

# ISLE OF CANNA

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023

August 2023 V.3



# Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Our 20 Year Vision**
- 3. Values & Mission**
- 4. Recent Progress**
- 5. Assets & Challenges**
- 6. SWOT Analysis**
- 7. Community Objectives**
- 8. Other plans & strategies**
- 9. Plan Review**
- 10. Partners**
- 11. Appendices**

## **1.0 Introduction**

This is Canna's second ten-year community development plan and builds on the significant progress we have achieved since 2013. We are grateful for the ongoing support of the National Trust for Scotland, and all our partners. This plan is the product of the ideas and enthusiasm of Canna's residents, as well as our wider community of friends and supporters, whose continuing interest and engagement is greatly valued.

## **2.0 Our 20 Year Vision**

*Twenty years from now we see Canna thriving, with a stable and sustainable population of all ages including families with children. People may come, stay for a few years, contribute to the community and then leave again, but a core of long-term residents keeps the population steady at around 30-35.*

*Canna's Community Learning Hub hosts Bun-Sgoil Chanaigh, as well as adult education, skills and development. Canna's schoolkids are in regular contact with the pupils of other Small Isles schools. A variety of affordable housing options allows households to grow, and newcomers to try a taste of island life, and settle here if it is right for them, (and us). Appropriate housing and a social support scheme means older residents are able to carry on living in Canna as long as they are able or want to.*

*A range of accommodation types means more of the 10,000 – 15,000 visitors who come each year can stay for a few nights and engage more meaningfully with the island and community. As a result, there are more opportunities for new businesses to generate income and employment, and the tourism season extends to 10 months of the year.*

*Crofting and farming still utilise much of the land, but the new environmental land management payments mean bio-diversity and wildlife value is prioritised over production. Food produced on and caught around Canna is in high demand in the local shop, and at the new Café Canna, prized for its high welfare and environmental standards.*

*Despite more folk living on Canna the essential character of the island has not been lost, derelict buildings have been restored, and new developments have been carefully considered and sensitively implemented so as to maintain the island's unspoilt nature. Canna is still largely car-free, with electric bikes the most common way for visitors and locals to get around (in Summer anyway!) The island is however planning for the effects of climate change, including the anticipated sea-level rise which means new transport infrastructure will need to be built on higher ground. New native woodlands are starting to get away in sheltered locations, and the old policy plantations have been restructured.*

*Canna still 'beats' to the daily coming and going of the new fast ferry to Mallaig, and also the twice-weekly inter-island passenger service to Eigg via Rum. Older kids in the High School hostel in Mallaig are able to return at weekends and visit their pals on other islands during the summer. Canna regularly hosts study tours and international symposia and has cultural exchanges with artists from other island communities across the North Atlantic.*

### 3.0 Our Mission & Values

The Isle of Canna Community Development Trust (IoCCDT) works to achieve sustainable demographic growth on Canna supported by good employment opportunities, good services and facilities and affordable housing.

Our Values: .....TBA.....

### 4.0 Recent Progress

In the five years since our previous community development plan was last reviewed, we have made significant progress on many of the objectives identified in that plan;

**Development Manager:** Being able to engage the services of a Development Manager and Administrator has enabled us to drive forward our priority projects. We are grateful for NTS and DTAS support towards these posts.

**Affordable Housing:** We are working with Communities Housing Trust to advance proposals for Canna's first community-owned homes. We have completed a Housing Needs Survey and a Housing Strategy. We have identified several potential sites for new housing and are about to acquire two sites from NTS with support from the Scottish Land Fund. We have started working up designs for 3 new homes to go on these sites and will be taking these to planning application in 2023.

**Housing Management:** In preparation for becoming a community landlord, we are working on housing management policies and along with other community development trusts in the Small Isles are looking at the potential for a joint housing management company to manage the community-owned housing stock in all the islands.

**Canna Partnership:** In 2022 we opened a new chapter in the working relationship between NTS and the resident community with the advent of the Canna Partnership which sets out how our two organisations will work together to achieve common aims of improving life for Canna's residents and the experience of our visitors.

**Coroghan Barn:** We undertook a building condition survey, an options appraisal and a project viability study on Coroghan, to investigate its potential for redevelopment to create a mixed-use facility providing budget visitor accommodation, community spaces and spaces for small businesses. In 2023 we intend to firm up those proposals with concept designs and initial planning enquiries.

**Canna Visitor Hub:** We advanced proposals for a new visitor facilities hub at Canna Pier, comprising modern toilets and showers, a laundry, a NTS Rangers base and store, and a room that could be used by visiting health workers and GPs. We secured a funding package for the design and planning stages, and also funding for the construction which it is hoped will happen in 2023-24.

**Energy and Decarbonisation:** We installed new monitoring equipment on Canna's energy supply system so we could better understand the correlation between our supply and demand, to make better use of surplus energy to heat domestic hot water in resident's homes. We also made use of available grants to buy air-source heat pumps for the 3 planned affordable houses. We are currently investigating the scope and options for increasing Canna's renewable energy generation, looking ahead to a time when we will need to do this.

**Canna Mission Church:** We have advanced discussions with Church of Scotland about the terms under which the community would consider acquiring the church and repairing it to create a community venue, exhibition and arts performance space. We are investigating funding sources for a refurbishment feasibility study.

**Water supply system:** NTS have improved the quality and reliability of the water supply, with a centralised treatment system and new spring sources added. Ultimately a bore hole planned for 2023-24 should hopefully address any constraint on Canna's future development.

**Canna House:** NTS have advanced proposals for the refurbishment of the house and its collection, which will take place in 2023-24. Once complete, Canna House will be in a much better position to contribute to the island's wider economic and social regeneration.

## 5.0 Assets & Challenges

The Islands of Canna and Sanday face many of the same challenges faced by all the remote Island communities on the West Coast of Scotland. But we also have some unique assets that we can build on to overcome those challenges. The islands have strong historical and cultural links within the Gaeltachd and to the other islands of the Hebrides and this gives Canna a strong sense of identity.

### Assets

#### Our community

Canna has a resourceful and cohesive community with a strong sense of shared goals and objectives. The experience and skill of our community members is its main asset. Living on a remote Island requires people to be hard working, resourceful, co-operative and to develop a wide range of skills and competencies. We recognise however that at around 18-20 residents community capacity is stretched and more people, especially younger people, would help spread the load. We are however developing closer connections with the other Small Isles community development trusts, and collaborating on matters of mutual interest where combined pressure on agencies can achieve outcomes for all of us.

#### Our environment

Canna's natural and historical environment is of national and global significance. We are very conscious of the need to balance human development with the conservation of the island's unique natural and built environment, and to keep within its ecological footprint. Canna's environment and special character is highly valued by the 10,000 – 15,000 people who visit the island each year, and we recognise that this is a huge part of our 'USP' as a tourism destination. Our unspoiled environment also provides food from both land and sea with a unique provenance that we can utilise to our advantage.

We recognise that changing national priorities for land use, and the support system for agriculture will affect how the land on Canna and Sanday is farmed and managed in the coming years. We want to ensure that the islands' bio-diversity and nature value is enhanced while meeting community regeneration objectives. A Canna Land Management Plan that includes consideration of future options for Canna Farm, crofting expansion, woodland management and nature conservation should be developed in partnership with NTS.

#### Our history

Canna's rich Gaelic heritage and the archaeology which bears witness to over 1,000 years of human habitation is a major asset which could be better utilised. The links to the Scottish Diaspora of countries like Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand gives Canna a worldwide appeal. Cultural tourism is becoming a huge market for remote communities and Canna is well placed to reap the rewards of this. The renovation of

Canna House and Collection in 2023 opens up new opportunities for us to develop cultural links with the wider Scottish and Highland diaspora.

## **Challenges**

### **Remoteness & Cost**

Canna lies 26 miles and 2½ hours sail from Mallaig, and that fact impacts on every aspect of island life. The distance and transport costs mean the cost of living and running a business is higher here than on the Mainland, while opportunities to generate income are reduced. Like other islands we are at the mercy of the weather and the whims of the ferry and freight operators, on whose performance we have limited influence – this has been a huge source of frustration in recent years.

Remoteness means residents must have a high degree of self-containment and self-sufficiency, and the community must be resilient. Remoteness can also have some benefits to tourism, potentially encouraging longer stays if more accommodation were available. It can also mean a more discerning (and potentially higher spending) visitor profile. A long-term goal would be to implement some form of Small Isles inter-island ferry service, potentially community-owned and run. At the very least the feasibility of a seasonal scheduled passenger service should be investigated.

### **Economy & Incomes**

Our economy is fragile and highly reliant on employment by the NTS and tourism. We need to diversify sources of income and develop new enterprises to increase resilience. We want to create more opportunities for social enterprises and private small businesses to start up in Canna.

Seasonal fluctuation in income is a big challenge to community development, particularly for tourism based businesses. Extending the season, increasing the range of accommodation options and creating more opportunities for added value and visitor services will all help address this.

Although tourism is a huge advantage for a remote island, it creates challenges both in terms of available infrastructure and its potential to erode the island's unique character. We need to balance tourism's economic potential against preserving the very thing that makes Canna a desirable place to live in and visit. Our new Tourism Strategy will set out how we intend to achieve this, working in partnership with NTS and the other Small Isles communities.

### **Population & Community**

There is general agreement that Canna's population needs to increase to a more stable and sustainable level for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The current 18-20 residents undertake a huge range of paid, unpaid and voluntary activities to keep the island functioning, and provide a welcome to our visitors. Community capacity is however stretched, and we need a new generation of residents to take over some of these roles. In the short term our goal is to increase the island's population to 30-35 as the experience of other small islands suggests that this is the minimum needed to achieve stability. Critically it is important to have a range of age-groups, including children and economically active folk. Good quality and affordable housing options, in a range of sizes and tenures are key to this. We also need to ensure that older residents are supported to stay on Canna as long as they wish or are able to. This means planning for both age-appropriate housing options, and the social care infrastructure that will be needed around that.

We are making a start with the building of three new community-owned affordable homes, but we also need to plan for how potential new residents can be attracted to Canna and assisted to settle and make a new life here. Our Housing Strategy (2020) sets out how we intend to develop this work over the coming years.

### **Infrastructure and Services**

Working in partnership with the NTS and other organisations is seen as being a crucial factor in increasing the infrastructure, housing and services potential. In the past 30 years the NTS has invested heavily in the infrastructure of the Island, but there remain many areas for further improvement, for example:

**Affordable housing:** increasing the existing population requires more homes of different types and sizes.

**Small business spaces:** we now have a reliable broadband internet connection, but small businesses lack space for expansion and storage. Flexible business spaces, or a shared-use facility for processing etc. would enable more economic activity.

**Health & Social Care:** Having a dedicated health visitor's room in the new hub at Canna Pier will be a big improvement in the island's health service. We also need to explore with Highland Council how social care can be delivered better to residents that need it, especially older residents.

**Transport:** Recent problems with the Calmac service all over the West Coast have highlighted our dependency on an ageing and unreliable ferry fleet. Together with the other Small Isles CTs we will continue to lobby for improvements, but a community-run inter-island passenger service is also worth exploring.

**Education:** Our medium term goal is to see Canna's primary school reopen, but we recognise that with fluctuating school rolls small island communities find it difficult to sustain primary schools indefinitely. We want to explore a different model with Highland Council, whereby Canna School becomes a community learning and skills hub, hosting the primary school when required, but still being actively used when not. We want kids on Canna to have more opportunities for interaction with their peers in the other Small Isle's schools and in Mallaig than was the case in the past.

**Visitor accommodation:** Canna needs to be able to offer more beds spaces of different types and price brackets if we are to encourage more day-trippers to stay overnight and spend money in the local economy, without simply increasing visitor numbers.

### Climate Change

With the majority of our homes, buildings and infrastructure sited along the shores of Canna Harbour, we are particularly vulnerable to sea-level rise and the increased risk of coastal flooding. Canna's limited water supply and lack of water storage also means the islands are vulnerable to extended dry periods, which may become more frequent with more extreme weather. We need to start planning for these impacts which may start to be felt within the next 30 years. To this end we will start work on a Climate Change Adaptation & Resilience Plan during the life of this plan.

## 6.0 SWOT Analysis

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cohesive, 'can-do' community</li> <li>Individuals skills &amp; experience</li> <li>NTS finance &amp; resources</li> <li>Diaspora &amp; supporters</li> <li>Partner agency goodwill</li> <li>High degree of community resilience</li> <li>Strong distinctive tourism offering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small community size, limited capacity</li> <li>Limited facilities &amp; infrastructure</li> <li>Reliance on small no. of individuals</li> <li>Distance/isolation/transport costs</li> <li>Agency attitude to NTS ownership</li> <li>Low profile regionally</li> </ul>

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Scot Gov. Islands funding &amp; Repopulation strategy,            Zero Carbon &amp; off-grid agenda            Small Isles common causes            NTS membership/fundraising            Cultural &amp; 'Slow' tourism trends</p>	<p>NTS bureaucracy &amp; processes            Lack of development funding            Loss of key personnel            Loss of community cohesion            Development cost inflation            Poor Calmac ferry service            Climate change (sea-levels, storms, droughts)</p>

## 7.0 Community Objectives

### Short Term Objectives (1-2 years)

- Construct and fill 3 new affordable homes
- Put in place arrangements and policies for good management of houses
- Establish SIMP with other partners
- Lease and operate completed visitor hub
- Complete feasibility for Coroghan Barn redevelopment and start capital fundraising
- Complete feasibility study for Rhu Church refurbishment
- Develop community garden in 'Hen run' area
- Advance proposals to re-open Canna School when required

### Medium Term Objectives (3-5) years

- Coroghan Barn Redevelopment capital project
- Rhu Church refurbishment project
- Canna Land Management Plan – agree with NTS and start actions
- Start native tree nursery
- Reopen Canna School
- Renewable Energy additional generation feasibility
- Pontoon at Canna Pier

### Long term Objectives (5-10 years)

- Second affordable housing project – self-build plots and supported homes?
- Change House Barn redevelopment - 'Gateway' housing or live/work units
- RE system supply & distribution upgrade
- New community facilities – shop/hall/businesses/leisure
- Climate change resilience planning
- Woodland management and tree planting
- Proposals for renovation of other derelict buildings.
- New crofts and extension to common grazings
- Small Isles inter-island ferry service feasibility study



<b>1.0 Short term objectives 1 – 2 years</b>			
<b>Project / Objective</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Partners/Funders</b>	<b>Cost &amp; Challenges</b>
1.1 construct 3 new affordable homes	Increase population & diversify age profile	CHT, RIHF, THC, NTS	Est. £900,000 funding in current climate
1.2 establish good housing management policies & arrangements	To maintain and manage housing stock, be a good landlord and meet legal requirements	CHT,	Capacity and specialist advice required
1.3 establish SIMP (Small Isles Management Partnership)	To provide capacity, efficiency and professionalism in housing management	Other Small Isles CTs and Knoydart, CHT, HIE	TBC
1.4 construct, lease & operate visitor facilities hub	To provide modern standard facilities, meet visitor expectations and provide NHS room & NTS Ranger's Base	NTS, RTIF, THC, VS, HIE	Est. construction cost significantly over budget
1.5 complete Coroghan Barn feasibility study	To create mixed-use facility and preserve historic structure	NTS, AHF, THC, CES	£100,000 budget for design to RIBA stage 3
1.6 complete Rhu Church feasibility study	To secure future use for historic building	CoS, NTS, other funders	Est. £35 – 40,000
1.7 community space in 'Hen Run' area	Space for community garden, open air events, pocket park etc	NTS	£10 – 15,000
1.8 advance proposals to reopen Canna School	Prepare for potential arrival of family with children	THC and NTS	TBC
<b>2.0 Medium term objectives 3-5 years</b>			
<b>Project / Objective</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Partners/Funders</b>	<b>Cost &amp; Challenges</b>
2.1 Coroghan Barn redevelopment capital project	To create mixed-use facility and preserve historic structure	NTS, THC, RCGF, HIE, HES & others	Est. £3.5 million
2.2 Rhu Church refurbishment capital	To secure future use for historic building	NTS, AHF, HES & others	TBC circa. £100,000
2.3 Canna Land Management Plan	To develop long-term objectives for woodland, agriculture, crofting, bio-diversity & nature	NTS, SGRIPD, SCU, NatureScot & others	
2.4 Establish native tree nursery	To provide local provenance seed stock for new native woodlands	NatureScot, FCS & others	TBC
2.5 Reopen Canna School	To create community learning hub and cater for new resident families	THC	TBC
2.6 Additional RE generation capacity feasibility study	To develop proposals to increase energy supply and capacity	CARES, LES, NTS	TBC

2.7 Pontoon at Canna Pier (opp. Hub)	To increase sea-borne tourism	NTS, HIE, VS	TBC
<b>3.0 Long term Objectives 5-10 years</b>			
<b>Project / Objective</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Partners/Funders</b>	<b>Cost &amp; Challenges</b>
3.1 Second affordable housing project	To provide more homes of different tenures, types & sizes	CHT, THC, Scot Gov. & others	Funding & development costs
3.2 Change House Barn redevelopment	To provide different accomm. options including live/work and 'gateway' units	NTS, HES,	
3.3 RE system supply & distribution upgrade	To increase capacity of power supply	CARES, NTS, LES	
3.4 New community facilities	Extend/replace Canna shop, provide hall & sports/leisure facilities	NTS	
3.5 New business premises	Small workspaces or larger shared facility	RCGF, THC, HIE	
3.6 Climate Change resilience plan	To plan and prepare for impacts of climate change	NTS, THC,	
3.7 Woodlands Project	To create more native woodland for bio-diversity & fuel	NTS, FCS, NatureScot	
3.8 Derelict buildings	Proposals to renovate and reuse derelict bldgs.	NTS,	
3.9 Crofting expansion	Proposals for new crofts and extending grazings	NTS	
3.10 Small Isles ferry study	To investigate feasibility of community-run inter-island ferry service	HIE, THC, other Small Isles CTs	

## **8.0 Other Plans & Strategies**

Housing Strategy (2020) IoCCDT  
Housing Allocation Policy (2023) IoCCDT  
Tourism Strategy (2023) NTS & IoCCDT  
Canna Vision & Masterplan (2023) NTS  
Land Management Plan (TBC) IoCCDT & NTS  
Climate Change & Resilience Plan (TBC) IoCCDT & NTS  
Decarbonisation Plan (2022) IoCCDT

## **9.0 Plan Review**

IoCCDT and the community will review this plan regularly to ensure that it remains relevant and dynamic. Major review will take place every 5 years.

## **10.0 Partners**

Community Land Scotland (CLS)  
National Trust for Scotland (NTS)  
The Highland Council (THC)  
Communities Housing Trust (CHT)  
Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS)  
Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE)  
Small Isles Community Council (SICC)  
Other Small Isles community development trusts; IEHT, IRCT, IMCE

## **11.0 Appendices**

11.1 CCDP All ideas from community consultation 2023