

Colonsay and Oronsay Heritage Trust, Community Planning Appraisal: Executive Summary

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This report has been produced in conjunction with the Colonsay and Oronsay Heritage Trust, the Colonsay Community Company and the Community Council, along with the communities of Colonsay and Oronsay. Its aim is to provide an agenda for sustainable community development for the area and its community.

A questionnaire was sent to the community to gather basic demographic information and both quantitative and qualitative data for use in the study. The data collected was then analyzed to identify local concerns about the present state of the area, and to explore potential solutions to these problems.

Interviews were also carried out with the village's young people: 5–11 years at the local Primary school, 12–18 years at the Glencruitten Hostel in Oban.

The results of the survey are presented in full in the main body of the report.

The priorities for development which have emerged from the findings of the survey include the following:

- There is a need for the various organizations on Colonsay to work in a more coherent and strategic way. At present, there is a tendency for groups to work in isolation, when a more positive outcome might result from a shared objective, and more co-operation on local development projects.
- There is a need to involve and consult with local people, and to build enthusiasm for and commitment to local development projects. This will be a great challenge, as the relatively low level of local response to the survey shows, but one that must be tackled if community 'buy-in' to local development is to be obtained.
- There is a need to address the lack of social opportunities for local people and to review the use and management of the Community Hall in some detail, with a view to identifying solutions to some of the challenges that it faces, in terms of longer-term financial sustainability.

- There is a need to develop new business opportunities, to diversify the economy, and to provide more employment opportunities.
- There is the potential for heritage-based activities to contribute to the development of the local economy. There is support for a central focus for cultural heritage interpretation, which is designed to serve both visitors and locals.
- The provision of certain services has been raised as an issue of concern, including ferry transport, medical services and environmental protection. These issues indicate clear priorities for the Community Council on which to lobby local and national governments.
- For many local people, the future of the islands depends on being able to attract young people and families to boost the island's population, and to bring new skills and experience to the working population. The provision of affordable housing will be an important issue in this respect.