the progress so far. Marion Gilroy and Robert Macrae are employed as project officers (job-share) and Zuzu Vojackova is employed as part-time administrator. The community shed and polytunnel are complete and work on the community garden continues.

The community garden is open to all residents of Applecross and we encourage everyone to come along and get involved. Regular workshops and events are being held, keep an eye out on social media and posters in the village for details. If you are interested in renting an allotment space, please get in touch to be added to the allotments waiting list.

Later this month a "food forest" is being planted at the far end of the allotments. This is a communal orchard and is funded by the Tree Council and Volunteering Matters. See our website, or pop along to the allotments to hear more.

5. Active Applecross - E-bikes Project

It has been really great to see our community getting out and about on the E-bikes over the past year, but especially during lockdown. The e-bike hires continue and if you, or someone you know, are interested in trying out an E-bike - then just get in touch and we can arrange. The e-bikes are hired at £20/month.

As the initial year of the project is now complete, ACC are now looking into alternative models/business ideas of how to manage the e-bikes in the future. This could be in the form of a new business opportunity, other groups/organisations taking on the e-bikes, or simply long-term hire to residents. If anyone is interested in establishing a business/taking on the e-bikes or have other ideas then please do get in touch to discuss.

6. Apple Juice Electric Vehicle Charger Feasibility Study

ACC and Apple Juice (Hydro) are working together to establish an Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Point powered by the community hydro station. A feasibility study (Stage 1) was completed earlier this year which included a

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community wide survey. The study investigated different options for the EV charger system and highlighted community support for the initiative.

ACC/AppleJuice have now progressed to Stage 2 Detailed Design for a *50kW Rapid + 7kW Fast charger with a battery storage unit* and the preferred site is the Stack Yard. The system will include an onboard inverter converting single-phase to three-phase and will allow maximum use of the renewable energy and fast charging. It will simply be two "plug in" pumps and a big battery beside. There will be four car parking spaces and the total footprint is approx.. 17m x 7m.

This site is owned by the Applecross Trust, who are supportive of the project and are happy to consider this site for the EV charge point. The site is of close proximity to the hydro station (reducing cabling lengths) and close to other facilities (campsite, path to Shore Street). We aim to complete the Detailed Design December 2020 and aim to install the system next year. This is dependent on funding and access to land.

7. Toilets

The public toilets were re-opened in July this year and have been very busy! In line with government guidelines, ACC have reviewed our cleaning protocols and increased the number of cleans per day. Unfortunately, due to the high volume of use, there have been several blockages and maintenance required. All these changes and issues have placed considerable pressure on the company. In response to this, ACC are looking into additional funding support for on-going costs and hopefully for some toilet upgrades. We are also investigating the potential of a laundry unit.

8. Covid Response

The *Applecross Community Support Group* continues to help support our community during this uncertain time. The group is a collaboration of the Applecross Healthcare Association, the Applecross Trust, the Applecross Community Council and ACC. Thank you to the wider community for your help and support of each other. Thank you also to the local businesses and organisations for providing tailored services for the community.

Food Box support continues for Applecross residents who are experiencing genuine hardship as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This is available at the Applecross Shop and is £20/adult/wk and £15/child/wk. This is funded by Foundation Scotland from the Response Fund.

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We have recently provided 11 Applecross residents with devices to help provide access to the internet. We have four remaining devices (Chromebooks). If you, or someone you know, are highly vulnerable/at a higher risk from the coronavirus, and do not have an appropriate or easy to use device to access the internet then please get in touch.

9. Church of Scotland

The Forum previously asked ACC to consider the Church of Scotland in Camusterrach for community use. ACC have had an initial look the building, and suggest it is not feasible to convert for affordable housing (too expensive for conversion).

The ACC board have come up with various ideas for community use of the Church but note that these should not replicate the current use of the hall. Possible uses include: a library, "library of things", computer/education space, office space, music rehearsal room, cinema space. It is thought that the building is in good condition and could be modified for these purposes without too much financial input. However, as the Scottish Land Fund is now closed, it is unclear how ACC could finance the purchase of the building.

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