

VIVARIUM TRUST CO-HOUSING PROJECT

Newsletter - February 2018

**A sustainable co-housing project for the over 50's
irrespective of circumstances**

Recent Developments

Our first newsletter of 2018 and there's quite a bit to catch-up on.....

Our activities over the last 6 months have focussed on trying to advance proposals for two potential sites in Inverkeithing. One of these, the former Inverkeithing Primary School is an impressive Grade C listed building which overlooks the town, with views out to the Firth of Forth. We were proposing a sympathetic adaptation of the structure, retaining as much of the historic fabric as possible, to create a number of self-contained apartments, with communal areas.

In September however we were shocked to discover that the owners had applied to Fife Council for consent to demolish the building! A media campaign and contact with the local community saw mounting opposition to the demolition, with over 30 local people attending a Vivarium information session in December.

Disappointingly the local planning committee approved the application to demolish the old primary school. This controversial decision has yet to be confirmed by Fife Council. If the Council does confirm the demolition approval on 14th February, the application will be referred to Scottish Ministers for the final decision as it is a listed building. The demolition is opposed by Historic Environment Scotland. We recently sent out a link to an on-line petition opposing the demolition, which has garnered over 1,000 signatures so far.

What else have we been doing?

In December Vivarium, along with several other Scottish co-housing groups, submitted a bid to the Scottish Government's Custom & Self-build Challenge Fund. Our bid was seeking funding to undertake a feasibility appraisal on the proposed Inverkeithing sites. We are still awaiting an announcement of the fund awards.

Our advisors have also met with senior figures in the Scottish Government to advance understanding among civil servants about how senior co-housing in particular can help address some of the issues around social care, loneliness and isolation that are increasingly being acknowledged by Scottish Parliament. We hope to have more engagement with policy makers like this in the future. We have been in contact with local Fife MSP's to raise awareness about senior co-housing and our proposals in

Inverkeithing.

A new Co-housing Network for Scotland

After several months of discussion between interested parties (including Vivarium) the new Scottish Co-housing Network was officially established in January, with a draft constitution and a steering committee. The new organisation is seeking to raise the profile of co-housing in Scotland, engage with Government, policy makers and housing bodies, and provide support, advice and information to Scottish co-housing groups. We hope that the Network will become an effective and distinctive voice for the co-housing movement in Scotland.

Get involved, stay in touch

Our next Board and Steering Group meeting will be in the County Buildings, Cupar on the 23rd February, 2.00pm – 4.00pm. All Vivarium Members are welcome to attend the meeting and we're always looking for more members to join the Steering Group.

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