



## Land Reform (Scotland) Bill

Evidence to the Net Zero, Energy and Transport committee of the Scottish Parliament

Dannie Onn CCDC Director and Chair

CCDC is the charitable development trust for Colonsay and Oransay. These islands are home to around 125 people, of which over 80 are members of the company. Colonsay has a majority landowner by the definition proposed in the Bill.

Following extensive consultation, CCDC published a Community Plan 2022-32, which is endorsed by Colonsay Community Council and the Colonsay and Oransay Heritage Trust. We are now engaged in matching this plan with a Net Zero Plan and a Local Place Plan, which will give a spatial dimension to the ambitions of the community. The spatial Plan will in due course require additional land for delivery. To date, acquisition of land for sustainable development has been difficult and time-consuming

We believe Land Reform and Community Empowerment legislation has already had a positive impact on the use of land on Colonsay by encouraging landowners to reach agreement. We welcome the new Bill as a further step in the journey to a sustainable community here.

Part 1 of the bill contains three areas of specific interest to us as follows:

### **Community Engagement**

A responsibility on landowners to engage with the community would cast light on major landowner's intentions and could encourage collaboration between the private estate and the community. That should help achieve a sustainable net-zero community on Colonsay and Oransay.

In particular we ask the committee to seek to maintain the proposed thresholds so that our community benefits from the legislation. We also ask that fines for landowners in breach do not become an easier or cheaper option than compliance.

### **Registering an Interest**

We welcome the proposal to extend opportunity for community bodies to register an interest in land. We understand that the registration process is complex and easy to frustrate. As a small charity working for a small community, having time to react could be critical.



## **Lotting**

In general terms we support the lotting process because it would provide a greater diversity of ownership. Any lotting decision on Colonsay land would need to take into account the circumstances of the community, but I can find no reference to consultation with the community. We think that this should be set out in the legislation rather than left to regulation or the Commissioner's discretion. It then follows that the community in which the land lies should be sent a copy of the Commissioner's Report.