**UPDATE: NEWS ON THE YETHOLM VILLAGE SHOP**

**Following the excellent news** about the award of Stage 1 grant funding by the Scottish Land Fund earlier, the wheels are in motion to progress the community purchase of the Yetholm Village Shop. The Scottish Land Fund (**SLF**) is a Scottish Government funded programme which supports community organisations across Scotland to own land, buildings and other assets.

This short update is to let everyone know what happens next.

**7th January is the** **kick-off meeting** in Yetholm with the well-respected community projects team led by Hazel Allen. Her team has a strong track record of business planning and viability for community projects requiring specialist knowledge of the Scottish rural economy. Hazel has developed and led community and stakeholder engagement and funding applications to the SLF for, among others, Findhorn Village Trust (workshops and storage, Moray); Old Luce Community Trust (Community Café, Wigtownshire); Strathpeffer Pavilion (Community performance and events venue, Highland), Kincraig (village shop purchase) and Kingussie (multiuse site development including retail). She is currently the finance lead on the team delivering a multi-funded redevelopment of Kilmartin Museum, including both the café and retail experience; and is completing business planning for MidSteeple Quarter, Dumfries including small retail and workshop development. **It’s great** to have the support and involvement of a team with this experience and knowledge.

**20th March is the target date** for our own submission for SLF Stage 2 funding. This is a tight timetable. We plan to have:

* a **public consultation event** in the **week beginning** **3rd Feb** to look at options
* a second public event in the **week commencing either 9th or 16th March** for the **final business plan presentation**

**Hazel’s team** will draw on their experience to assist the village in looking at such key areas as:

* The community vision for the shop’s short, medium- and longer-term future
* Options for developing existing and future uses
* Funding strategy for acquisition and refurbishment and set up costs, including working capital
* Strategic risk analysis of the pressures on small local retail from other forms of shopping and changing habits
* A detailed five-year Business Plan with identified income streams and costs
* The legal structure including community shares issued through the Community Benefit Society

*28 December 2019*