



Knocknagael: a Green Hub for our Community

www.knocknagael.org.uk

Contact: grow@knocknagael.org.uk

Newsletter 2025/4

What's happening?

We recently had contact from one of our members about why the Smiddy Field is looking somewhat untended (see picture below), and the dialogue is shared in the box opposite.

We have been working for more than a decade to bring the Smiddy Field into community ownership and all the pieces are now in place: the Asset Transfer has been agreed through the Community Empowerment Act, funding is in place from the Scottish Land Fund and the conditions of sale have been all but agreed. All but!

At the eleventh hour the current owners (the Rural Payments & Inspections Division of the Scottish Government, or RPID) have put a new condition on the sale; that they retain control of any lease that the community enters into for the land that the community will own for the next 25 years!

We regard this condition as unnecessary, burdensome and inconsistent with the 'community empowerment' ethic of the Community Empowerment Act. We are considering how to navigate this unexpected hurdle, and are taking legal advice on the issue.

Plans are however progressing for development of the Field (see over)

Member: Has the company any plan to cut the grass in the field or offer it to the bull farm for their use, shame to see it unused and die off and rot???

Us: I'm afraid that we do not yet own the field. It is still under the ownership of the Bull Stud Farm who retain responsibility for maintenance until such time as the transfer goes through

Member: Thanks for sharing - real shame the field is going to waste until I assume the legals have concluded.

Maybe worth informing the locals (the newsletter) of that position as most understand (as per general conversation in the neighbourhood) the purchase of field has concluded



Knocknagael membership continues to grow and there are now approaching 120 members in the 'Knocknagael Family'. As with the update above, which resulted from a dialogue with one of our members, we are delighted when we have contact, suggestions or feedback from members—please get in touch with us at grow@knocknagael.org.uk, or through any of our social media feeds.

See our entry on the 'Linn an Fheirainn' website celebrating 100 years of community land ownership at [Knocknagael Limited - Linn an fheirainn: 100 Years of Community Ownership](#)

Date for your Diary

- **Annual General Meeting: 7pm Weds 21st January. Details to follow**

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Smiddy Field Planning Application Update:

Our planning application for change of use from agricultural land to a Green Hub with allotments was submitted to Highland Council in May. No objections were received, and the application was acknowledged positively, with many letters received in support of our proposals.

Upon detailed review of the application, Knocknagael Limited was asked by Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks to provide further plans with protection measures for several high voltage underground cables which run within the Smiddy Field.

This involved a number of weeks of further detailing work, updating plans and designing protective measures to ensure these important services remain undisturbed.

Knocknagael Ltd was also asked to address a number of queries from Highland Council Transport Planning regarding parking spaces for both cars and cargo bikes. This led to us undertaking a parking survey at another allotments site to confirm all traffic can be comfortably accommodated within the parking areas we have designed. We also reviewed and updated footpath and cycleway designs in accordance with latest guidance regarding sustainable transport.

As of 10th October all the newly updated drawings were submitted to Highland Council, and a decision notice on our Planning Application for the Green Hub is expected shortly.

Iglu Studios, who we have worked closely with in this have produced a very informative page on their website on our project [here](#)

Knocknagael Sponsored Cycle

Fundraising is an important challenge for us as we move towards ownership of the Smiddy Field and implementation of the plans described above. We anticipate that grant-funding of one kind or another will form a major part of this, but it is also important that we raise our own funds where we can.

Our recent sponsored cycle raised the impressive total of £2490 and we are extremely grateful to the Knocknagael members and supporters that generously supported this effort.

The cycle ride itself involved an 11.3 mile loop from the Smiddy Field and we are giving thought as to whether this could be a regular event in the future, and involving the wider community rather than a single Director going round and round the loop!

The Inverness Courier generously covered the event [here](#) and we are grateful to Daniel Forsyth of Highland News & Media for the photos

