

## **Kinghorn Community Land Association 2005 (KCLA2005)**

### **First Annual Report 2005-06**

I am delighted to make this first report to our membership on what I believe has been a highly successful first year for the Association.

The Association came about because of the driving ambition of Kinghorn people to secure what they saw as valuable at Kinghorn Loch. At first it was the uncertainty over the future of the Craigencaht Ecology Centre that galvanised action, but this was soon followed by concern about the redevelopment of the former Kinghorn Tannery site. Would it encroach upon and change the character of a natural environment at the Loch that had been important to the Town since it was first gifted to its citizens in 1605 by King James VI? From this determination to regain influence over vital community assets, came first the Kinghorn Community Land Association, and then, in order to expedite the first registration for a Right to Buy land, Kinghorn Community Land Association 2005 which was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 21 March 2005

We have been recognised by Scottish Ministers as a Community Body under the terms of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

We have gained our first registered interest - the east shore of Kinghorn Loch, There is no doubt it was a great disappointment to all those who had laboured and invested their hopes in what looked like becoming our first Right to Buy, only for it to be "de-activated" just as we were about to ballot community support. We found the land was sold two months before it went on the market. But this did become a learning point for us, and indeed we believe too, for the Scottish Executive. Our registration nevertheless remains, and we will be re-activated should it be placed on the market at any time in the next 4 years.

On 30<sup>th</sup> June 2005, an Extraordinary General Meeting created the Association's first elected Board, a very important step in our development.

We have conducted extensive consultations with owners, users, the general public, our members and government agencies at local and central level on their aspirations and interests in the Kinghorn Loch area. These consultations were vital to discussing and forming a vision at the open meeting on 21 February 2006, namely:

"Our vision for Kinghorn Loch and surrounds is of:  
a beautiful, peaceful yet accessible and vibrant place,  
with a sustainable balance of environmental, educational, economic,  
leisure and social pursuits,  
enjoyed by all people of Kinghorn and beyond, and  
secured by care, excellent stewardship and community ownership."

This culminated in a submission to Scottish Ministers on 6 July 2006 to register interest in 18 plots of land at and around Kinghorn Loch, the largest

number of applications at one time, under the Act. Since then we received a number of comments on the submissions from the Scottish Environment and Rural Affairs Dept of the Scottish Executive. These are being addressed for final application for registrations to be made shortly.

I am greatly encouraged by the support of the Kinghorn community. Firstly, our membership now exceeds 100 persons and continues to grow. We also have a small number of Associate Members from outwith Kinghorn reflecting the importance to the wider community of our cause. We have also gained over 1200 signatures in two petitions to support our registration applications. Even allowing for people signing both petitions, that is a lot of support for a community of 2,500 people.

As a Board, we believe that it is essential to communicate well and reflect the views of our membership and the local community. We have posted five "Updates" or newsletters for the community, written to you as members on several occasions and called two open meetings, May 2005 and February 2006, in addition to the General meetings of our Association. We have also put out press statements and supplied information to the local newspaper columns. We can always do more and welcome suggestions about how best to do this.

The Crofting Communities have pioneered Land Reform in Scotland but for other communities it is a relatively new development and one we have much to learn about. We have tried to keep abreast of the emerging movement by going beyond Kinghorn to learn about charity law, about common good assets and, at the recent Big Tent festival in Falkland, to share our own thoughts with others about good stewardship of community assets. The land reform legislation has spurred a movement across Scotland, and Kinghorn can be proud to be at the forefront of that.

Our focus continues to be the Loch and what it offers to our community so we have gladly participated in the last two Craigencaft Festivals, to promote the Association, raise funds and to support the Ecology Centre.

So far the most important resource we have needed to rely on is the time and effort of membership. Our financial needs have been very modest but thanks to some imaginative fund-raising and the transfer of funds from our predecessor Association, our bank account is open and healthy. We will need to begin some substantial fund raising.

Ahead of us, we look forward to completing the Registration process for the Loch area and addressing the serious task of commissioning feasibility studies, seeking professional advice, production of a business plan and securing of funding for the land purchases as the opportunities arise. An exciting if challenging part of this is turning the vision into the practical management plan that will yield, plot by plot, our aspirations and those who value the Loch area as a beautiful, sustainable and vital part of the Kinghorn community's future.

In this first Chair's Annual Report, I do wish to pay tribute to certain individuals whose efforts have made particularly significant contributions to the Association's first steps.

**Mick McMillan**, former chair of KCLA and KCLA2005 and our first Treasurer. Mick lead and enthused people to become part of a cause and a thriving organisation. He is now somewhere in Europe heading towards Africa on his own very special journey around the world. We wish him the very best of luck and look forward to welcoming him back to the Association on his return.

**Christine Blair Murray**, our first company secretary, who also serviced KCLA and has presided over its winding up and handing over the reigns to KCLA2005, whilst becoming a mother for the first time.

Former Director **Tom Brown** for the time and effort he put into the groundwork to establish the Company.

Many friends from the original KCLA, such as **Simon Wakefield, Christine Hazel, Ronnie Mackie, Cecelia Fernie** who laid the foundations for our Association.

Fellow Directors – Anne Donald, Hugh McNeil who are standing down; other Directors who were in at the start or who have joined and are able to continue to devote their own considerable energy and enthusiasm to the Board and its work.

This Association, and indeed Kinghorn, should be proud of the selfless commitment of all these people.

In conclusion, it has been a highly productive first year. It has not been without its disappointments but it is a sign of the strength and maturity of the Association and the Board that we have persevered, made the largest number of Right to Buy registration applications at one time in Scotland, and are preparing to bring land at Kinghorn Loch into community ownership for the lasting benefit of all.

Chris Mitchell  
Chair  
Kinghorn Community Land Association 2005

18 September 2005