

Comhairle Choimhearsnachd Shlèite
Sleat Community Council

Sleat Community Trust
Urras Coimhearsnachd Shlèite

Sleat community meets to discuss Clan Donald land sale

8 April 2025. For immediate release.

Around 150 Sleat residents gathered at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig on Monday evening to discuss the future of the Clan Donald Estate, recently put up for sale.

The Clan Donald Lands Trust (CDLT) announced that it is selling the 22,000-acre estate, with the castle and gardens to follow “in early summer”. This has shocked many, coming as it does with no community notice or engagement. Many people within the community, from Clan Donald and beyond have called for the sale to be halted to give the community time.

Former CDLT Trustee David MacFadyen began the meeting by providing background information on its founding and stressed its important links to the local community and clan members.

Meeting chair Dr Andy Williamson outlined the actions taken by Sleat Community Council, Sleat Community Trust and others since the announcement. These include raising media awareness, engaging with politicians at Holyrood and Westminster, and exploring practical steps with statutory bodies and land reform organisations.

John MacDonald, a Community Trust director with experience of Scottish Land Fund projects, went through the complex process the community would need to follow if considering a buyout.

A significant majority of attendees supported pursuing an interest in the castle, gardens and adjoining woodland that will form the second part of the sale. People expressed

concerns regarding CDLT's financial state and the poor condition of some buildings, noting the substantial sum needed for repairs. Dr Williamson cautioned that any community buyout would need to account for both purchase costs and repair expenses.

Dr Williamson expressed firm support for crofters in determining their own futures without outside intervention, noting that croft land accounted for half the estate. For this reason, he suggested, an outright community bid for the entire estate would not be the preferred approach—a view that received broad agreement from attendees, with minimal support for a full estate purchase.

One suggestion from the floor, which received majority backing, was to identify parcels of land outside the estate's crofting areas that hold cultural, historical or ecological significance that the community might want to take ownership of.

"Our next steps are to bring people together from within and beyond the community with the skills we need, and to start working on the options," Dr Williamson said after the meeting.

This needs to be a community-led effort and if you can help, please get in touch.

- Ends -

For further information, please contact Sleat Community Council (info@sleatcommunitycouncil.org.uk) or the Sleat Community Trust (office@sleat.org.uk)