



Building Inclusive Rural Communities

Rural Housing Service Annual Conference

Conference Speakers

Building Inclusive Rural Communities

Alex Neil MSP, Minister for Housing and Communities

Alex Neil is currently a member of the Scottish Parliament for Central Scotland. He was elected at the 1999 parliamentary election as head of the SNP list for that area, and has since re-elected at the top of the SNP Central Scotland list in 2003 and 2007.

Born in Patna, Ayrshire in 1951, he began political life as a member of the Labour Party. He joined the Labour Party at the age of 16 and became the head of their student wing whilst studying economics at Dundee University. Upon graduation he became the Labour Party's Scottish researcher, until in 1976 he left Labour to help form the Scottish Labour Party. After the 1979 general election he worked in America before returning to Scotland and forming his own economic consultancy business. In 1985 he joined the SNP and stood as their candidate in the 1989 Glasgow Central by-election, also rising to senior office within the party.

After election to the Scottish Parliament in 1999 he became firstly SNP spokesperson for social justice before chairing the Parliament's Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee from 2000-2003 and again 2004 till 2007. Until his appointment to Scottish Government Minister for Housing and Communities in February 2009, Alex was vice-Convenor of the European and External Relations Committee and member of the Finance Committee. He was also co-Convenor of the Cross-Party Group on the Scottish Economy and on the Council of Europe's Local and Regional Authorities Association. Alex is married with one son, and lives in Ayr.

Are Rural Communities Sustainable?

Hugh Raven, Soil Association Scotland Director

& Commissioner, Sustainable Development Commission

Hugh Raven is director of Soil Association Scotland. He is an adviser to the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation on the environment. He helps run his family's estate in north Argyll and is a trustee of Corroul Estate in Lochaber. He and his wife Jane - a restaurateur and lawyer - are active in the Slow Food movement, and live in Morvern, N Argyll.

Raymond Young CBE, Chair, Architecture + Design Scotland

& Convenor, Rural Housing Service

Raymond Young is an architect and was one of the founder members of ASSIST, the community architecture practice that pioneered both tenement rehabilitation and community based housing associations in Glasgow. He was a member of the UK Sustainable Development Commission from 2000-2004. He has worked with both the Housing Corporation and Scottish Homes, latterly as Director of Research and Innovation. Since 1997 he has run a part-time regeneration consultancy with clients in the UK and Denmark from a sustainable straw bale office in Perthshire. He is non-executive Board member of Historic Scotland, an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Urban Studies at the University of Glasgow, and a visiting professor at the Department of Architecture at the University of Strathclyde, and Convenor of the Rural Housing Service.

Community Action Planning

Alan Caldwell, Alan Caldwell Associates

Alan Caldwell has approaching 30 years experience in community involvement and planning across the UK and Ireland. He runs a small practice working directly with local people and their partners to create a more sustainable future. Alan has established almost 60 community development trusts across the UK, 21 of them in rural Scotland. Land Reform and low carbon futures have dominated his recent work. Living in Comrie with his partner and three teenage daughters, Alan is a volunteer director of the Comrie Development Trust who has successfully purchased 96 acres of land on the edge of the village at Cultybraggan Army Camp.

Is HAG the only game in town, and what happens when the money runs out?

Neil Clapperton, Director of Housing & Property Services, Grampian Housing Association

Since starting in housing in 1989 **Neil Clapperton** has worked in just about every housing discipline and for various landlords; in local government and the voluntary sector. Apart from a brief stint in Edinburgh he has always had an involvement in rural housing. In addition to being Director of Housing & Property Services with Grampian Housing Association he has responsibility for business development and its no-subsidy affordable housing funding model pioneered at Brimmond View in Dyce.

Rural Housing Enablers in Wales

David James, Rural Housing Enabler, Monmouthshire & South Powys

David James has been Rural Housing Enabler for Monmouthshire and South Powys since January 2008. Prior to taking up this post, he spent ten months as coordinator of the South East Wales Regional Housing Forum followed by nine months in the Housing Strategy and Equality Team in the Welsh Assembly Government. During his time as Rural Housing Enabler he has introduced new methods in an attempt to speed up the time it takes to deliver rural affordable housing. He has also been exploring ways to ensure rural development becomes more dispersed amongst settlements. David is currently Chair of the Midlands and Wales RHE Network.

“Thinking Rural” – rural proofing policy

Victoria Pymm, Senior Programme Advisor, Commission for Rural Communities

Victoria Pymm is a Senior Programme Advisor to the Commission for Rural Communities' Rural Governance Team, focusing on engagement at the national level. She is currently Project Manager for the Rural Proofing Champions project, a joint CRC/DEFRA initiative which aims to encourage government organisations to imbed rural proofing within the policy making process. Victoria was a Committee Clerk, advising Standing Committees of the Upper House of NSW Parliament. Victoria has a Masters of Public Policy and a BA (Hons) from the University of Sydney.

Rural Housing Design

Neil Stephen, Dualchas Building Design

Neil is a partner in Dualchas Building Design and a director of kit house company, Hebridean Contemporary Homes. He has been involved trying to find design-led solutions for rural housing need, and is a firm believer that good design should mean that we create beautiful communities that enhance, not spoil, our wonderful rural landscapes. He also writes features for Scottisharchitecture.com.



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26 February 2010, The Birnam Institute, Birnam, Perthshire