

Canna Housing Needs Survey Report



February 2016

Thank you to the Isle of Canna Community Development Trust, the National Trust for Scotland and the residents of Canna for assisting with this survey and report.



Introduction

Our Island Home (OIH) visited the Isle of Canna between 17 March and 19 March 2015. At an open meeting with the community hosted by the Isle of Canna Community Development Trust (IoCCDT), OIH was approached to undertake a housing needs survey, specifically to record the on-island need.

OIH was present at a meeting on 19 March 2015 with the National Trust for Scotland (NTS), the national charity and landowner of Canna and its buildings. Housing was on the agenda and NTS agreed that there was a housing shortage, it was suggested by NTS a Canna Housing Forum be set up and OIH was subsequently invited to the initial meeting in July 2015.

Currently, only one family with primary school age children live on the island. Socially, this is a difficult situation and the sustainability of keeping the school open was addressed at the meeting.

Methodology

A simple survey designed by RHS and OIH on Survey Monkey was used. The chair of the IoCCDT distributed the survey, which was completed online, to the islanders. The first survey asked general questions to gauge the opinion of the community with regards to housing and the second part was to be completed by those with housing need.

Out of the 8 households on Canna, 6 completed the survey. This gives a response rate of 75%.

Area Profile

The Isle of Canna is 4.3 miles long and 0.9 miles wide. It is the westernmost of the Small Isles archipelago in the Inner Hebrides. The island is adjoined to Sanday by road. Canna is served by a Caledonian MacBrayne ferry from Mallaig, although there is not a sailing every day.

There is an honesty shop that sells ambient foodstuffs as well as gifts, books, teas and coffees. Cafe Canna is open throughout the tourist season for lunch and dinner. There is no pub, hotel, village hall or doctors surgery. The doctor travels from Skye fortnightly to do home visits for patients that need to be seen. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) ranks Canna and the surrounding area the second most deprived data zone out of 6502 in Scotland in regard to Access to Services.

The population at the time this survey was undertaken was 22 and the school was open to the 4 primary-school aged residents. Currently (February 2016), there are temporarily no children of school age on the island, there is no teacher and the school has effectively been mothballed. Highland Council with the IoCCDT (and support from the NTS) have been working together to bring a temporary teacher to the island, and for NTS to assist the Highland Council by providing the teacher an NTS property with 2 bedrooms while a long term solution is found. The Highland Council owned flat at the school is inhabitable currently but it is hoped with renovation this could be re-established as the designated teacher accommodation, thereby releasing NTS property back for alternative use. Due to the nature and condition of the facilities at the school, the maximum pupil capacity is 4.5 children for the primary and pre-school. Three primary school age children who

previously attended the school are planning to return to the island and will start in August 2016, by which time a temporary teacher will have been appointed and housed on Canna.

There is no social housing to rent on Canna. SIMD ranks Canna at 1977/6502 for Housing Deprivation, this is in the top 30% of the most deprived areas.

The island was gifted to NTS in 1981 by John Lorne Campbell, who continued to live there until his passing in 1996.

Housing Needs Survey - Part One

Household Composition

Of the survey respondents, 5 described themselves as couple households and 1 was a family household. All 6 rented from NTS. With regards to size of their homes, 1 respondent lived in a 2 x bedroom property, 3 lived in a 3 x bedroom property and 2 were living in a 4 x bedroom property.

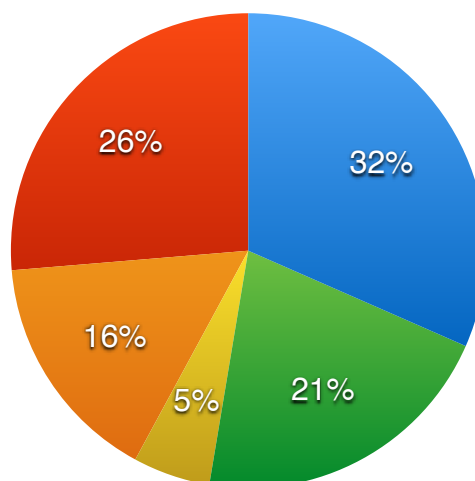
The age groups of composite households were made up like this;

	Male	Female
0-15	1	1
16-24	0	0
25-44	3	3
45-59	3	2
60+	0	0

The survey asked if respondents knew of anyone that had left Canna and wanted to return. But nobody said they did.

What type of housing is needed on Canna?

- Affordable Rental
- Private Rental
- Retirement Homes & Sheltered Housing
- Starter Homes
- Self-build Plots



The question of what type of housing is needed was posed, and respondents could answer all that that applied.

- 100% (6) respondents believed affordable rental housing was needed
- 75% (4) of respondents believe private rented housing is needed
- 16% (1) respondent said retirement homes/sheltered housing is needed
- 50% (3) respondents said starter homes are required

- 83% (5) respondents said that they believe affordable plots for self-build are required

Housing Needs Survey - Part Two

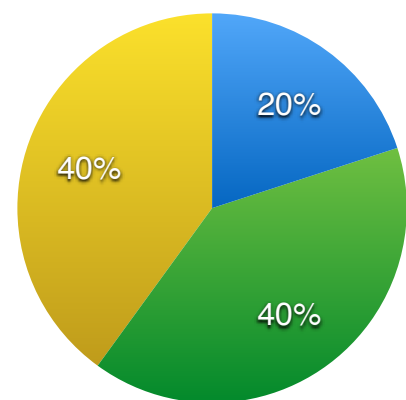
Housing Need

When asked whether anyone in the household had housing need, 2 respondents said everyone in the household needed alternative housing. Overall, the survey indicated that 3 households had housing need, which makes up 50% of respondents.

Reasons given for needing alternative housing were as follows;

- Want to live independently (1)
- Current home too expensive to heat (2)
- Insecure tenancy (2)

- Want to live independently
- Expensive to heat
- Insecure Tenancy



Those in housing need were asked what type of housing they would be most interested in; 3 were interested in affordable rental, 2 were interested in private rental and 3 were interested in self-build plots.

All households that indicated housing need were couple households. One of the couple households gave the reason 'want to live independently' when asked why they need alternative housing. This answer is quite ambiguous; it could be interpreted as wanting to live independently from parent/guardian or from NTS.

Affordability

The survey asked those that were interested in renting, what would be an affordable monthly rent. 1 said less than £300 per calendar month (pcm), 1 said £300-400 pcm and 1 said £400-500 pcm. The range of answers make it difficult to identify how much would be an affordable rent pcm for residents on Canna.

Respondent households consisted of mainly full-time workers. All 6 respondents in question 7 of the survey believed that affordable rental housing was required, indicating that any new housing development should aim to have rents in line with Highland Council, Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association (LSHA) and other social housing providers in the region.

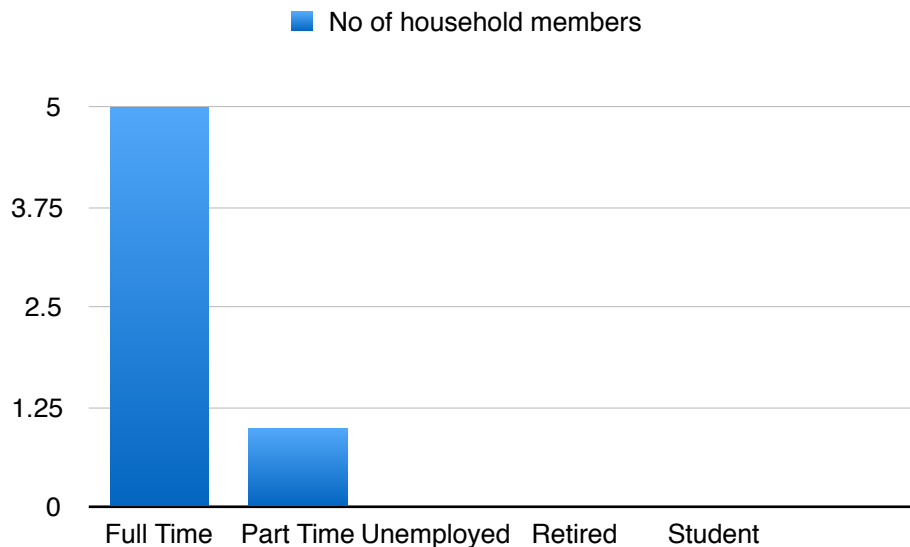
Size

Respondents were asked how many bedrooms their new home would need. Only 3 respondents indicated housing need, however 4 answered this question; 2 respondents stated that their new home would need 2 bedrooms and a further 2 stated that their new home would need 3

bedrooms. The survey has shown that there are 4 couple households currently living in a property with 3+ bedrooms, household composition does not reflect the occupied property size.

Employment

How many of the household needing to move are in the following types of employment?



This graph shows that everyone needing to move is in employment, the vast majority are employed full time. The 6 household members represented here, reflect the 3 couple households who have indicated that they need alternative accommodation.

External Housing Pressures

While existing residents on the island are indicating housing need, there are also other housing pressures influencing the housing market that must be considered. These are;

- New employment created by NTS
- Waiting list of households interested in moving to the island
- The need to increase the primary school roll

A Canna family appeared on a Dutch documentary that attracted over 2.5 million viewers, which lead to an influx of families registering their interest in moving to the island. There's also a substantial amount of interest from families within the UK who would like to move which in turn would support the primary school.

NTS have created 2 new jobs in recent months, which is excellent for the sustainability of the island, however, it adds pressure to the housing supply.

Recommendations

Based on evidence from the housing needs survey and information from similar projects elsewhere in the Hebrides, we aim to provide the IoCCDT with a range of recommendations as a starting point for discussion.

- **Low cost plots** The number of current residents interested in self-build (3) plus the number of those who believe self-build plots are required to alleviate the housing shortage (5) indicates that this sort of scheme would be well-received on the island. Other islands, such as Gigha (Gigha Heritage Trust) and Harris (West Harris Trust), have sold off plots for self-builders using allocations policies devised by the communities themselves, in order to meet the needs of the community as a whole.
- **Creation of new crofts** A tie to the land can give people a sense of purpose, a reason to put roots down in a place and settle. North West Mull Community Woodland Company (NWMCWC) near Dervaig on the Isle of Mull, recently allocated 9 woodland crofts, the majority to local workers, couple and families. Some have plans to build homes on the crofts, utilising the Croft House Grant Scheme (CHGS). Looking at the bigger picture though, the new crofts mean more people are working/living in the area and passing through, thus making it more sustainable.
- **New private rental/NTS homes** Respondents have indicated that they would support new rental homes, 4 respondents believed new private rental homes were required and 2 of the respondents in housing need said they were interested in rental accommodation. NTS have around 8 empty properties (in disrepair) and have 3 prioritised for renovation. As a conservation charity, it is clear that this would be a preferred route by the Trust in delivering new housing. Security of tenure was a concern for current residents and should be considered when developing new housing and attracting new residents. The Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Bill is currently in its Stage 1 of the process and is proposing to protect up to 700,000 tenants in the private rented sector across Scotland. It is hoped these new proposals will give Canna tenants new confidence in their security of tenure.
- **Rural Housing Fund** This new funding stream from the Scottish Government is set to run for 3 financial years from 16/17 to 18/19 with the aim of increasing the long-term availability of affordable residential housing of all tenures in rural Scotland. This will be achieved by; increasing the supply of new build homes for affordable rent or sale, increasing the number of rural empty properties brought back into use for affordable rent or sale and facilitating the conversion of commercial and non-domestic properties for residential use. Communities will be at the heart of all projects funded. Collaborations and partnerships are encouraged where it provides clear long-term benefits for the local community or better value for money.
- **Keeping rents affordable** All survey respondents said new affordable housing was required on Canna. This suggests that any new housing development should look to social housing providers for guidance on affordable rental. For example, LSHA rent out their 2 bedroom properties for between £275-£300 per calendar month.