



Hope Cohousing Newsletter

June 2025

In the news



Hope Cohousing was the subject of an article in *The Scotsman* by Rob Aberdeen, Group Managing Director of Simpson and Marwick, a leading firm of estate agents. As a disinterested housing specialist, his clear articulation of the benefits of cohousing and the appreciation of our project is powerful. Mr Aberdeen writes:

A bold housing experiment is underway in Orkney that could redefine how communities live and thrive... This is more than a housing project – it's a proof of concept for a different way of living in Scotland. If successful, it could influence planners, policymakers, and other rural communities to embrace co-housing as part of the solution to Scotland's ongoing 'housing crisis'. [May 5, 2025]

Read the whole article [here](#)

Ariane Burgess, Green MSP for the Highlands, reporting progress of the Housing Bill through the Scottish Parliament in her regular round-up in *The Orcadian* also cited Hope Cohousing as 'a fantastic Orkney-based group'. [May 8, 2025]

Our progress

Together with our partner, the Communities Housing Trust (CHT), we are still seeking grant funding for the build. There are very few grants for capital spending on construction available at present, but all potential leads are followed up. Post COVID and cost of living pressures have led many funds to focus on other areas.

Following a meeting with Lynda Bradford from Orkney Health and Care (OHAC) in February, the Hope Cohousing team was invited to join an Integration Joint Board meeting in March. We were pleased to have this opportunity to brief board members on how cohousing can address issues of loneliness and social isolation, potentially reducing demands on adult social care resources.

Visits

We are always pleased to have visits from people interested in what we are doing.



Rachel Douglas (centre) from OWCH with Trish and Jenny at the HCH site

In May our highlight visitor was Rachel Douglas, a member of Older Women's Cohousing ([OWCH](#)) and a resident at New Ground, Barnet, London. OWCH has been an inspiration to us from the beginning. It was so good to hear from someone who has lived in a cohousing scheme for years – and has never regretted her decision. Rachel was impressed by what we have achieved and encouraged us to keep at it, leaving us with renewed vigour for our work.

Rhoda Grant, Scottish Labour MSP for the Highlands, had attended the Cohousing Scotland event at Parliament in January. Wanting to know more, she followed up with a visit to us during recess in April. It was a pleasure to brief her and show her the site. Cross-party support for cohousing in general, and our project in particular, is so welcome.

We also met Francesca Perotti from **the Highlands and Islands Climate Hub** in April to brief her on our ambitions for a small a carbon footprint as possible, and to cut out fuel poverty for residents.



Jenny, Francesca, and Cath at the HCH site

Coming up in July is a visit to Sanday to catch up on the **Care4Sanday initiative**. More about this in the next newsletter

Monthly meetings

We continued to hold open meetings on the first Saturday each month. In May, we were joined by Ruth Owen, Chair of the South Ronaldsay and Burray Development Trust. We had the opportunity to share plans and explore how our two community-led organisations might work together. The Trust is working hard on the Tomb of the Eagles project and submitting funding bids. We wish them well with securing a Community Land Fund grant and look forward to the re-opening of the **Tomb**.

Over the summer, we are going on the road, and we'd love to see you at one of the drop ins:



Cohousing – what is it all about?

What's happening with the St Margaret's Hope project?

The Hope Cohousing team is on the move over the summer months

Saturday June 7th – drop in

2 - 4pm at the Stromness Community Centre

Saturday July 5th – drop in

2 – 4pm at the St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall

Wednesday August 6th - at the Hope Show

w: hopecohousing.org | e: info.hopecohousing@gmail.com
fb: <https://www.facebook.com/HopeCohousing>

Would you like to see more cohousing in Orkney?

Do you want to be more involved with cohousing? If you would, we are planning to set up a Friends association to bring together people who have given us support and expressed interest in growing cohousing in Orkney. Our next newsletter will focus on plans to take this forward.

Something else that has grown out of Hope Cohousing is a new website – **Exploring South Ronaldsay**.

The site began life on the HCH website and has a growing body of information about island life and South Ronaldsay history. For those visiting Orkney this summer and looking for what they should do, it is a great starting point.