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### **Our Island Home**

We are absolutely delighted that the Prince's Countryside Fund are to support the project again, for another 3 year period. This means that our project officer can continue to deliver housing projects across the Hebrides. The project will concentrate on finding affordable housing options for young people, delivering housing education workshops to secondary school pupils, developing social media and web based housing options and advice and securing funding for housing projects in the Hebrides.



### **Scottish Government**

We welcome the news from the Finance Secretary at the end of last year of an increase of £90m in the budget for affordable housing. The Housing Minister has confirmed that the government's 50,000 new build target for the next term, of which 70% will be social rent properties. How much of these will be rural we do not know but as always, we will be lobbying the government and working with local authorities, housing associations, development trusts and individuals to help create more affordable housing options for rural communities.

A new Rural Housing Fund is currently being developed by the Scottish Government, aimed at innovative community let housing developments. Rural Housing Scotland and Our Island Home will be able to help communities to develop applications to this fund.

### **Conference**

At Rural Housing Scotland, we are putting together final preparations for our Annual Conference which takes place on 25/26 February 2016 in Birnam. The title of this year's conference is 'Strengthening Communities' and speakers include the Minister for Housing & Welfare, Margaret Burgess MSP, Professor Sarah Sherratt of SRUC, editor of Rural Scotland in Focus biennial reports and Dr Kim McKee from St Andrews University, who recently published the report "Generation Rent" which focused on young people in the private rented sector.

The Housing Minister will discuss the Rural Housing Fund at the event and the lunch break will provide an opportunity for interested communities to drop-in and speak to Scottish Government staff for advice on application.s

This is the premier rural housing conference in Scotland and we attract around 120 delegates per year from community organisations, housing association staff and senior government officials amongst many other sectors. We look forward to welcoming new faces and regulars. For more details and how to book, visit [ruralhousingscotland.org](http://ruralhousingscotland.org).

### **Ulva Ferry Housing Project**

Just before Christmas, the Ulva Ferry Housing Partnership were given a massive boost when the Quaker Housing Trust granted the project a massive £40,000. This comes after a grant application made by project manager Helen MacDonald led to a Trustee visit. The visit, which was hosted by Mull and Iona Community Trust and Ulva School Community Association, obviously made a great impression. This assistance has significantly reduced the shortfall for the rental houses, which will be built to a high spec in order to reduce heating and running costs for the tenant, this will address fuel poverty in an area that largely relies on oil heating (43.4%). You can help finance the housing project and find out more by visiting [www.justgiving.com/ulvaferryhousing/](http://www.justgiving.com/ulvaferryhousing/)

### **Links**

*Housing Generation Rent - Dr Kim McKee and Jennifer Hoolachan* <http://bit.ly/1GstzwZ>

*Rural Scotland in Focus 2014 - SRUC Policy Centre* <http://bit.ly/1NjYGhF>

*Ulva Ferry Housing Project* <http://bit.ly/1P2LW5h>

*Rural Housing Fund - The Scottish Government* <http://bit.ly/1RnOZFf>

*Posted 15/01/16 by Jodi MacLeod*