

HIFAR

and the

High School

On Wednesday of last week, about 40 people attended a meeting in Lamlash Hall to discuss the bid of HIFAR (Housing Initiative For Arran Residents) to save the old High School. That same day, a delay in occupancy of the new school had been announced, and there was a sense of relief that demolition was not as imminent as has been thought. John Inglis, chairing the meeting, put in a passionate plea for retaining faith that a reversal of the decision to demolish could be achieved.

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It was agreed that the appeal to save the building for affordable housing had to move into higher circles, with approaches to be made directly to the developers and to the 'big players' who had already signified interest. Henry Murdo reported that Ian Thomson had offered to sell part of the White House woods when the deal was first mooted, so that the old school could provide new premises for the Council Offices and the Police Station, with affordable houses being constructed on the same site. An architect is to be contacted, to estimate the costs of converting the old building, and a small sub-committee was formed to take the work further.

HIFAR is Happening

HIFAR will be holding a community seminar next Friday 22nd June, designed to harness wider community support and interest in the issue of affordable housing on Arran. With the long-delayed release of the Craigforth report this week, the seminar comes at a formative time for Arran's housing strategy.

Statutory consultation before the full review of the island's local plan will start in the autumn, and the seminar provides an opportunity for Arran's community to help shape the process.

HIFAR has invited a wide variety of skilled and experienced speakers to share their knowledge at the seminar. Presenters in running order are:

Derek Logie – Rural Housing Service
Mary Arnold-Forster – Dualchas Design Architects
Jess Christman – Community Self-Build Scotland
Fergus Tickell – Northen Energy Developments Ltd
Bryan Stuart – Sylvan Stuart Log Homes
Alf Robertson – North-East Energy Ltd
Lorna Andrew – Gigha Heritage Trust

There will be time for questions after each presentation and an open discussion after last speaker. Andrew Grazier of HIFAR says, 'Aside from each speaker's speciality, the themes running throughout the seminar will be planning flexibility, variety of design and benefits to the community as a whole.'