



Knocknagael: a Green Hub for our Community

Newsletter 2024/3

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Welcome to an extra, and very exciting edition of our Autumn 2024 edition of our newsletter.

Despite our somewhat exasperated tone in recent newsletters about the bureaucracy that we have been dealing with to secure the Asset Transfer process for the Smiddy Field at Knocknagael Farm, we have some good news, hot off the press, as detailed below.



We are delighted to be able to share with you the excellent news that Knocknagael has been successful in securing grant funding from the Scottish Land Fund that will cover the costs of purchase of the land at the Smiddy Field. Although this is a major step forward towards realising the aims of our project, it is by no means the final step in the journey. Next comes the necessary negotiation with the Rural Payments Inspectorate Division (RPID) a governmental division that currently owns and manages the Smiddy Field.

Our Chairman Maria de la Torre said; *'This is a significant milestone. It is more than a year since the Ministerial decision to allow the transfer was made, and we have spent months in negotiation with the department of agriculture. Hopefully this agreement on funding will allow us to rapidly conclude the transfer. It has been a long process - we have been working on this project since 2016 involving hundreds of hours of volunteer time. Purchasing the site will allow the community access to green space and food-growing in Inverness, which are recognised as so important for our health and well-being. On behalf of all our members, we are grateful to the SLF for their support; without it we would not have been able to continue to the next stage.'*

Local Councillor Alasdair Christie said; *'The Knocknagael project has over the years persistently put forward a fabulous vision for the use of this field. The hard work of all the volunteers associated with the project is an example of what a community can do. The grant from the Scottish Land Fund will now turn that vision into a reality and I, like many others wait in excitement for the next stage.'*

Arianne Burgess MSP said; *'I'm delighted to hear that Knocknagael has secured grant funding from the Scottish Land Fund to purchase Smiddy Field. I've been hugely impressed by the hard work, diligence and sheer perseverance of Knocknagael Ltd as they've fought to keep this vital Green space at the heart of their community. Owning the land will open up a huge range of opportunities for community growing and other nature-based activities. I look forward to seeing them go from strength to strength as the site develops'.*

Archaeology survey 5th—9th November:

The archaeology group AOC undertook a survey of the Smiddy Field on the week commencing 4th November. Funding to support this work came from the UK Prosperity Fund and the Highland Council. The Knocknagael Farm is the original site of the Knocknagael Boar Stone, a pictish carving dating from 400-600 AD that was moved from a field in the Farm to its current home in the Highland Regional Council headquarters, so the survey was an important part of our plans. No significant archaeological finds were made but local schools enjoyed their involvement and the community event on Saturday 9th November was very well attended.