

Summary of Forestry Village Community Consultation 17 – 20 August 2005

In June Forestry Commission Scotland launched the National Forestry Land Scheme – allowing the FCS to sell land for the purpose of affordable housing. The proposed ‘forestry village’ project aims to take advantage of this scheme to create good quality housing at low-cost in Tighnabruaich/ Kames.

Project partners include Scottish Native Woods, Argyll Green Woodworkers Association and Reforesting Scotland – who have discussed the project in detail with the Community Council, the Argyll and Bute Planning Department and FCS – all of whom are supportive.

During the 17th, 18th and 20th August, the first part of a community consultation exercise relating to the project took place. The purpose of the consultation was:
to inform people of Tighnabruaich of the project and its possible opportunities
to gauge whether there is community support at this stage
to involve local people in designing the project to ensure that it addresses the needs and interests of the local community

The consultation process included an exhibition in the village hall about the forestry area and the project; 2 public meetings; and an open day.

Results of the community consultation:

Approximately 100 people were spoken to – including teenagers, young and older adults, families, and retired people (both incomers and people who had lived in Tighnabruaich all their lives). People were also contacted through posters, a local newspaper article, mail drops, the community council meeting and school.

Most people consulted felt that the population of Tighnabruaich was ageing and that there was a lack of jobs and affordable housing. This was resulting in a sense that the community was gone or ‘dying’. A ‘timeline’ of Tighnabruaich showed that in the last 50 years, 8 shops, a cinema, the forestry office, a hotel and regular ferry services had closed. Positive changes included the opening of the sailing school, the opening of the Cowal Way. There has also been an increase in holiday housing.

A large majority of people spoken to were supportive of the project – and some local people already noted that they would like to be involved. They felt that the project could encourage more young people to stay and that it would support local businesses.

A few people thought that Tighnabruaich/ Kames was fine as it is.

Priorities for the future of the villages included:

More permanent residents

Affordable housing

Diversification of income-generating opportunities

It was considered that these would all be major outputs from this project.

Concerns raised included:

Practicalities of putting in sewage, water and access

Apathy in the village and a lack of support for change from a minority

The project is supported by the Planning Department – and a feasibility study will consider practicalities in detail.

A range of different ‘interest groups’ who would be affected by the project were identified during the consultation process. This included local tradesmen, young people leaving school and working adults, retired people who wanted to see the community come alive again, and retired people who wished the community to remain quiet and peaceful.

The project will only go ahead if there is a majority of community support. At present there is a feeling that there is support to continue to develop a feasibility study and hold further consultation in September.

The next phase of the community consultation will ensure that all of the different interest groups are consulted and involved in further project development.

The Community Council have agreed to represent the project on behalf of the community

For discuss the project further, to be involved, or for more information about the project please contact:

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