



24th October 2022

Briefing Note: Land Reform in Crisis

NatureScot Sale of Rum's Kinloch Castle puts Community at Huge Risk

We would urgently request your help regarding the above matter. We feel that Lorna Slater should demand that NatureScot pause the above sale process for this castle, which is set to complete 31st October, and that the Board of NatureScot meet with the Isle of Rum Community Trust (IRCT) to agree a mutually acceptable way forward for the benefit of all parties.

We feel that NS and its Board have completely ignored the spirit and the letter of the current *Land Reform agenda* in Scotland to rid itself of the burden of the castle in any way possible, and that they have chosen to disregard the Scottish Government's *Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement* (LRRS) which is intended to guide landowners in their dealings with communities. We have repeatedly asked for greater and more active engagement from NS and have been refused.

IRCT is the representative community body for the village of Kinloch on Rum and the principal, village landowner since 2010, with the exception of Kinloch Castle, which sits in the heart of the village and is currently owned by NatureScot.

The community on Rum are very keen to support a positive future for the castle and to see further investment coming to the island. However, we currently stand opposed to this particular sale, until we have detailed and legally binding agreements in place to protect the community.

To consider support for this sale, we still require:

1. IRCT and NatureScot to establish and agree the relationship and protocols which will govern all further actions to progress this sale (as per LRRS)
2. Detailed and accurate information on key aspects of this sale, including:
 - Access in front of Castle
 - Power system ownership/control
 - Constitution of Castle Trust and a detailed Business Plan for future castle use
3. Legal safeguards to be agreed for this sale and any future land sales by NatureScot on Rum
4. IRCT included as legal signatories in a tripartite agreement to any sale

At present the prospective buyer desires that the principal access route through the village is diverted, for privacy reasons, to the rear of the Castle – a long detour that would effectively split the village in two. He also wants to own Rum's off grid power supply, currently owned by NatureScot.

We would welcome your help in seeking the urgent support of Lorna Slater and the Scottish Parliament in achieving a fair outcome for the community on Rum and for all associated parties.

Thank you

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ali Morris'.

Ali Morris, chair
Isle of Rum Community Trust