



Knocknagael: a Green Hub for our Community

www.knocknagael.org.uk

Contact: grow@knocknagael.org.uk

Newsletter 2025/1

Asset Transfer Update: As reported in our last newsletter, we were delighted to share the news that we had been successful in securing funding from the Scottish Land Fund that will cover the costs of purchase of the land at the Smiddy Field. Next comes the necessary negotiation with the Rural Payments Inspectorate Division (RPID) a governmental division that currently owns and manages the Field.

Sandie Craig is one of the Directors leading on the transfer and reports that '*we are working hard with our solicitor to agree the sale with solicitors acting for RPID. There are some issues regarding the boundaries and access which have still to be negotiated and we have asked the relevant Scottish Government Minister to help with expediting this. We remain optimistic that these issues can be rapidly ironed out.*'

In the meantime, a lot is happening! Des Kelly, who is one of the Directors leading on the design work for the Field reports that '*during October 2024 we sent out invitations to several Landscape Architects to tender for the detailed design work for the Knocknagael allotments site. This work is to further enhance the preliminary designs undertaken by Harrison Stevens, and to prepare documents for submission of a planning application. We also requested that the design consultants prepare documents and drawings such that we can approach contractors to request tenders for the necessary construction phases, all of which must be completed prior to the letting of allotments.*

After a competitive tender process with four high quality submissions from four landscape design contractors we appointed Iglu Studio of Edinburgh to undertake the detailed design work. Iglu Studio Ltd will work alongside Ethos Consultants who are providing a traffic engineering support role. Also, Narro Associates, Harley Haddow, and Thomson Gray complete the design and engineering team providing civil, structural, mechanical & electrical engineering and quantity surveying services.

Iglu Studio are now working on preparing the detailed site layout. This includes design of the entrance-way, car and bicycle parking areas, design of a central hub with container storage, toilets, community orchard, and associated access pathways.

We are undertaking a community consultation at the Green Drive Hall on Wednesday 19th February 2025 to seek feedback from members of the public on the detailed preliminary layout proposals [see the third page of this newsletter]. Comments will be taken on board and design changes made based on public opinion before we submit the planning application to Highland Council'.

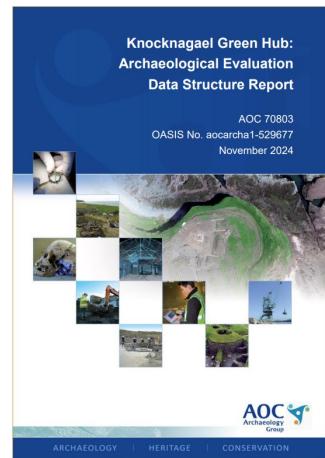
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Date for your Diary: Consultation Event at the Green Drive Hall, Wednesday 19th February between 1-7pm.
Come Along and Have Your Say!

Archaeology survey: As reported in our last Newsletter of 2024, the archaeology group AOC undertook a survey of the Smiddy Field on the week commencing 4th November. This was an important undertaking that was necessary to progress our plans for the Smiddy Field, not least because of the plethora of historically-important sites in the near locality. First among these is perhaps 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. Funding to support this work came from the UK Prosperity Fund and the Highland Council. No significant archaeological finds were made but local schools enjoyed their involvement and the community event on Saturday 9th November was very well attended. For those that are interested, the full report can be accessed through this link <https://tinyurl.com/2accv8tc> .



AGM Report: Our Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 22nd January and a pleasing number members were linked by Zoom to take part. The business part of the meeting included the presentation of the annual accounts (which can be viewed on our website <https://tinyurl.com/ymdjvyn6>) as well as some changes to the membership of the Knocknagael Board. Following a year's sabbatical we are delighted to welcome Steve Rowan back as a Director. Dan Rhodes has also joined the Board (more about Dan below) and sadly Gordon Macdonald has stepped back from the Director's role but plans to remain a committed and active member.

With respect to Gordon, our Chairman Maria de la Torre stated '*We would like to thank Gordon for his massive contribution during a critical stage in the asset transfer process. We have been fortunate to benefit from his huge financial knowledge, patience, and dedication. Not only has Gordon kept our accounts, he put together the financial case for the transfer of the field that was presented to the review panel and which was instrumental in getting us through the final negotiations last year. Thank you Gordon!*'

The business of the meeting was followed by a fascinating talk about the history of Knocknagael by Lorna Steele-McGinn, Community Engagement Officer at the Highland Archive Centre. A recording of Lorna's talk can be accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/bp8v3jv9>—a very good use of 20 minutes of your time!

Daniel Rhodes, our newest Director, is Senior Archaeologist with the National Trust for Scotland and Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Stirling. Over the last 25 years he has been involved in community heritage projects in Ireland, Iceland and East Africa. He's experienced in Landscape Management and Change and runs community heritage projects all over Scotland. He is also a Trustee of Dunain Community Woods in Inverness, an experienced allotment digger-overer and an enthusiastic apple tree grower.



PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Knocknagael Green Hub Allotments

GREEN DRIVE HALL

36 Green Drive
Inverness
IV2 4EU

Wednesday 19th February 2025

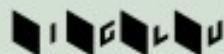
1pm - 7pm

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Iglu Studio and Knocknagael Ltd.
will be holding a public consultation session at the **Green Drive Hall** on
Wednesday 19th February 2025 between **1pm to 7pm**.

This is an opportunity for us to present our concept design for the
Knocknagael Green Hub project at the Smiddy Field.

This event is **your** chance to tell us what you think about the emerging
design via community feedback and comments. Join us for some tea,
cake and a chat!



NARRO

