

# Housing initiative looks to the future

The Housing Initiative For Arran Residents (HIFAR) is finally able to look towards the future after receiving official charity status this week.

The group hit stalemate last month when it looked unlikely that it could proceed with plans for affordable housing on Arran without charitable status.

As a charitable housing trust, HIFAR can now act as a community landlord and approach the Scottish Land Fund to get the money they need to start building houses.

Andrew Grazier from HIFAR said: 'We

are very pleased to finally get charitable status. It could have been a significant stumbling block for us but now we can look towards the future.'

The next step for HIFAR is to undergo a feasibility study. On Wednesday, a representative of Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) visited Arran to begin their initial enquiry. If they support what HIFAR are doing then they will contribute £15,000 towards the feasibility study.

Mr Grazier explained: 'Our architect, chartered surveyors and several others will

complete a study to work out the best way for us to proceed. The money from HIE will pay for that. After that it's all about getting funds from wherever we can. We're not short of ideas, just money.'

The group is considering four possible sites to build on. The smallest, in North Sannox, is judged to be the best place to start. Here they would build six or seven houses with a community right to buy placed upon them.

'We are not looking to build more social rented housing on the island,' explained Mr Grazier, 'because Isle of Arran Homes already do that. We want to provide homes for people who ordinarily could afford to buy or build a house but they can't on Arran.'

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