

Glenueig Shop and Fuel Station - June 2008

Blow for Local Community as Lottery Application Fails due to Land Ownership Issues.

There has been a shop and sub-post office at Glenueig for many years, which has provided an essential service to the community, not only as a place to buy essential goods, but as a social hub for folk from miles around.

The community has been working for nearly 10 years to get a new shop building that will satisfy the needs of this community along with visitors and other local communities. Following much work within the community, a business plan and funding application was made to the Big Lottery Fund, Rural Petrol Station Grant Scheme and HIE Lochaber.

With much competition for Lottery Grants, the Glenueig application failed as the land would not be owned by the community. The owners of the Glenueig Estate have traditionally been very generous to the local community and had extended the Glenueig Community Association lease to 80 years, in line with the stated lottery requirements. Unfortunately, the lottery panel then decided that this was not enough and rejected the application as the land would not be owned by the community.

How can communities plan for the next 80 plus years?

There is a huge onus on community groups with projects involving community land or buildings to plan for the future. Who knows what will happen in 50 or 80 years time? This project was delivering a fuel station and timber built shop. Will there still be Oil, in 80 years time? Will today's technology still be suitable then? We can't answer those questions, yet we are being asked to plan for them now, with a project that delivers real benefits to a real community here and now. Will the lottery application criteria still be there in 80 years time or will they, as has been proved with many grant and funding bodies, be changed and repackaged every 3 to 5 years, with new goals and criteria, to fulfil a new set of outcomes?

As the Lottery Panel had taken more than three months to make their decision, the Rural Petrol Station Grant Scheme application was also withdrawn leaving the community with both major funders withdrawing. A meeting has already been held with members of the Lottery Application Team and HIE staff to discuss the reasons of rejection given by the Lottery.

Disappointed but not Defeated

The community will not be defeated as they believe that this shop project and fuel station is vital to their and other local communities and will reapply to the Lottery Fund before its closure later this year. The Estate Owners have also once again shown their commitment to ensuring that Glenueig remains a vibrant and sustainable community by offering the land for sale to the community.

The Glenueig Community Association are grateful for all the support they have received to date and know that there will be continued support until this essential service can be delivered.

The current shop, built in 1967, will continue to open six days a week, staffed by a dedicated group of volunteers, offering a range of groceries and a twice weekly postal service. Volunteers will also give the old building a facelift in order that it can continue to trade for the foreseeable future.