

Glenkens Housing Forum

9th February 2023

The Smiddy, Balmaclellan

32 attendees

Agenda

- Introduction – Helen Keron, GCAT
- Glenkens Housing Demand and Need Survey – Mike Staples, SoSCH
- Case Studies: Retro-fitting - Mike Staples
- Case Study: New build – Mike Steele, Nith Valley Leaf Trust
- Some Glenkens plans – Alan Smith, Pamela Young Trust
- Open discussion

SOSCH provides long-term support to community organisations around the planning and delivery of community-led housing.

We will get involved at the very start of a housing conversation and can provide support all the way through to delivery and beyond.

We understand the unique and specific needs of individual communities and have years of experience in taking ideas into delivery, including recommending funding sources.

If you would like to hear more about the potential of community-led housing or have a specific idea for a project, please get in touch!

Mike Staples, Chief Exec – mike.sosch@outlook.com
sosch.org/what-we-do/

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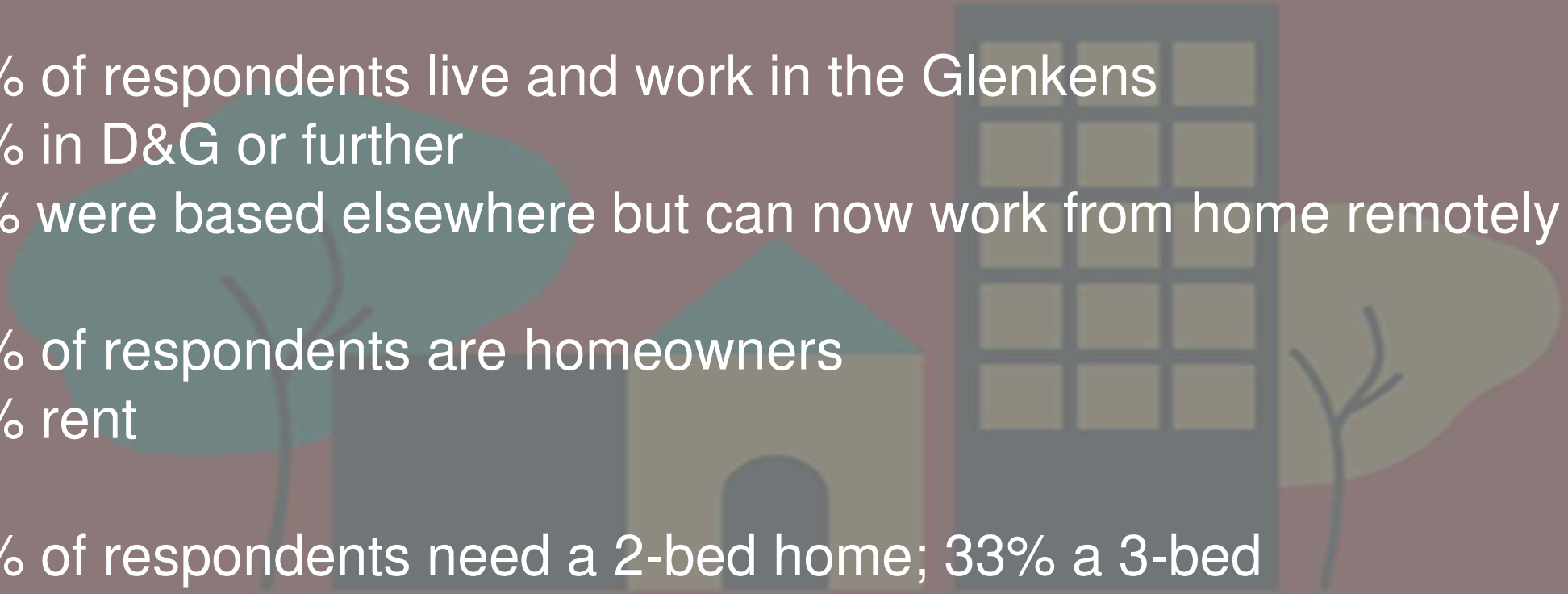


Glenkens Housing Needs and Demands Assessment (HNDA)

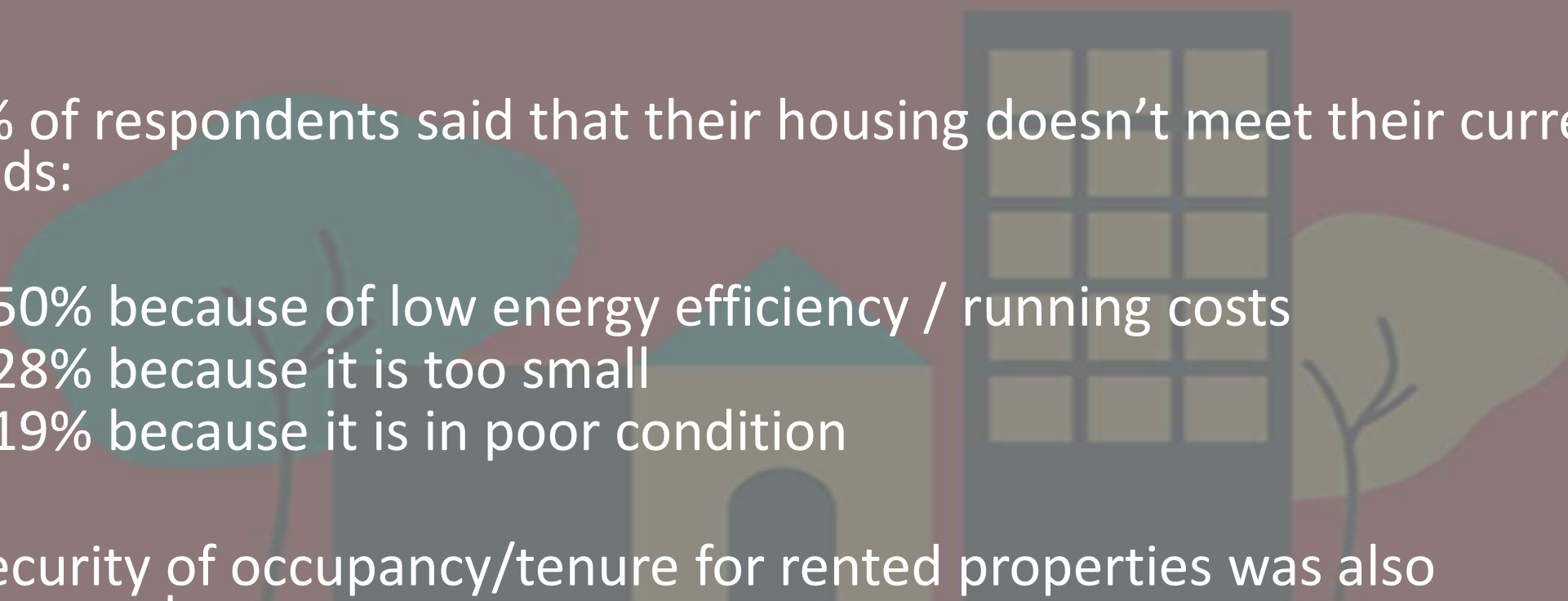
- Carried out November 2021 - March 2022, online.
- 146 responses from a population of 3,000 (5%)
- Included an Employer Survey and a review of housing association waiting lists data for Glenkens
- Full report available at glenkenstrust.org.uk
- Purpose:
 - to establish the views of the area relative to housing needs (present and future)
 - to consider type and tenure of any potential community housing within the Glenkens.

Glenkens HNDA - Demographics

- 32% of respondents live and work in the Glenkens
- 30% in D&G or further
- 11% were based elsewhere but can now work from home remotely
- 63% of respondents are homeowners
- 27% rent
- 44% of respondents need a 2-bed home; 33% a 3-bed



Glenkens HNDA – Findings (1)

- 27% of respondents said that their housing doesn't meet their current needs:
 - 50% because of low energy efficiency / running costs
 - 28% because it is too small
 - 19% because it is in poor condition
 - Insecurity of occupancy/tenure for rented properties was also referenced.
- 
- A stylized illustration in the background shows a small house with a green roof and a dark arched doorway, and a taller building with a grid of windows. There are two trees, one green and one brown, flanking the buildings.

Glenkens HNDA – Findings (2)

- 39% of respondents said that they would be in need of housing now or in the next 5 years.
- 51% knew of someone who had had to leave the household due to a lack of suitable housing.
- 65% have need for a workspace within the home.
- Top preferred routes for identifying housing options (all equal):
 - Renting (private / housing association / community groups)
 - Buying
 - Self-build

Glenkens HNDA – Key Conclusions

- The offer of housing in the Glenkens is extremely limited and is affecting the sustainability of communities.
- There is a need for housing that is affordable, fuel efficient and low cost to run, whether re-developing existing properties or new build.
- Community housing allocated or bought with a local needs policy in place will ensure that the housing is protected in perpetuity and that it is designed to meet the needs of the community.

Housing Challenges for all rural D&G Communities

- Undersupply of safe, warm, low-energy (affordable running costs), secure homes for rent or purchase
- Heated property market and second home ownership has been exacerbated post-Covid
- Shrinking private rental market – unintended consequence of energy efficiency legislation
- Repopulation agenda – supporting schools, businesses etc
- Increased development costs and insufficient supply chain
- Issues of social equality and housing
- Addressing Net Zero / climate emergency and fuel poverty

Some retro-fit case studies

sosch.



Old Police Station, Langholm

- Town Centre decline – key issue of empty buildings and vacant “gap” sites
- Repurposing of empty / vacant / derelict buildings as energy-efficient community-led homes
- “The Old Police Station”, Langholm – completed July 2021
- Community Asset Transfer of building from D&G Council - disused for 15 years, “B” listed – heritage restoration
- Complex funding package - Rural Housing Fund, Scottish Land Fund, Architectural Heritage Fund, SOSE, Borrowing, Eskdale Foundation, Town Centre Living Fund





The Grapes Hotel, Whithorn

- Prominent High Street Building, disused for 30+ years and source of significant frustration to local community
- Property internally derelict, some external repair
- All Roads Lead to Whithorn – community development trust, worked with SOSCH to develop partnership approach, business planning and funding package
- Acquisition in 2019 via Scottish Land Fund
- Capital programme of works completed mid-2022
- Rural Housing Fund, Town Centre Living Fund, Town Centre Capital Fund, Scottish Land Fund
- Two large family homes, addressing localised demand profile.
- Planning consent for further homes on land to rear
 - Phase 2



Wigtown Former Bank

- Former Bank of Scotland, Wigtown – key High Street property, vacated following withdrawal of service in 2017
- Completion May 2022 – two homes (family and amenity accessible home for older resident) plus community-run bunkhouse plus community growing project on large garden
- Community Right to Buy enacted, property acquired via Scottish Land Fund
- Mixed use community-led High Street regeneration
- Multi-partnership project, complex funding package
- Rural Housing Fund / Scottish Land Fund / Town Centre Living Fund / Town Centre Capital Fund / Windfarm Community Benefits



Glentrool: Community-led Regeneration

- Remote community – community-led response to securing a sustainable future
- Threat of loss of affordable housing supply
- Homes in ownership of RSL transferred to community org
- Community ownership of former school – “The Hive” – projects are complementary
- Rural Housing Fund / SLF / SOSE / SIS Loan + Vendor Contribution



Glenkens Community Led Housing – Next Steps

- HNDA indicated a significant issue around suitable and locally affordable housing supply across Glenkens communities.
- SOSCH are keen to hear from individual communities with an interest in housing.
- Strategic discussions ongoing with GDT/GCAT/SOSE
- Working with Pamela Young Trust around project development
- Support to Carsphairn Community Council – HNDA

New-build case study: Nith Valley Leaf Trust

Community-owned Passivhaus homes for affordable rent



www.nithvalley.org

Mike.steelebsas@yahoo.co.uk



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Project Development process

- Early clarity on objectives
 - homes for families
 - highest energy/health standards
- Community Asset Transfer - D&G Council
- Development Funding
 - Scottish Land Fund
 - Rural Housing Fund
- Community engagement
- Site identification / Housing Needs survey
- Appointment of Design Team and “Passivhaus” partnership
- Planning and building warrant
- Team approach - NVLT/SOSCH
 - + John Gilbert Architects
 - + Quantity Surveyors



Project Delivery

- Scottish Land Fund – Stage Two Award for land/expenses/development officer
- Rural Housing Fund – full grant award
- Capital supplemented by Windfarm Funding and Loan
- Ecology Building Society
- Contract with main contractor (Stewart and Shields)
- 15-month build
- Challenges of Covid-19
- Scotland's 1st community-owned passive-certified homes! Passive certification Feb 21
- SURF Awards 2020 – “Housing and Regeneration” - WINNER!



NVLT Passivhaus – Post-delivery learning

- Local Allocations Policy has to be agreed
- Expect a long snagging period
- Consider appointing Managing agents



Outcomes - Community Impacts

- Rural regeneration
- Increased population - especially the primary school
- Rental income for community projects
- Community-owned low-impact housing at affordable levels long term
- Motivation for more sustainable environmental conscious projects
- Attractive and colourful architecture on derelict land
- Direct community-led response to Climate Change.



Outcomes - Tenant Impacts

- Security of tenure
- Affordable rent – “social” rent levels and low running costs
- Very low energy bills addressing fuel poverty
- Low / no energy consumption for comfortable year round temperatures
- Filtered air due to MVHR system – health benefits
- Ability to stay local for family, friends and work
- New state of the art environmentally sensitive village homes
- Sense of pride and reduced anxiety.



PAMELA YOUNG TRUST
help with housing in the Glenkens



- 22 houses purchased between 1992 and 2022, plus 1 commercial property used as local charity shop
- Originally intended to support farm-workers in their retirement from tied houses.
- Now open to anyone who has a connection with the Glenkens and would benefit from rent-assured permanent housing. Allocation policy reflects this.

PAMELA YOUNG TRUST
help with housing in the Glenkens



- Housing stock being brought up to current EPC requirements as tenancies allow. Recently retro-fitted 2 family houses to very high standards of energy efficiency, including air source heat pumps.
- Trustees are all local and have a good knowledge of local requirements
- Historically properties have only been purchased after prolonged exposure on the general housing market.
- Now extending into new builds to meet needs, working in partnership with SOSCH.

PAMELA YOUNG TRUST
help with housing in the Glenkens



- **Balmaclellan New Build Housing (potentially Passivhaus standard)**
 - The Pamela Young Trust (PYT) has purchased a brownfield derelict site in Balmaclellan village centre and plans to build up to 3 new houses to the highest energy efficiency standards. Feasibility Study/options analysis in planning.
- **Houses at Glenlee (currently owned by SPEN)**
 - Constructive discussions underway between SPEN and PYT
 - Tenders to assess scope of work at Glenlee being assessed which will in turn feed into a Feasibility Study to be commissioned by PYT.
- **Feasibility Study / Viability Assessment**
 - Both projects have secured initial strategic support from the Rural Housing Fund (and therefore D&G Council) and are in the process of submitting applications to the RHF Feasibility Fund which will cover this initial phase . Additional funding will be sought to cover development work.

Additional points from the event

Mike Staples, SOSCH

- The rental market is shrinking because landlords have to meet minimum EPC standards. This is so difficult for much Galloway housing stock that they are removing them from the market.
- You have to do a thorough Options Appraisal and remain flexible to meeting the true need with a community housing project e.g. Langholm Old Police Station was to be accommodation plus office space but ended up being all accommodation because that's where the need was.
- SOSCH can support community projects from idea to delivery so long as the funding can be sourced – it's hard work but not impossible!

Additional points from the event

Mike Steele, NVLT

- The Trust went to the Council to ask what land they (the Council) owned and therefore might be available for asset transfer.
- Consider fixed interest loans from e.g. Social Investment Scotland to complete a funding package, because you will have income (rent).
- Quantity Surveyor services were invaluable, and all project management was hidden behind that one interface with the NVLT Board.
- The Local Allocation Policy is key. They prioritized young families, and their 4 homes have added 9 children (15%) to the primary school roll.
- There is an issue of allocation as children grow up, but they are hoping to create smaller homes of a similar standard that people will be happy to move into.

Additional points from the event

Alan Smith, Pamela Young Trust

- PYT currently has a waiting list of 27, showing the need.
- PYT is committed to maintaining and upgrading its existing housing stock, and any new projects can't jeopardise that base.
- Any new projects around housing are a marathon not a sprint, but if people get organised, there's no reason why we can't have many new projects in addition to those the PYT are working on

From the floor

- Could we create a Glenkens-wide network of owners and landlords who have been through an energy-efficiency upgrade to share knowledge?
- Could we bundle work in order to create sufficient demand for people to start businesses?

Contacts and follow-up

Thanks to all who came and contributed so positively. Community-led housing projects are difficult but not impossible, and funding sources are out there to support community groups who have identified a need and organised around a project. Once the funding is in place, technical support is also out there to make the project a reality.

Contacts:

- Mike Staples: Mike.sosch@outlook.com
- Mike Steele: mike.steelebsas@yahoo.co.uk
- Pamela Young Trust: enquiries@abamatthews.com
- GCAT: Helen@catstrand.com

This event was organised and hosted by GCAT in support of the Glenkens & District Community Action Plan.