

Applecross Surgery Results

22.01.2008

Here are the results of the housing "surgery" held by HSCHT staff, Morven Taylor and Susan Hunter in Applecross Community Hall on at the request of the Applecross Community Council.

1. Pre-publicity

Posters advertising the surgery were put out in advance of the "surgery" by the Community Council on various noticeboards, bus shelters, schools etc. Word of mouth was spread amongst the community to advertise the surgery.

2. Attendance

9 households

1 couple came along to express their views

1 letter of support was received from a local business, explaining their recruitment problems related to housing.

The total number of responses with real, live housing needs was from 9 households.

3. Local connection

All of the people surveyed live in the area or have a local connection with the local area through currently living there, employment or family.

4. Household ages

Age 16 – 44 single - 3

Age 16 - 44 with family - 2

Age 16 – 44 couple - 4

Age 45 – 59 single - 0

Age 45 – 59 with family - 0

Age 60+ with family - 0

Age 60+ - 0

Total with needs - 9 (This represents 18 individuals)

5. Household size and composition

2 out of the 9 households have school age children. This equates to 4 children, 2 of which are in the local primary school and 2 are in high school. One of the other households is expecting a baby next month.

6. Current accommodation

Homeowner	- 0
H.A./Council house	- 2
Private rented	- 5
Living with parents	- 0
Tied house	- 0
Other	- 2

Total - 9

Standard of current accommodation:

One individual is homeless and has been registered with the council for 1 year. They are staying with friends on their good will at present.

One family with two primary school children have been living in a caravan for 1 year and are not able to find an alternative.

Three of the households in private rented housing said that their current accommodation is of a poor standard with problems such as windows that don't open, mice, holes in the wall, dampness, ineffective and expensive storage heating, broken Rayburn and no insulation.

The two households in council housing have said that their houses are too small.

7. Employment

Full time employed	- 7
Part time employed	- 0
Self employed	- 4
Unemployed/retired	- 3

The above reflects the number of individuals of working age in the households, and therefore totals - 14

8. Average incomes

3 out of 9 households are earning typical rural incomes under £12k, 4 earn between £12k and £20k, 4 earn between £20k and £30k and 2 have an income of between £20k and £30k.

The majority of the household income levels are typical rural incomes which exacerbates the problem of the individuals being able to secure affordable of housing in the community.

9. Realistically preferred housing options

Between 1 and 3 preferences can be selected by each individual. Therefore the total number of options selected equates to more than 9. The 1st Preference is probably the best indicator of the preferred housing in the Community.

	Affordable Rented	Shared equity "Homestake"	RHOG – own plot	Trust RHOG plot	Other e.g. Crofter grant
1 st Preference	3	1	1	2	2
2 nd Preference	1	2	2	0	0
3 rd Preference	1	1	1	0	0

RHOG = Rural Home Ownership Grant

10. Low cost home ownership (lcho) housing

Of these, 2 households are interested in getting an affordable plot provided by the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust (and understands and accepts that the Trust would attach pre-emption right conditions to lock in affordability for subsequent purchasers).

In line with the earnings, 3 households have expressed a preference for rented housing. Those on slightly higher incomes prefer to build their own house with assistance from either the RHOG or a crofters grant.

One of the households is interested "Homestake" housing (shared equity with a "golden share" of the equity retained by the Housing Association which would build any "Homestake" housing).

11. Preferred location of any new, affordable housing provision (rented H.A. or lcho)

Applecross	- 6
Camusterrach	- 1
Toscaig	- 1
Anywhere in area	- 1

12. Other findings

Most of those interviewed expressed their deep frustration at the apparent impossibility of their ever being able to secure an affordable home of their own in their own community.

HSCHT conclusions:

- a) The type of affordable housing required is mostly the provision of self-build plots, using the Rural Home Ownership Grant scheme (RHOG), or the Crofters Grant scheme. Some of the householders already own land and they wanted advice on how to progress in order to build their houses. Three of the households want affordable rented accommodation and 1 would like "Homestake" as their 1st preference.
- b) All of householders want affordable housing in Applecross.
- c) The turnout at the surgery was good (approximately 9% of the local permanent residents) for the size of the community. Approximately 45% of the housing in Applecross is holiday home accommodation, which has resulted in increased house prices, which in turn means that the local people are priced out of the housing market.
- d) There was a strong sense of community shown from the individuals who attended the surgery and a desire for them to remain in their community and to keep it thriving.
- e) A letter from a local company was received at the surgery explaining their concerns over recruitment and retention of staff, which they believe, directly relates to the shortage of affordable housing in the area. Of their staff, they identified 1 family looking for permanent accommodation, 1 family in insecure and sub-standard accommodation, 1 living in cramped conditions, another in an

insecure tenancy and another living at home, with no option of securing their own house in Applecross. Therefore, in addition to the people who attended the surgery, there are clearly more individuals in Applecross, who have a need for affordable housing.

- f) If a development of 6 affordable houses was to be provided and 2 HSCHT plots, this would alleviate the immediate housing need in the Applecross area.