



Community Right to Buy Wigtown

Wigtown & Bladnoch Community Initiative

www.wigtownandbladnoch.co.uk contact@wigtownandbladnoch.co.uk



Wigtown

- Former Royal Burgh & former County Town
- Population c. 900
- Scotland's National Booktown
- Conservation area with many heritage bldgs
- Limited work, and mainly lower paid
- Housing assessment - shortage of affordable and accessible housing



Old Showfield

- Parkland - traditional home of agricultural show for over 150 yrs, until 1992, but with derelict buildings
- Central to local lived experience, physically central in the town, and considered community land
- Owned by developer and nothing happening
- Stimulated setting up W&BCI, but stalled



Former Bank

- Closed 2017
- Poor state and risk of dereliction in centre of town
- Needing complete redevelopment and expensive prospect in depressed market

CRtB process

- Place-based organisation
 - Property - and proposals for its use - must benefit and be supported by community
 - Petition required to demonstrate at least 10% support
 - Proposal for use is in outline but must demonstrate community benefit
 - Property needs some form of "connection" to the community
 - Application for approval to Scottish Government
 - ScotGov staff advise on process
 - Land-owner engagement encouraged, incl. invited to make formal response to application
 - If approved, "note of community interest" lasts 5 yrs, and entitles "first refusal" if put up for sale
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Next phase

- Property placed on market
 - Decide whether to seek approval to exercise CRtB (would give <8 months to complete - extend by agreement)
 - Full business plan for property must support applications for CRtB activation and for funding
 - Sale price set by independent valuation, surveyor appointed by ScotGov.
 - ScotGov. instructs indep. Community Ballot - referendum - to demonstrate significant support for purchase
 - If approved, proceed to finalise funding, formal offer and completion of purchase, etc.
 - Easy!!!
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Can we Bank on Community Support?



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This building is now under community ownership

What is proposed for the building?

- **Affordable flats** - Upstairs a family size affordable flat; ground floor at the back a fully accessible one bedroom affordable pensioner flat.

These tenancies would be for people with a local connection; our research has shown that there are lots of people struggling to find good affordable accommodation in the town, so this will help.

- **Bunkhouse** - The main 'retail' area of the bank that opens off North Main Street will become a tourist bunkhouse. We want to offer affordable holiday accommodation for walkers, cyclists, etc. Offering bunkhouse beds would mean that more people can stay in the town. They would shop, eat, and drink at local businesses, as they appreciate our wonderful town and the surrounding Machars countryside.

- **Gardens** - We also plan to have community allotments in the garden space at the rear of the building.



This has been made possible by

Scottish Land Fund

SSE Sustainable Development Fund

D&G Council's Town Centre Living Fund

Rural Housing Fund Wigtown Community Shop

The Architectural Heritage Fund



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot



Dumfries
& Galloway



AHF

www.wigtownandbladnoch.co.uk



Implementing

- Affordable (grant condition) housing -
 - one large 3 bdrm family flat
 - one small 1 bdrm accessible flat
- "Booktown Bunkhouse"
- Garden area for community use

Downs & Ups

- Building capacity - numbers, time, skills - with both community and organisation
 - Establishing relationship with landowners
 - Developing plans and consulting, aggravated by COVID pandemic
 - Gathering funding in relevant time
 - The few local nay-sayers
 - Active community with some very competent folk interested and involved
 - Great support available, such as South of Scotland Community Housing, Community Land Scotland, and advice/examples from near-ish communities
 - For housing aspect, Local Authority also very supportive
 - Several funding streams
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Funding

- Planning (feasibility and business planning)
 - Scottish Land Fund - stage 1; Rural Housing Fund - stage 1
 - Purchase
 - Scottish Land Fund - stage 2; max. 95% valuation; donations / crowd-funding 5%
 - Renovation work
 - housing: Rural Housing Fund - stage 2; Town Centre Capital Fund; Town Centre Living Fund
 - non-housing: SSE Sustainable Development Fund, Architectural Heritage Fund, Kilgallioch Community Benefit Fund
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www.gov.scot/policies/land-reform/community-right-to-buy/



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W&BCI