Dear Members

**ULVA BUYOUT UPDATE 9 1 18**

This morning we have received the results of the postal ballot on the proposed Ulva Buyout.

Of the eligible votes cast, 63.9% were in favour 35.7% against

Of a total of 401 eligible voters, 255 votes had been received by the deadline of noon yesterday which represents a 63.6% “turnout”

This is a great result which shows solid community support for the buyout bid.

The buyout team would like to thank everyone for taking the time to express their views via the ballot. Much work remains to be done and we are committed to keeping our members and the wider community fully updated as things progress.

Below is a copy of the press release we are putting out today.

**PRESS RELEASE**

**ULVA BUYOUT UPDATE 9th Jan 2018**

**Ulva Ballot confirms Community support for Buyout**

Attempts to buy the Island of Ulva for the community took a major step forward today with the announcement of the result of a postal ballot amongst voters in North West Mull. A total of 63.6% of eligible ballots were received by the deadline of noon on Monday 8th. Of these 63.9% were in favour. The ballot was ordered by the Scottish Government and organised by Electoral Reform Services.

On the basis of the ballot result and also the Business Plan submitted by North West Mull Community Woodland Company (NWMCWC), the Cabinet Secretary for Land Reform, Roseanna Cunningham, will now decide whether to “trigger” the Right to Buy. This would give NWMCWC the green light to put together a funding package to complete the purchase in June.

Commenting on the project, one of the directors of NWMCWC, John Addy, said;

*“It is self-evident to anyone just walking on Ulva that the existing housing stock and other buildings including the historic Telford church are in a poor state of repair and maintenance.*

*Also the present tenants have no security of tenure as their leases expired in November last year and the lease on the Boathouse restaurant expires in June 2108.*

*A new owner would be free to make his or her own decisions on what happens to the island, who and how many people can live there, and whether or not to encourage visitors or even whether to continue to allow operation of the ferry and access to the pier by fishermen. Community ownership however, will bring certainty that repopulation of the island and its social and economic development for the common good will always be the top priorities.*

*This goes to the heart of the land reform process which is about who makes the decisions and has control over the destiny of communities - landlords or the communities themselves? We strongly believe it should be the latter.“*

A Feasibilty Study carried out by respected independent consultants concluded that “..a community buyout of the Isle of Ulva is feasible and represents a unique opportunity to increase Ulva’s population and enhance the sustainable development of the island, Ulva Ferry and North West Mull as a whole.“

NWMCWC does not underestimate the scale of the task to reinvigorate Ulva. The key will be to tackle the development of housing, agriculture, forestry and tourism in a carefully phased manner over years and decades. Lack of investment over the past couple of decades or more will take a while to reverse. Nevertheless, the aim is to move quickly on the high priorities such as renovation of the existing housing stock and in this regard, the ability of a community body to access funds not available to private landlords will be important. Excluding the Ulva House and Ardalum, there are six houses on Ulva which all require major renovation. Once these have been brought up to modern standards and are re-let to existing and new residents, the population will treble to around 15 or 20.

An independent valuation ordered by the Scottish Government has set the purchase price for the land covered by the Right to Buy registration at £4.2M. This will now need to be raised by NWMCWC over the next 5 months and it is hoped that the Scottish Land Fund (SLF) will be able to contribute the major part. SLF funding is normally capped at £1M and 95% of the total, though the Minister has power to exceed this. As the price for Ulva is well above £1M, NWMCWC plans to raise significantly more than the minimum 5% contribution from sources other than SLF and discussions are already in hand with a number of potential partner organisations with a view both to raising the capital for the purchase and also to provide development funding post-purchase.

A crowdfunding appeal [https://www.justgiving.com/…/char…/northwest-mull/ulvabuyout](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.justgiving.com%2Fcampaigns%2Fcharity%2Fnorthwest-mull%2Fulvabuyout&h=ATPLf8gnYuBRv8YBLKhZeaPZ61eDkrWWyX-JStb7cuJ9OFrO-CPLV6DkLQb1bI5K7UiIRZEnruNKa7c-1hXU4-pEQwamQcyiIkDgo7irZIgIaUKIbVc1jAeNvTNAV5oYMwMyXGq7YeU4jbdURCC3uFYLPnKYioqcMSSkWd9A-fibJH0UGzPpHxpA3wlWYZUM-IBD4VnnCPAGS8iJRWiSTHfdGu_Z0USe0nYRIX-RdSTbhOnudDTu1vQeft0FzMm06BetE93vX8YCoeeIyyqzwCCKImpVXoHcUpEoCjPFCzZ9GE0StCz2Cw) continues until June. Additionally, various community events will be organised throughout the year both to raise funds and also increase the public profile of the project.

**ENDS**

Further information and documents such as the Feasibility Study can be found on the NWMCWC website: <http://nwmullwoodland.co.uk/>

More info on Community Right to Buy: [www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Rural/rural-land/right-to-buy/Community](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Rural/rural-land/right-to-buy/Community)

Community Land Scotland:

<http://www.communitylandscotland.org.uk/>