

Raasay House Community Company Ltd

Community Presentation

30th September

2008

Programme

1. Ralph Palmer:-

The long road to community ownership

2. RHCC Board Presentation:-

What the Raasay community now owns

Status or ongoing House Refurbishment

Bringing the Walled Garden back into production

Developing Woodlands & Water

3. Question Time

*If you want to go on a tour of the house don't forget to put
your name down*

Raasay community ownership since Dec 2007

- 36 hectares (approx. 87 acres)
- Raasay House & grounds
- The Walled Garden
- Shoreline and woods alongside Creagan Beaga
- Osgaig woods
- Loch a'Mhuillin (Home Loch)
- Old mine outcrop railtrack & “banana”
- Mineral Rights for entire Island

Priority 1 Refurbish House

- Over 60% completed
- Tours of house October
- Finished building to be handed over to Community end January 2009
- ROC move in February 2009
- Official opening planned for April 2009
- History of house on interpretation boards in public rooms planned

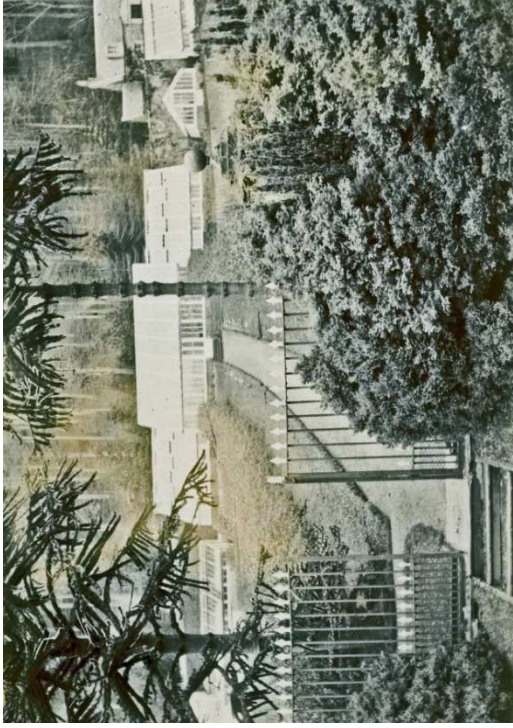


Priority 2

improve Policies

- **Drives, pathways etc. around Raasay House**
 - ROK will:-
 - reinstate driveways, edgings, flagstones and do general repairs to gates and boundary fencing
 - Provide surfaced car parking spaces for 54 vehicles inc disabled and staff
- **Raasay House Grounds**
 - Partnership between RHCC and Forestry Commission to obtain development grants
- **Community Walled Garden**

The Walled Garden



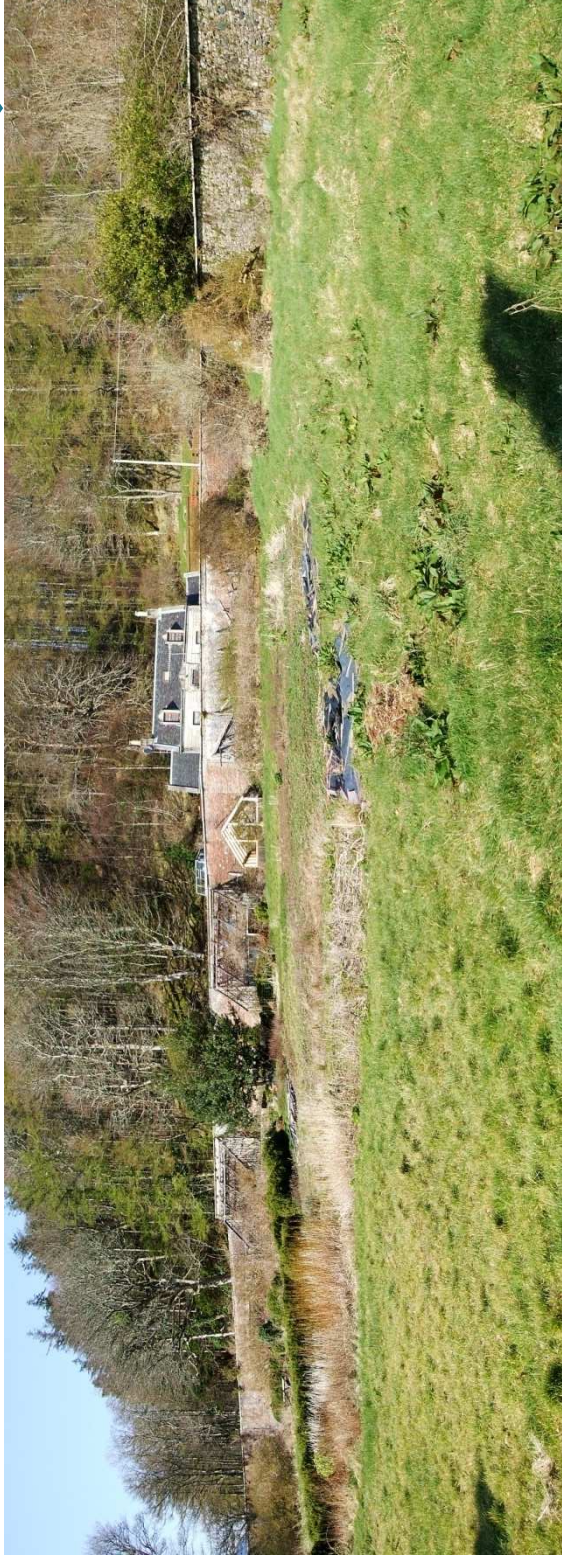
1910?



1940s approx.



2008



Scottish Agricultural College

Scoping Study

Soil assessment

- Overview of the soils in the garden
- Soil physical assessments
- Soil chemical characteristics

Assessment of cropping potential

- Vegetables and Salads
- Fruit
- Flowers
- Greenhouses etc.

Recreational

- Seating Areas
- Walkways

Management and marketing

Strengths



- Good soil structure and fertility
- Walls in good condition
- Garden has excellent aspect & shelter
- Great cropping potential
- Markets nearby e.g. Raasay House, Raasay Hotel, self catering cottages, local shop and Raasay inhabitants
- Tourist economy

Opportunities



- Grow a wide range of fruit, vegetables and ornamentals
- Great potential for community involvement
- Expand Raasay's tourist economy
- Community working, training and health benefits
- Links with School
- Funding potential
- Horticultural training centre

Weaknesses



- Majority of garden currently uncultivated
- Needs large amount of remedial work to remove the plastic and improve any damaged soil structure
- No sound buildings
- Paths in disused state
- Health and safety concerns with state of greenhouses and archaeology site

Threats



- Ability to generate adequate revenue
- Establishment of effective Management structures & Tenancy issues
- Management of volunteers
- Legal delays

HEI Legal process 2007

- 21st March 2007, RHCC & HIE met occupant to discuss gardens future and her involvement under community ownership. Outline of business proposals requested
- Seasonal agreement expired March 31st 2007
- Occupant refused to sign new seasonal lease for 2007
- Two further meetings with occupant encouraging her to work with the community, join the project and produce a plan.
- Occupant given notice to quit by HIE August 2007
- HIE allows occupant to stay until community take over. No rent paid for this year
- No proper business plan received; however brief statement recd. End Nov. 2007 with no financial detail.
- Dec 1st 2007 community take over with vacant possession

Legal process 2008

- With agreement with ROK garden locked for H&S reasons during house restoration
- Former occupant breaks into garden
- Jan 2008 RHCC invite former occupant to meet to try and resolve situation
- Former occupant agreed, but cancelled meeting at short notice citing solicitors advice, thus bringing the law into the situation and claiming an agricultural tenancy for life.
- RHCC therefore had no option but to take its own legal advice and seek an interdict to prevent entry to garden
- Interdict only partly upheld restricting required area of the garden to meet H&S requirements but without decision on tenancy issue as this is not within the Sheriff's remit
- The issue of the tenancy will now be resolved by the appropriate legal process at no cost to the community.

SAC recommendations to recover garden

- Spray with glyphosate (Roundup, Monsanto) over the area but protect plants against walls
- When the vegetation turns & starts to die, it can be dug in.
- Once the dead grass has been dug under, form a tilth on the surface
- Clip and manage central box hedge
- Take cuttings and replant new box hedges where they were originally
- Restore paths

A suggested layout



Summary of interim tasks

- Establish the area of archaeological interest with Martin Wildgoose
- A small section of garden could be fenced off to allow future archaeology works to proceed.
- A full assessment of the old buildings.
- Commission a full plant catalogue.
- Fruit trees. Identify and conserve any unusual species.
- Remove virus stocks from garden e.g. strawberries.
- Remove buried plastic
- Plant up to cover any exposed soil

Options for the long term management structure

- Committee employ an overseer to run the unit for the community encouraging as much community involvement as possible
- Seek a tenant to run the garden as a commercial business and pay a commercial rent to the community
- A community venture such as community supported agriculture
- Allotments are made available and rented out. Committee manage rest of garden i.e. borders and grass for the benefit of all the community
- Areas rented out for other commercial operations such as an outdoor coffee lawn area, selling plants, etc. for visitors of the garden.

A viable future for the garden

As soon as the garden has been brought back to a healthy and productive state it will:-

1. Provide enough vegetables, salads and fresh fruit to meet most of the needs of the community
2. Be a centre where local children can learn how to grow flowers and produce
3. Be a really lovely spot for visitors and residents to enjoy
4. Provide some form of income to the community in both cash and kind

**But most of all become an asset for everyone
in the community**

Woodlands

In partnership with the Forestry Commission we are currently discussing

- Clearance of fallen timber to make it readily available to residents for fuel
- Provision of chainsaw courses
- Tourism trails, footpaths and cycle tracks
- Replanting and tree management
- Joint management of FC woodland adjoining community owned woodland
- The viability of a biomass woodchip project

We are also looking at the feasibility of building log cabins, using our timber on our land, to provide self catering accommodation thus providing further income to the community. Using community owned land for affordable housing schemes is also being considered

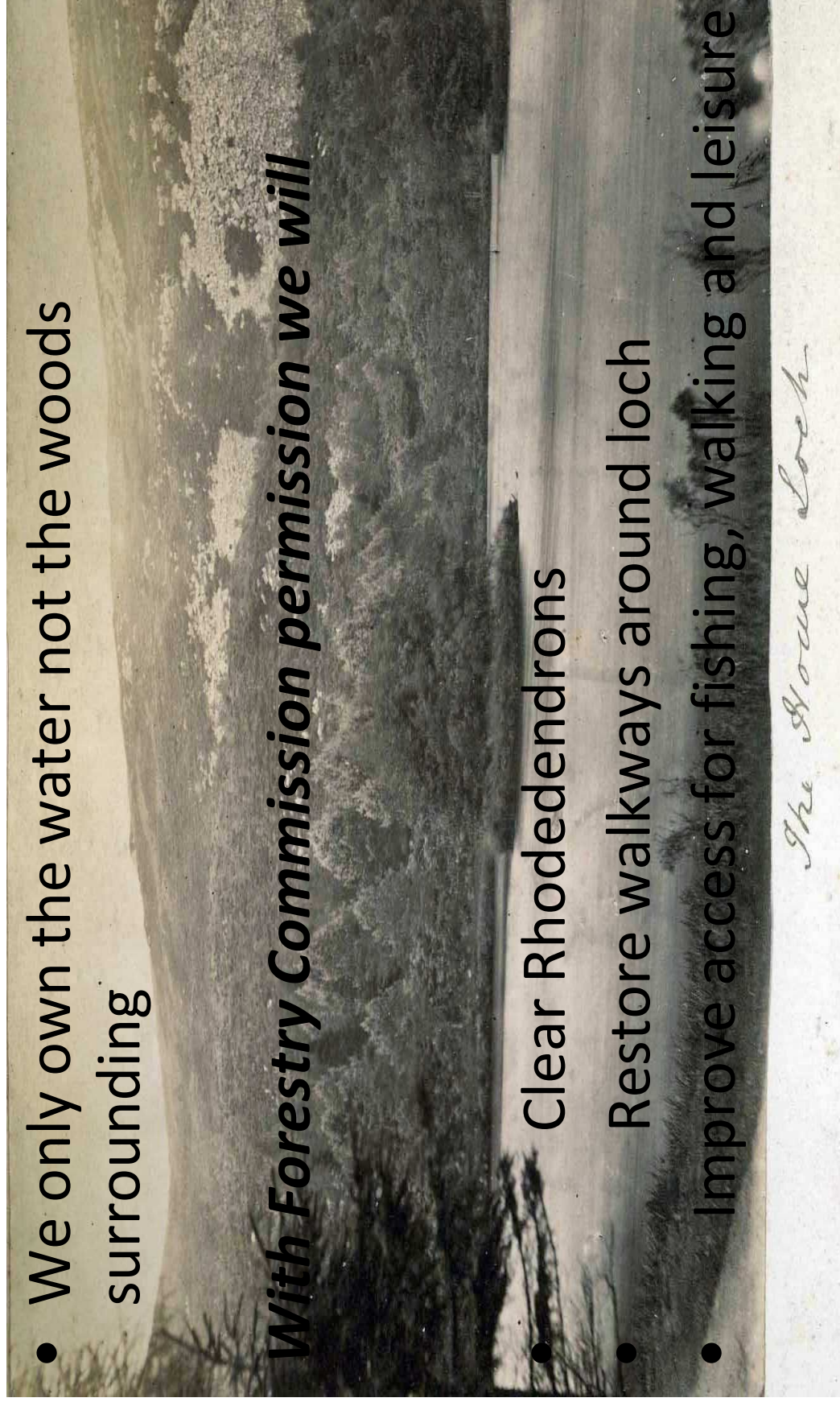
Loch a Mhuillin

- We only own the water not the woods surrounding

With Forestry Commission permission we will

- Clear Rhodedendrons
- Restore walkways around loch
- Improve access for fishing, walking and leisure

The Howe Loch



Railtrack, Banana & Mining Rights

- All came with the package
- Mining rights may provide solutions for quarry
- Good access to possible wind farm site
- Long term

Working together

- The community now owns considerable land and assets. It is essential we work together to ensure that these are now developed and managed as community projects with community involvement.
- RHCC will be open to suggestions from the community for projects they would like help with, once RHCC is receiving rent from ROC in 2009.
- Because of so many years of sad neglect these will be long term projects