

# Community Land initiatives

*Land for People* was the title of an inspiring and highly successful Conference which took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> September 2003, at Gregynog Hall, near Newtown.

The aims of the event were to explore how:

- communities can engage in land ownership and development
- people and groups can develop their capacities and skills for common land ownership
- community land ownership solutions can be shared
- this work could be developed and supported in Wales beyond the conference

The conference packed a lot in to a very short time, combining workshops, videos and a series of diverse presentations on all aspects of community land ownership including:

- current research into affordable housing
- models of community finance
- stories from projects across the UK

The softly spoken Andrew Anderson from the Scottish Land Unit was the keynote speaker. He gave a moving, eloquent and inspirational presentation on the establishment and work of the Scottish Community Land Unit.

The unit has succeeded in supporting a wide range of community land initiatives across Scotland. These have ranged from the purchase of small scale buildings to provide community facilities in remote highland communities through to larger scale, higher profile projects, such as the establishment of the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust, which has taken ownership of the 3,200 acre island of Gigha, off the West coast of Scotland.

The work that is being undertaken in Scotland, where there is a clear political will to address land ownership issues, is truly inspirational and provides a great model of what can be achieved that we would do well to emulate

here in Wales. For more information about the Scottish Community Land Unit visit their website [www.hie.co.uk](http://www.hie.co.uk)

The conference was organised by a planning group including representatives from a number of community land initiatives and key people working in a range of intermediary bodies at a local and national level.

Following on from the conference, the group is working on several fronts including:

- A plan for developing community land ownership in Wales
- A structure to support the plan, i.e. action groups and a steering committee
- A date for a briefing event and a follow-up conference in autumn 2004
- A communications plan & website
- Action learning groups for Community Land Trust projects; support and advice
- A Community Land Trust “toolkit”

Plans are well advanced for the development of a website ([www.landforpeople.org.uk](http://www.landforpeople.org.uk)) which should be up and running from the end of November. A full report of the conference will be made available in December and will be posted on the site.

In the meantime Jonathan Brown, the Director of the Giving Campaign is happy for people to contact him to discuss how they might get involved in the emerging network. His email address is [JBrown@wcva.org.uk](mailto:JBrown@wcva.org.uk)

I am happy to act as a local contact/ information point for anyone currently involved, or interested in establishing a community land initiative in Pembrokeshire, and can be contacted by email on [guy.norman@pavs.org.uk](mailto:guy.norman@pavs.org.uk) or by telephone on the main PAVS number 01437 769422