

The Community Company has had a very busy few months with lots of grants approved, new apprenticeships started, and the continued work on the new homes project, as well as supporting the 3 Glens Resilience Group with their work. Read on to find out more...

Grant scheme

The past year has been a very odd one for the grants scheme. Many of the grants that we gave out previously have yet to be spent, because of the limitations on so many activities. However it was great to see some new applications coming through, albeit some of those will be postponed for when restrictions are lifted.

The next grant application deadline is the 18th May. If you are interested in applying do give us a call to chat about your plans and let us know if we can help with your application.

Community Caretakers

We are a core team of three at the moment, as with the complications of social distancing in a small yard, it has been easier to keep things tight. Our seasonal team member, Zander, has secured a winter contract with 'Compass' working on the new housing. We wish him good luck over this period and will hopefully welcome him back in April for another season. Like many of you we have had periods of furlough to protect both ourselves and the community. We have managed to maintain the essential services though throughout the lockdown period.

Autumn brought about its annual battle with the continuous leaf fall, keeping the pavements clear and reducing any slip hazards. By and large we are on top of it. Our rock salt quota was also delivered by the council ready for the harsher days and conditions that winter brings our way. Please feel free to help yourself to the salt in the numerous yellow grit bins around the villages should you need to treat your own garden paths.

As you would imagine, the general waste volume has dropped dramatically due to the lack of tourists at



the moment, however, we still carry out regular litter patrols. The team on patrol tolerate picking up accidentally dropped waste. Our frustration kicks in though when we repeatedly have to tidy up deliberately dropped waste in certain areas. This really isn't on and shows a complete lack of respect for your village and the residents within. Please, show some respect for yourselves and don't take the community caretakers for granted. Just use a bin! There are plenty of them!

We are really looking forward to getting back to a more normal schedule and being able to have a friendly chat with you all – without a face mask to hide our smiles!

Grants March– December 2020

£980- Badminton Club– To hire the school hall for a year

£600– Cadets - To send a cadet to visit the battlefields in France

£10,000 - Fort Augustus Golf Club–

To buy quad bike for grounds maintenance.

£8,200- Loch Ness and Great Glen Recreation

Development Group– Set up costs and to update the feasibility study for a potential Leisure Centre.

£11,000- 3 Glens Community Care– For establishing this new service.

£1,875- Glenmoriston Improvement Group- seating by the war memorial and to set up a community website.

£8,380- Telford Centre– To improve communal facilities at the care home.

£800- Gaelic Group- to run a 10 week course for all who want to learn Gaelic

£20,000- Glenmoriston Millennium Hall towards a bigger project in improving the public toilet facilities

9 Student Travel grants



New Homes for Old Convent Land

Over the last year we've made a lot of progress with the project despite delays caused by Covid-19. Before lockdown, we hosted an open day and received lots of great feedback. You also voted 'Caledonian Court' as your name of choice for the new street and we were able to confirm this, with Highland Council allocating us the name in September.



Once restrictions were lifted in June, work was able to begin on site, thanks to all the work done in preparation by the project team during lockdown. After having awarded the contract to Compass in April, they were raring to go and in the last eight months they've transformed the site and the new homes are really taking shape.

A lot of thought and work has been put in by

- the project team and the Director's housing sub group to ensure that the
- designs of the different houses fit the needs of the community. There will be a
- range of house types, including 2 bungalows which are suited for anyone with mobility issues. To keep all the homes energy efficient and cost effective to heat, each property have specially designed Nordan doors and windows and an eco-dan air source heat pump to keep you cosy when it gets cold.



The directors have been busy preparing the application packs and the allocation process for the new homes. These will be available in March. If you are interested in renting one of the new homes, and haven't already done so, please pass your name on to Karen at contact@communitycompany.co.uk and we will send you all the relevant information as and when it is released.

If you'd like to stay up to date with all the latest news about the new homes, be sure to follow and like our 'New Homes for Old Convent Land- FAGCC' Facebook page

Apprenticeships

Full-time college or university not for you? Would you prefer to earn while you learn? With an apprenticeship you can do just that. Someone who did this is Cameron Findlay, who recently completed his 4 year apprenticeship with MacRaild and Smith, and is now a fully qualified electrician. We met with him to discuss his apprenticeship and how it has made a difference to him.

There are many reasons for choosing to do an apprenticeship rather than going on to full-time college or university. For Cameron, it was pretty simple. "I wanted to earn some money, and I wasn't too keen on school. I prefer learning on the job, so an apprenticeship seemed the right route to take." An apprenticeship allowed him to do just that. Following two years of block release at college, there was then a full year of working on the job before taking the all-important final exams.

Learning on the job has great advantages, but the college side of things is also important. As Cameron says, "You might think that just because it's an apprenticeship and not full-time university it's going to be easy- but it's not. There's a lot of studying and work that you need to put in to pass the exams." Certainly there is a lot of commitment and hard work involved if you want to successfully complete your apprenticeship.

"Some of the college tests and exams could be hard, but I preferred the on the job learning" Cameron says. And learning on the job is something he's had plenty of. During his apprenticeship he was involved in many different jobs, both domestic and commercial. These have included lots of everyday domestic maintenance jobs, as well as large scale jobs such as the 26 new houses that were built in Fort William opposite the swimming pool, a new office for Fergusons transport in Corpach and the new MacBrayne Apartments on the High Street in Fort William. "The new flats were probably the most challenging," Cameron explains, "There was a lot of complex work that needed doing for the lift system." From lifts to lights, it's all in a day's work for an electrician.

If you're considering an apprenticeship, or are a new apprentice yourself, Cameron has this advice- "Stick at it. You need to work hard at it if you want to succeed, and it won't necessarily be easy. You might find all the studying and exams difficult, but it's a great reward at the end of it."

An apprenticeship is a great choice if you want to gain experience and a qualification whilst also earning a wage. Over the years, the Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Community Company's apprenticeship scheme has supported a number of apprentices, so if you are considering whether an apprenticeship is right for you, why not give us a call on 01320366800 or email contact@communitycompany.co.uk to discuss options.