

## **Response to representations**

Raddery House Ltd. (RHL) would like to thank the Highland Council for considering their request for a Community Asset Transfer under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. We are excited at the prospect of securing the old Black Isle Education Centre and adjoining woodland for the continued benefit and enjoyment of the local community.

Currently, the house and its grounds are badly neglected and deteriorating rapidly, subject to countless break-ins and vandalism. We hope to restore and reinvigorate the estate to support new community activities, such as a community garden, sapling project, outdoor education, children, and youth activities, along with providing affordable meeting spaces (with further discounted rates for local community groups and charities). We are delighted at the prospect of accommodating groups such as the Young Carers and Dementia groups with a much-needed place to meet for mutual support, recreation, and respite.

By being a community-controlled body, RHL will always be in a position to re-evaluate the community's needs and adapt our activities to meet those needs. We are especially interested in providing activities and experiences that have a focus on employability. Whether it is developing transferable skills or providing volunteering opportunities.

We would like to take this chance also to reassure the community that as well as the new activities, the woodland will continue to be cherished and open to the public, without restriction, as it always has been.

We appreciate how ambitious our plans are and are aware that there are many challenges ahead. We do not expect all our ambitions to be met within the first year, or even the second! This is a long-term plan, with various projects being carried out on various timelines. Whilst we have many ideas and plans in place for the estate, honed from our previous consultations, our first step will be to carry out additional research to further assess the priorities of the local community. It is our goal to implement these on a needs and priority basis that is community led.

Raddery House is a company limited by guarantee (CLG) and is a not-for-profit community-controlled body. This means that it is constituted to represent the community of the Black Isle, membership being open to any member of the community and that the majority of the members of RHL will consist of members of the community and will therefore have control of the body. Being community controlled also means that no big decisions can be made without the consultation and approval of the membership – for example, when it comes the inclusion of memory spaces in the woodland or increasing the accessibility for disabled individuals, the membership will be consulted and will have the opportunity to voice their opinion and vote. When constituting, RHL has also ensured that no asset can be sold or transferred without community approval of at least 75%.

We worked hard with members of the Highland Council, the Scottish Land Fund, and the Highland Third Sector Interface to ensure that our legal structure is set up to meet their requirements as well as represent the local community. We are looking forward to our membership increasing and having the community taking an active part in the project.

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