

Craignish Community Council

Housing Policy Statement

History

The area covered by Craignish Community Council was traditionally a farming community, made up of three large estates, Craignish, Lunga and Barbreck, plus the village of Ardfern.

The period since the 1960s has seen significant development and growth in population, caused by the availability of development land, the growth of the marina in Ardfern, and in the 1980s the development of the village and marina at Craobh Haven. Simultaneously, a large community has grown on the Lunga Estate, living mainly in caravans and self-built dwellings without planning permission, providing much needed low-cost but mostly sub-standard accommodation.

Employment/Economic Situation

Ardfern Yacht Centre is the largest single employer, and the marina in Craobh Haven is also a significant employer. Hospitality businesses such as the Galley of Lorne (Ardfern), The Lord of the Isles (Craobh) and the local shops benefit from the large number of yachts using both marinas throughout the year.

The rapid development of the area has resulted in a thriving construction industry, with many younger members of the community working full or part time, employed or self-employed in the building trade.

Traditional farming is still important in terms of land management if not of employment, additionally several new farm-gate retail businesses have been successfully developed.

There is a thriving annual arts festival with contributions from many local craft workers.

As has the rest of the country, Craignish has seen the recent arrival of economic migrants from Eastern Europe, providing a welcome addition to the community mix, and finding employment mainly in the hospitality/tourist industry.

As a result of these developments, Craignish is now a thriving, vibrant, disparate but cohesive community.

Infrastructure

The large increase in population has not been matched by simultaneous infrastructure improvements.

Mains water supply is now at capacity, and Argyll and Bute Council has stipulated that there can be no further housing development without a private water supply.

Currently the majority of properties are serviced by septic tanks, and the village septic tanks are at capacity and in need of repair. This reliance on septic tanks has resulted in pollution problems at the Mill Burn and the lagoon, with SEPA working to ascertain specific causes.

Scottish Water is committed to assisting development in Scotland and as a result their current investment programme (2006-2010) focuses on increasing capacity in their water and waste water treatment works. In Ardfern, studies are currently being carried out to ascertain the environmental effect of additional water extraction on Loch Fada, but there is no date as to when this will be completed. Likewise Scottish Water has no timetable for the upgrading of the Ardfern septic tank. However if development is imminent Scottish Water will work with developers to move certain works up the priority list.

The village of Ardfern is served by the single track B8002, which has not been improved or upgraded since 1990. Since then there has been a significant increase in traffic, and a significant deterioration of the road, exacerbated by heavy construction and commercial traffic.

Craignish Primary School expects to reach capacity in the near future, and the layout of the accommodation means that it is struggling to accommodate the current roll. Pupils are bussed to the village hall half a mile away for PE, and the new pre-five unit, though an integral part of the school, is housed in the village hall.

There are no play areas or playing fields in Craignish. However, thanks to the efforts of the local community there is now an excellent new village hall which is used not only for community activities and to provide community computer facilities and a Learning Centre, but as explained above as an extension of the village school.

The Housing Situation

The demand for property in the area, fuelled by an influx of retired people or those seeking holiday/second homes, attracted by the marinas, the sailing and the beautiful surrounding countryside, has resulted in inflated house prices. Most properties that come on the market are out of reach of many local people.

Argyll and Bute Council recently employed consultants to review the situation concerning residential caravans and dwellings without planning permission in Craignish. As a result of this review, many people were served with either 3 or 5 year eviction notices in 2007.

This action, coupled with an existing need for low cost housing, has resulted in a serious shortage of affordable housing in Craignish.

Future Development

The emerging Local Plan envisages further significant development on the Craignish peninsula. It identifies 5 sites in Ardfern, 3 High Density and 2 Mixed or Medium Density, and Craobh Haven has been allocated 5 sites accommodating some 117 units. An approved outline planning application for 195 units in Craobh has recently lapsed, however the housing land allocation in the Local Plan still stands. This does not count towards the total housing land allocation in the area, as it is assumed that any development in Craobh Haven will be of second/holiday homes. However, as with the existing houses in Craobh, some will undoubtedly be occupied full time, with corresponding impact on local infrastructure such as the school.

The Local Plan deals only with housing and does not consider the corresponding infrastructure investment which is required to service this development.

SUMMARY

Craignish Community Council supports and will work towards:

- The overall development of Craignish in a steady and considered manner, as befits a small rural community in a scenically sensitive area
- improvements to the infrastructure,(roads, water, electricity, sewage and communications) before any substantial new development is planned
- the provision of low cost affordable housing for those who live and work in Craignish. To this end Craignish Community Council will encourage and support initiatives to deliver affordable/low cost/sheltered housing
- the successful re-housing of those in need who live and work in Craignish ahead of any provision of housing for people from out-with the community
- the sympathetic and considerate implementation of Enforcement Orders while plans for affordable housing are delivered
- the preservation and development of Craignish Primary School as an integral and valued community asset
- the development of a play area and playing field in a central and convenient location
- all new development in the area meeting the Argyll and Bute Council Sustainability Checklist
- the gradual reduction and eventual end to members of the community living in sub-standard accommodation and/or without security of tenure and without appropriate planning consents
- notwithstanding the demand for housing and infrastructure improvements, due regard will be given to the siting, scale and design of developments in the peninsula so that the rural character of the village and its setting is not irreversibly prejudiced

**Craignish Community Council
6th February, 2008**