

# Housing frustration over land purchase

Plans for a housing initiative on forestry land at North Sannox are stagnating because a price for the land has yet to be set.

Housing Initiative for Arran Residents (HIFAR) is keen to build affordable homes for ordinary working people. A site for half a dozen houses at North Sannox has been earmarked as a good place to start. The idea is to build the houses with a community right to buy condition placed on them.

The idea has been in the pipeline for many months but this week HIFAR chairman Henry Murdo said they had not even got as far as purchasing the land.

Henry said the Forestry Commission was happy to give up the land but so far the land agent had not come up with a price.

‘We cannot apply for the land until we know the price,’ said Henry. ‘It is really frustrating because we are just waiting.’

‘Hopefully, we will get it soon, then the next stage will be putting our application in to North Ayrshire Council.’

## **Housing initiatives**

HIFAR has several sites earmarked for its housing initiatives including one at Kildonan and one on forestry land at the Heights, between Whiting Bay and Lamlash, where it is planned to have working crofts.

HIFAR believes that if something drastic is not done to find homes at reasonable cost the island’s infrastructure will collapse and all services could be mainland based. It says 42 per cent of houses on the island are second or holiday homes. It wants to see planning restrictions relaxed to keep young people and workers on the island.

Its policy states: ‘We need, through planning change and policy change, to break the stranglehold of high land and building costs, making full use of new opportunities in house design, sustainability and setting.’

‘We need to make it easier for people who need social housing as well as people with resources of their own who wish to use them towards housing themselves but cannot because the cost of housing has outstripped what even reasonably well paid people can afford.’