

Since coming into being last October, the Housing Initiative for Arran Residents has made great progress on several fronts. Now a limited company, we are a few weeks away from achieving charitable trust status. At that point we will be able to apply for grant funding which will enable us to utilise professional expertise in design, planning and legal areas. It will also provide us with gravitas when dealing with such bodies as the Forestry Commission and Communities Scotland.

Up until now, all of this has been achieved by a handful of people. The relatively small expenses incurred have been met from the (very shallow) pockets of the directors. However, the time has come for greater community involvement. By necessity this must take place within the next few weeks, but it cannot happen without wider assistance.

We intend to run a one day seminar on rural house design and sustainability, open to all Arran people which should educate us and provide advice and help to those in need of a house as well as making a contribution to the future, sensitive development of the island.

The aim is to "make flesh" the concepts we have only talked about so far. To bring to Arran people whose expertise range from house design through small community planning and renewable energy, to power generation on a large scale.

We have commitment from such people to attend and make presentations, we have a venue (Auchrannie Spa Sports Hall – courtesy of Iain Johnston) and we have a date – Friday June 22nd 2007.

What we lack is almost everything else. Large tables, chairs, a large projection screen (we can purloin a projector), PA system. Even refreshments (and volunteers to provide them). We will also need suitable transport for such items to and from the Spa.

To cover other expenses (advertising, postage, transport etc.) we are, for the first time, asking for financial help. Small donations from, let's say, the 600-plus people who have to date signed the HIFAR support forms, would go a long way to making this event happen.

Everyone on Arran will be welcome to attend. As many high officials as can be persuaded to come will be there. But before we can confirm with the presenters and advertise the event, we must be confident that we can stage it. Time is of the essence – we have little over a week to finalise arrangements.

This is an opportunity to give great impetus to HIFAR and our efforts to bring affordable, quality housing to Arran.

If you can assist us in any way, please speak to either Ailsa McNicol on 302680 or Andrew Grazier on 840287.

*Andrew Grazier
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