

# Development Matters

Issue 5 August 2006

A regular update produced by the Housing Development team of The Highland Council, designed to promote awareness by providing information about recent Housing Development activity in the Highlands.

## Community Ownership Programme delivers Affordable Housing

Through the Community Ownership programme the Highland Council will receive £50million spread over 5 years to provide up to 1,000 extra new affordable homes for rent and low cost home ownership.

By the end of March 2006 we had spent £12million with 315 new homes starting on site in all areas of the Highlands, from Kingussie to Thurso and from Portree to Alness.



### *Some of the new affordable housing provided since 2005*

For 2006/07 we anticipate spending another £10million with starts on site for another 225 new homes.

Sites in both years' programmes include Aviemore, Kingussie, Ardersier, Inverness, Beauly, Fort Augustus, Scourie, Alness, Invergordon, Muir of Ord, Munlochy, Cromarty, Tain, Conon Bridge, Dingwall, Evanton, Gairloch, Arisaig, Caol, Eigg, Mallaig, Portree, Dornie, Broadford, Edinbane, Auldearn, Thurso, Wick, Dornoch and Golspie.

In this issue of 'Development Matters' we feature some of the new housing opportunities that have been developed, many as a direct result of the Community Ownership programme funding.

## Woodside of Culloden

The Woodside of Culloden developments featured here were grant aided by Communities Scotland under the Grant for Owner Occupation mechanism (GRO grant) and have been delivered through the Council's affordable housing policy. The GRO grant properties are targeted at first time buyers who are currently Council or housing association tenants and those on their waiting lists.

22 low cost home ownership flats were recently completed at Admiral's Court, Woodside of Culloden in Inverness by MacKintosh Highland (a private building company). They were sold at a price of £74,750 to £77,250 to first time buyers who were existing Council and housing association tenants and to those on their waiting lists. This has given people an opportunity to own their own homes in Inverness at a reasonable price and many of them moved in during August.



*The GRO Grant flats at Admiral's Court, Woodside of Culloden (prior to completion)*

***"I'm so happy to be a home owner at last"***

*Lee Dowie and her young daughter have just moved into their new flat at Woodside of Culloden and Lee is thrilled that she now owns her own home.*

*Lee was a Highland Council tenant for over three years when she applied to buy the GRO grant flat at a discounted price. Along with many other first time buyers, Lee found that she could not afford to buy on the open market and so she seized this chance to buy affordable housing.*

***"We are really pleased to be on the property ladder"***

*Louise Atherton and her partner David Gibson had been Cairn Housing Association tenants for nearly three years when they applied to buy one of the GRO grant flats at Woodside of Culloden.*

*They have recently moved in with their six month old son and are delighted to have been given this opportunity to become home owners as they thought they would never be able to afford to buy their own home.*

## Woodside of Culloden (continued)

### **\*\*\*MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO BUY AFFORDABLE HOUSING\*\*\***

In two further GRO grant developments at Woodside, MacKintosh Highland have 6 three bedroom houses currently on sale for £87,500 and 6 two bedroom houses for £82,000. Strathnairn Ltd also have 14 two bedroom houses for sale at £82,000. Again, these properties are targeted at first time buyers who are currently Council or housing association tenants and those on their waiting lists for rented housing.

For further details of the MacKintosh Highland properties, please phone them on 01463 790779. Please phone Allied Souter & Jaffrey on 01463 239494 for more information about the Strathnairn houses.

**For both developments, you need to phone no later than 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2006 to receive an application pack. Completed application forms must be returned to the developers no later than 27<sup>th</sup> October 2006.**



*GRO grant houses under construction by MacKintosh Highland and Strathnairn Ltd at Woodside of Culloden, Inverness.*

## Nelson Street, Inverness

The building at 6 Nelson Street had previously been used to provide a domestic refuge run by Inverness Women's Aid. After they relocated to more suitable premises Highland Council agreed to sell the property to Cairn Housing Association at a reduced value to enable the renovation of the building. The property has now been converted into 3 three bedroom flats, offered for sale through the Homestake form of low cost home ownership thus helping to diversify the tenure in this area. Further information on [Homestake](#) is available from the Communities Scotland website: [www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk](http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk)



## Strothers Lane, Inverness

As part of a large mixed use development right in the heart of Inverness City Centre and through the Council's affordable housing policy, Cairn Housing Association are developing 13 flats for sale through the Homestake form of low cost home ownership. Completion is expected in October 2006.



Individuals are able to purchase a stake in the property of up to 80% and the scheme is targeted towards Council tenants, housing association tenants and first time buyers. However, other circumstances are also taken into account, such as those looking for a new home after a significant change in their household circumstances, or those who are disabled and own a house which doesn't suit their needs.

## Other planned Homestake projects in the Highlands include:-

<u>Project</u>	<u>Number of Homes</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Date</u>
Aviemore, Phase 1	10	September 2006
Aviemore, Phase 2	10	October 2007
Kingussie, former Royal Hotel	8	July 2007
Leachkin Brae, Inverness	8	February 2007
Woodside of Culloden	10	December 2006
Woodside of Culloden	10	March 2007
Wester Inshes, Inverness	10	January 2007
Dell of Inshes, Inverness	8	March 2007
Milton of Leys, Inverness	36	December 2006
Milton of Leys, Inverness	6	January 2007
Dalneigh Hostel, Inverness	10	March 2007
Muirfield, Cullernie Park, Culloden	4	September 2006
Nelson Street, Inverness	3	September 2006
Fort Augustus, Jenkins Park	2	August 2007
The Orchard, Alness	5	September 2006
Academy Lane, Alness	10	March 2007
Old Evanton Road, Dingwall	10	November 2007
Ord Terrace, Strathpeffer	10	November 2007
Marine Terrace, Cromarty	4	March 2007
Heathercroft, Fort William	6	February 2008
Caol Nursery, Fort William	4	February 2007
Manson's Lane, Thurso	8	July 2007
Home Farm, Portree	10	May 2007
Home Farm, Portree	26	August 2008

For further information about the projects in Badenoch & Strathspey, Inverness and Ross & Cromarty, please phone Homestake Highland on 01349 855991.

Please phone Lochaber Housing Association on 01397 702530 for more details about the schemes in Fort William and for further details about the Homestake units in Caithness, please contact Pentland Housing Association on 01847 892507.

Contact details for Homestake units at Home Farm, Portree can be found on the next page.

## **Mill Street, Nairn**

This site originally had 3 stone built cottages with common garden ground. The cottages had reached a derelict state and were not capable of being improved at a reasonable cost. To enable the development of this site Highland Council transferred the land to Albyn Housing Society at nil value. In return Albyn will construct a two bedroom (three person) house for rent, to which Highland Council will have 100% nomination rights from their Housing waiting list. The construction is expected to be completed by the end of October 2006.

## **Home Farm, Portree**

Home Farm, Portree is a large mixed tenure development of over 200 new homes which Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association is developing. Portree has been identified as one of the most housing stressed areas in the Highlands and this development will meet the affordable housing requirements in Portree over the next 5 years. The local community was fully consulted by the housing association and this scheme will contribute to the development and sustainability of the community.

The site could not be developed until a major archaeological study had been carried out so that any items of archaeological significance could be identified and recorded. The Highland Council obtained funding from Communities Scotland for the archaeological study which enabled the land to be released for housing and community facilities.



The Phase One project is now on site with substantial infrastructure works, including the new distributor road and the bridge over the River Leasigarry, at an advanced stage of completion. The house construction works have now commenced and it is anticipated that the first new homes will be ready for occupation by May 2007. The Phase One project will provide 31 high quality new homes for rent and 10 for Homestake (shared equity).

The Phase Two project is scheduled to start on site in February 2007 and to be completed by August 2008. This phase will provide 25 homes for rent and 26 Homestake units.

For further information please contact James Stephenson, Project Officer, Development at Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association on 01478 612035 or email [james@LSHA.co.uk](mailto:james@LSHA.co.uk)

## **Inverpark, Lochinver**

There is a distinct shortage of land available for housing in Lochinver. The Council identified an area of land at Inverpark, partly in their ownership and partly in the ownership of Assynt Estates. The Council were able to purchase the Estate land and transfer the entire area to Albyn Housing Society. Albyn, with funding made available from Communities Scotland, have developed the site for 8 units for affordable rent.

## [Jenkins Park, Fort Augustus](#)

Eight houses will be developed at Jenkins Park, Fort Augustus on land previously owned by the Forestry Commission and transferred to Albyn Housing Society at a discounted land value as part of the Forestry Commission's commitment to affordable housing. Six of the homes will be for rent and two will be sold through the Homestake initiative.

Communities Minister Malcolm Chisholm visited Fort Augustus in July to cut the first sod on the development site. During his visit Mr Chisholm commented: "I am very impressed by what I have seen in Fort Augustus today. This new development is a practical example of how the partnership between Communities Scotland, Forestry Commission Scotland, the Highland Council and others is delivering real benefits for local communities living in rural Scotland."

## [Buchanan Court, Fort Augustus](#)

As reported in May, Cairn Housing Association has built two new homes for rent on the site of the former doctor's surgery and the land was transferred from the Highland Council to enable the site to be developed.



The photo above shows Mr Billy Armitage receiving B&Q vouchers from Gayle Anderson, Housing Officer with Cairn Housing Association, as a token of thanks for opening his home for the Communities Minister, Malcolm Chisholm to visit on 18<sup>th</sup> July.

## [Drummuie, Golspie](#)

The Council has recently let a contract to refurbish buildings of the former Sutherland Technical School to provide new offices for the Council and other partners. Part of the land attached to the former school will be sold to the Highland Housing Alliance for provision of up to 72 houses, of which about half will be affordable. The Alliance intends to develop the sites following on from the current road and infrastructure contract due to be completed in June 2007.

## [Scourie](#)

The Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust, with grant assistance provided by the Highland Council, purchased a site adjacent to the camping ground, close to the harbour. The site has now been developed by Albyn Housing Society as 6 homes for affordable rent and the houses were completed in July.



## [The Orchard, Coulhill, Alness](#)

The Council agreed to transfer a site in Coulhill to Albyn Housing Society which has enabled a development to proceed which will provide 13 homes for sale under the Homestake initiative. The first phase of 8 two bedroom bungalows is now complete and the photos below are of Nicola Cavanagh, who is buying one of these properties. The photo on the left shows Nicola receiving the keys to her bungalow from William Hay, Site Foreman and the second photo shows Nicola in her new home.



***“I can’t believe that I now own my own home!”***

*Nicola applied for a Homestake property in February 2006 and couldn’t believe it when she received a letter in June saying she had successfully applied for a bungalow at The Orchard in Alness. Nicola said: “As a first time buyer, I had been searching the property market for the past two years and had been unsuccessful as I couldn’t compete with the rising house prices and other buyers. To the delight of both myself and my parents, who have been waiting for me to move out, I am now totally independent and moving into my own house has been a dream come true.”*

The second phase of this development will soon be completed, providing 5 two bedroom houses through the Homestake form of low cost home ownership.

## [The Evergreens, Alness](#)

The development of the former Cadboll Wood caravan park is progressing. The four affordable homes which were grant aided by Communities Scotland under the Grant for Owner Occupation mechanism (GRO grant) have now been completed. All four of the two bedroom houses have been purchased by first time buyers, three of whom were Council tenants and the remaining purchaser had been on the Council’s waiting list for almost three years. This housing has been delivered through the Council’s affordable housing policy.

## [Dalmore, Alness](#)

Albyn housing Society has secured ownership of a large site at Dalmore, adjacent to the Academy. This site will be developed in phases over a number of years to meet part of the housing needs of the area. It is expected that works to provide access to the site will start during the summer of 2007, with the first housing development starting during 2008.

## Inverlochy, Fort William

In August Scottish Deputy Communities Minister Johann Lamont officially marked the completion of a 33 house development at Dubh MacDonald Road and Place, Inverlochy with a ceremonial tree planting. The development is on the site of the former Highland Council Building Maintenance depot.

The scheme was facilitated through Highland Council selling the land at a reduced value to Lochaber Housing Association and through funding from Communities Scotland.

The site is in a good location for housing within Fort William and the development of the site has provided much needed low cost housing for local residents in a convenient area of town. In addition, development of the site gives a positive impact within the community by bringing visual improvements to a run-down area which is located in a scenic setting next to the River Lochy with views across Ben Nevis.



The photos above show some of the new housing at Inverlochy. There are 13 houses and 12 flats for rent, including 4 Special Needs units. In addition there are 8 houses for sale through the Homestake form of low cost home ownership.

## Aviemore

The Highland Council has been working with its partners to provide affordable homes in Aviemore and the first phase of an exciting new mixed tenure partnership development is now on site. The site was purchased by The Highland Council and transferred over to Albyn Housing Society who, working in partnership with Robertson Homes, will be building over 200 new highly innovative homes.



This first phase will provide 200 new homes, of which 100 will be affordable housing units, with 28 homes recently completed. The affordable homes, which are a mixture of rented and low cost home ownership through Homestake, benefit from a bio mass (wood chip) district heating system which will provide low cost heating from a renewable fuel source.

## Harrow Hill, Wick

28 homes have been developed by Pentland Housing Association on the site of the old Caithness Glass factory, on the outskirts of the Pulteney area of Wick.

There are 8 houses with four bedrooms, 16 have three bedrooms and there are 4 two bedroom flats. 14 of the properties are available for shared ownership with 14 for rent and this mix of housing will help to alleviate the shortage of family homes in the area.



## Update from the Highland Housing Alliance



The Alliance is pleased to announce that our website is now up and running.

Please log on to [www.highlandhousingalliance.com](http://www.highlandhousingalliance.com) where you can register to be kept up to date with all of the Alliance's developments and opportunities, whether you are a home seeker, landowner or developer.

## Tain, Scotsburn Road

The Highland Housing Alliance sold its first plots on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> August to 14 people from Tain and Easter Ross, the majority of whom had queued from Monday lunchtime to secure their preferred plot. The plots are sold fully serviced and with outline planning consent for a family home. The fixed prices ranged from £45,000 to £59,000 depending on size and are good value compared with the few other plots for sale in the Tain area.

We were aware of a huge pent up demand from local people for self build plots. The Scotsburn Road site owned by the Highland Council was an ideal opportunity to meet some of this demand.

We have a planning application currently submitted for Phase 2, which will comprise a further 90 units and include more plots, affordable housing provided by Albyn Housing Society Ltd, private houses for sale and housing for older people.

**For further information about Phase 2 at Tain or about any of the other developments in the pipeline please register via the website (see above) or contact Nancy Forsyth, Admin Support Officer, Highland Housing Alliance, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX, tel: 01463 702896 (email: [info@highlandhousingalliance.com](mailto:info@highlandhousingalliance.com)).**

# LAND WANTED !

**Do you own land that is zoned for housing, or that you think will be suitable for housing? (Minimum 4 houses).**

**If so, please contact:-**

**Allan Maguire, Head of Housing Development  
Housing Services  
The Highland Council  
Glenurquhart Road  
Inverness IV3 5NX.**

**Tel: 01463 702528**

**Email: [allan.maguire@highland.gov.uk](mailto:allan.maguire@highland.gov.uk)**

**Alternatively, contact:-**

**Susan Torrance, Chief Executive  
Highland Housing Alliance  
C/O The Highland Council  
Glenurquhart Road  
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*For further information about the Highland Housing Alliance, please see their website [www.highlandhousingalliance.com](http://www.highlandhousingalliance.com) The Alliance has also been featured in Development Matters Issue 2 (November 2005) and Issue 4 (May 2006).*

*Have you any comments or questions to be covered in future issues or at the Area Housing Development Forums?*

*If so, please write to the Housing Development team, Housing Services, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX or send an email to Heather Bebbington at [heather.bebbington@highland.gov.uk](mailto:heather.bebbington@highland.gov.uk) (Tel: 01463 702831)*