

# 'I just want a small, affordable house'

A new housing association which may help young people get their own homes was formed on Arran last week.

The HIFAR (Housing Initiative for Arran Residents) community trust was officially launched at a meeting in Ailsa McNicol's Brodick house on Thursday 22 February. This is in response to a lack of affordable housing, particularly for younger people, and the rising number of holiday homes on the Island.

A committee of eight directors was appointed comprising Henry Murdo, chairman, Andrew Grazier, secretary, Catherine McBain, Margo McLellan, John Inglis, Ailsa McNicol, Peter McKinnon and Margo Wheeler.

Henry Murdo said: 'Our main aim is to get secure housing for people who need it. Isle of Arran Homes will always be the main accommodation provider but they have 270 people registered on their waiting list. I believe that lots more haven't bothered to register because they think that there is no chance of ever getting a house. In the 1960s and 70s all my contemporaries built their own homes but land just isn't available now.

'With the Crofting Bill now going through the Scottish Parliament it opens up possibilities of building on forestry land. Arran should soon be included in the crofting counties. Hopefully this will provide sites for self-build. There is already legislation to prevent people selling-on as holiday homes.

'It won't be attractive to everyone because they could not sell on at market value and make a killing.'

## Emigrate

Sixty-seven people are already registered with HIFAR, mostly in the 18 to 30 years age range.

Thirty-year-old Lynne McVicar said she is living in short-term rented accommodation. 'I want to raise a family on Arran but may emigrate if unable to buy.'

Peter McKinnon works for North Ayrshire Council and lives with his sister and her boyfriend. 'I just want a small affordable house,' he said.

Thirty-five year old Mark Williams describes himself as a coalman, chef and mushroom picker and thinks there should be higher council tax on second homes.

Kenny Ross works at Cladach sawmill and lives in a caravan. 'I just want a secure home before I retire,' he said.

Margo McLellan describes herself as not young but not old. She has a six month short assured tenancy and says that she wants her children to be able to live on Arran.

'This is just the beginning,' said Henry Murdo. 'There will be lots more to come. I don't want anyone to be excluded from our website which already has 67 pictures and

case stories on it. Anyone not on it can contact me and I'll go round and take their photo. We need 10 per cent of the Arran population to support us. Forms for people to sign are in post offices.'



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