

**PRESS RELEASE 2 April 2021**

### **Community buys land in Lochinver for affordable housing and community facilities**

The Assynt Development Trust has bought 55 acres of former glebe land from the Church of Scotland, with support from the Scottish Land Fund.

The purchase, which was finalised at the end of March, marks the next step of a 15-year community-led search to find suitable land for building much-needed affordable homes for the local community, as well as other facilities.

With the land now in community ownership, the Assynt Development Trust is hoping the site will deliver multiple benefits to the community, and plan to hold further consultations in the local area once Covid restrictions are eased.

The site, situated on the road towards Glencanisp Lodge, was identified after a thorough process of surveys, housing need evaluations, and careful thought and planning.

Initial ideas for the site are being explored, to potentially include affordable homes, an all-abilities path network, commercial work units, and education and training facilities. The Communities Housing Trust supported the community with the land acquisition, and will continue to help facilitate the development process.

Willie Jack, Chair of Assynt Development Trust: “We are really pleased that the land purchase has now gone through, and we can now begin to address some of the issues facing our community, such as the need for affordable homes for Assynt residents. We are very keen that people have a chance to pitch their ideas in, for what they need and want in Lochinver. As everything is still at an early stage, and with the site secured, we can work on developing the site into what local people want for it, now and into the future.”

Ronnie MacRae, CEO of Communities Housing Trust: “This is an exciting opportunity to provide not just affordable housing, but wider social and economic community benefits too. This community-led, mixed development model is often so much more suited to smaller, more rural communities and we are extremely pleased to continue working with the Trust and the wider community to further develop the site. We’d like to thank the Scottish Land Fund and congratulate the community on the buyout, and recognise all the hard work that’s been put in to get to this stage. Well done!”

**END**

For further information, images and interviews, please contact:

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