

## **PRESS RELEASE – 04 03 2002**

### **HIGHLAND PERTSHIRE FIRST COMMUNITY LAND PURCHASE BID SUCCESS**

A bid to buy Dùn Coillich, 1100 acres of hill ground in Glengoulandie near Aberfeldy, for the people of Highland Perthshire, has been successful. This has been made possible entirely by generous contributions, both large and small, from the community.

The successful bid, the first of its kind in the area, was organised by an 18-strong Steering Group, set up after a public meeting in Aberfeldy last November. This meeting and later community consultation meetings endorsed the proposed purchase and creation of a Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust (HPCLT), which would own the land on behalf of the communities of Highland Perthshire.

The Steering Group was jubilant on hearing the news. One member, Blair Atholl farmer, Innes Smith said: "The successful launch of the land trust and bid for Dùn Coillich is great news for everyone in Highland Perthshire. My hope is that 10 years down the line community ownership of local resources will no longer be an issue, it will be an accepted part of the rural scene bringing us into line with most other European countries."

Steering Group member, Andrew Pointer, who lives in Aberfeldy said: "This is fantastic - I am delighted that the efforts of the Steering Group and the many supporters in the local community have been rewarded with a successful bid. Now the local community will have the opportunity to manage this land for the benefit of all in Highland Perthshire and beyond."

Steering Group member, Paul Jarvis, who has many years experience of forestry, commented: "We know there will be big changes on this hill as the vegetation recovers from grazing and browsing, but how the changes will progress is uncertain."

Professor Jarvis added: "These are likely to be very revealing, exciting developments of enormous interest for the community to join in and follow."

Robin Hull a retired doctor living in Strathtay, commented: "One day there may again be capercaillie on Dùn Coillich".

Alec Cruikshank, Highland Perthshire Communities Partnership Project Co-ordinator commented: "This is a excellent opportunity for all the communities and interested groups in the Highland Perthshire area to come together and work in partnership, creating a resource that will help improve the quality of life - educationally, environmentally, socially and economically. This is a novel project that everyone has the opportunity to feel part of and help manage."

The next step is to discover what local people want to see happening on the land, and how they would like to become involved. In the meantime, HPCLT is being established as a Charitable Trust, which will formally own the land. Public meetings are planned for March, at which Trustees will be elected.

Further funds for the development of Dùn Coillich as a community resource will then be needed. Loch Tummel side resident and group member, Russell Coope explained: "Many volunteers will be needed to help with all aspects of this project, but inevitably, professional skills and advice will also be necessary and this will cost money."

He added: "Our resources have been stretched to the limit by the land purchase and we now need funds to safeguard the future of the project."

This is a community venture and Dùn Coilich now belongs to everyone in the area. Donations, however small are welcome. Details on how to contribute and subscribe to the fledgling trust are available from HPCLT, c/o J & H Mitchell, 51 Atholl Road, Pitlochry, PH16 5BU. In due course a list of contributors will be made available with no indication of whether donations were large or small.

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## **For further information please contact:**

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## **Notes:**

- 1. The first public meeting to hear about the formation of HPCLT will take place on Monday, 11 March, 7.30pm at Scotland's Hotel, Pitlochry. The next meeting, which will elect trustees will be on Wednesday 27 March, 7.30pm at Moness Country Club, Aberfeldy.*
- 2. The land will formally be handed over to the community on 10th May 2002.*
- 3. High resolution images (see below) can be downloaded from [pan Dùn coilich big.jpg](#) (4163x1596 @ 200dpi, 1.3Mb) and from [Dùn coilich 4x3.jpg](#) (2278x1704 @72dpi, 1.9Mb). These images are copyright of Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust and may be used with permission and acknowledgement.*