

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2015

ASSET TRANSFER REQUEST FORM

CHOISS – Cohousing in Southern Scotland applies for ownership of Comiston Farmhouse, 83 Pentland View, Edinburgh EH10 6PT



IMPORTANT NOTES:

This is a standard asset transfer request form which can be used to make a request to any relevant authority. Relevant authorities may also provide their own forms in their own style.

You do not need to use this form or a relevant authority's form to make an asset transfer request but using a form will help you to make sure you include all the required information.

You should read the asset transfer guidance provided by the Scottish Government before making a request. Relevant authorities may also provide additional guidance on their schemes.

You are strongly advised to contact the relevant authority and discuss your proposals with them before making an asset transfer request.

When completed, this form must be sent to the relevant authority which owns or leases the land your request relates to.

Asset transfer request under Part 5 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

Section 1: Information about the body making the request

1.1 Name of the community transfer body (CTB) making the asset transfer request

CHOISS – Cohousing in Southern Scotland Ltd

1.2 CTB address. This should be the registered address, if you have one.

Postal address: 71 Nile Grove, Edinburgh EH10 4SN

1.3 Contact details. Please provide the name and contact address to which correspondence in relation to this asset transfer request should be sent.

Contact name: **David Somervell, Secretary** – at the above address

Email: [REDACTED] – please use this email for correspondence

Telephone: [REDACTED]

1.4 Please mark an “X” in the relevant box to confirm the type of CTB and its official number, if it has one.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Company, and its company number is	SC700946
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Benefit Society (BenCom)	

Please find our articles of association at <https://bit.ly/choissclgsubmitted>.

1.5 Has the organisation been individually designated as a community transfer body by the Scottish Ministers? **No**

1.6 Does the organisation fall within a class of bodies which has been designated as community transfer bodies by the Scottish Ministers? **Yes**

If yes what class of bodies does it fall within?

CHOISS - Cohousing in Southern Scotland Ltd is registered as a company [SC700496]. We used Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS) Community Benefit Society rules as our Articles of Association and plan to convert to a Community Benefit Society.

This not-for-profit constitution means that the project is asset-locked and neither the Trustees nor members may benefit materially from it. It operates for the public benefit to further the object of sustainable development.

While CHOISS is a Community of Interest we are supported by a Geographic Community - 107 local residents in Oxfords and Fairmilehead who have since mid-May have signed up to CHOISS in supporting the bid to save Comiston Farmhouse and keep it in community hands. There are the 350 online supporters and the 20 members who have subscribed to the society since it was formally incorporated on 3 June.

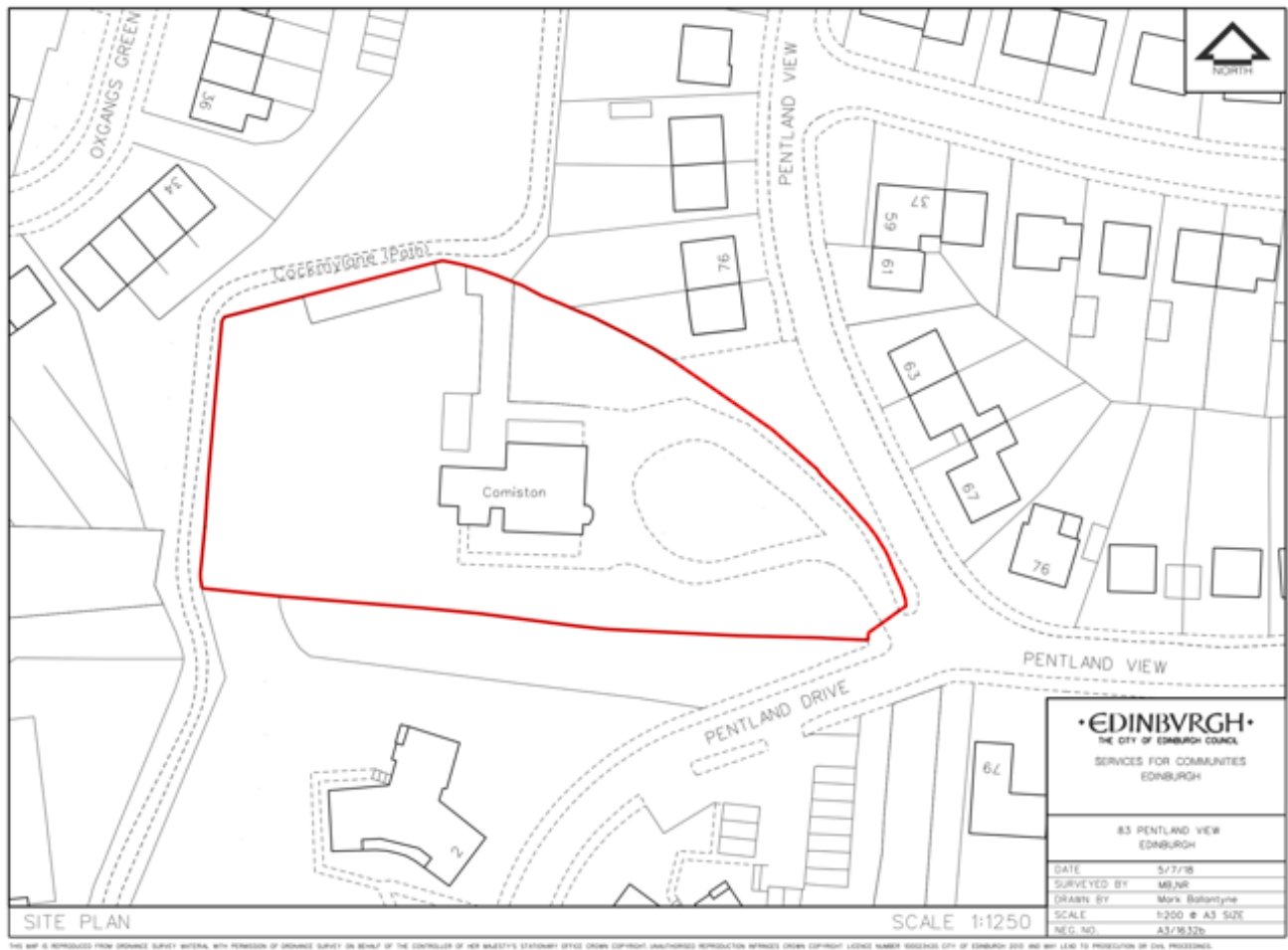
Section 2: Information about the land and rights requested

2.1 Please identify the land to which this asset transfer request relates.

You should provide a street address or grid reference and any name by which the land or building is known. If you have identified the land on the relevant authority's register of land, please enter the details listed there.

It may be helpful to provide one or more maps or drawings to show the boundaries of the land requested. If you are requesting part of a piece of land, you must give a full description of the boundaries of the area to which your request relates. If you are requesting part of a building, please make clear what area you require. A drawing may be helpful.

Comiston Farmhouse, 83 Pentland View, Edinburgh EH10 6PT



Please provide the UPRN (Unique Property Reference Number), if known.

If the property has a UPRN you will find it in the relevant authority's register of land.

UPRN: 167

Section 3: Type of request, payment and conditions

3.1 Please tick what type of request is being made:

for ownership (under section 79(2)(a)) - go to section 3A

3A – Request for ownership

What price are you prepared to pay for the land requested? :

Proposed price: £1,001,001

Please find attached a note setting out any terms and conditions that apply to the request.

Section 4: Community Proposal

4.1 Community Proposal

Please set out the reasons for making the request and how the building will be used. This should explain the objectives of your project, why there is a need for it, any development or changes you plan to make to building, and any activities that will take place there.

The City of Edinburgh Council has a groundbreaking opportunity to support a pioneering community led Cohousing initiative at Comiston Farmhouse.



Our vision is to establish a permanently-affordable and environmentally-responsible Cohousing development - an intergenerational community - at Comiston Farmhouse, Fairmilehead. The project will facilitate direct participation and active involvement, neighbourly and social interaction while reducing loneliness and isolation.

The preferred legal form is a Housing Cooperative using [Mutual Home Ownership Society \(MHOS\)](#) rules. We will re-imagine the Farmhouse as a local hub in a vibrant '20-minute neighbourhood'.

Construction will be funded through Members' own funds plus a loan or mortgage. Ecology Building Society and Social Investment Scotland confirm that 'Cohousing' fits entirely with their business aims and have expressed a positive interest in providing loan funding to support the project subject to their usual due diligence requirements.

Housing Cooperative Precedents

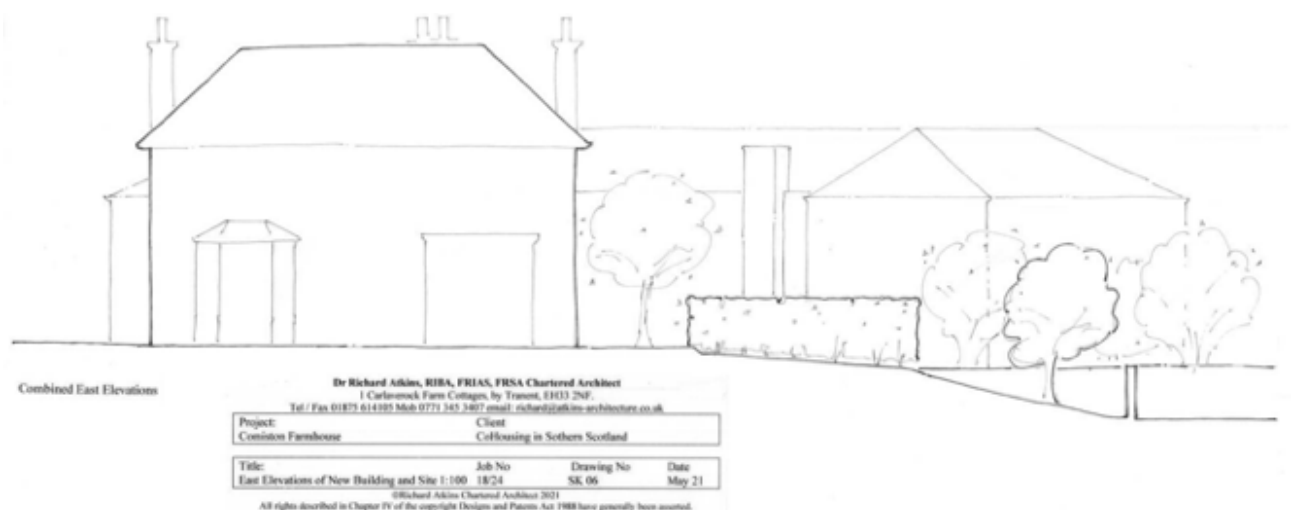
The Scottish Government Strategy ***Housing to 2040*** specifically includes Cooperative Housing as a priority. CHOISS is leading the Comiston Cohousing project which will be a first for Scotland. It will act as an exemplar for other community-led initiatives seeking to find a middle way between private homes, social housing and the private rented sector.

The precedents for these Cooperative models include [LILAC Cohousing](#) in Leeds and [YorSpace](#) in York. LILAC uses a [MHOS Dwell application](#) to manage their finances.

Cohousing Benefits

Cohousing is described by the [UK Cohousing Network](#) as an intentional community created by residents; members manage the community and often share meals. Cohousing creates neighbourly support and can resolve the loneliness many people experience today. Cohousing communities are formed on five principles:

1. **Co-designed with the members of the community** – who help design new buildings or renovations to old ones; shared outside space for gardens, children's play, parties and food growing often feature
2. **Private homes plus a Common House** – with cooking and dining, meeting and play areas, laundry and guest rooms / smaller homes as members can use the common facilities
3. **Usually between 10 to 40 households** with a design encouraging interaction, reducing car numbers - and keeping them to the edge - with Common House in centre or entrance
4. **Resident control of all decision-making** – development and maintenance, finance, gardens etc – often using consensus decision-making with active consent. Adults make the decisions and regularly contribute a few hours work per week
5. **Inclusive and part of a diverse wider community**, with open membership; groups often host neighbourhood activities in the shared space and Common House.



A New Form of Tenure: neither private nor social housing

Mutual Home Ownership is a new form of home ownership. It enables groups of people to club together to buy or build homes that they might not otherwise be able to afford. A Mutual Home Ownership Society is the legal structure for such a Housing Cooperative.

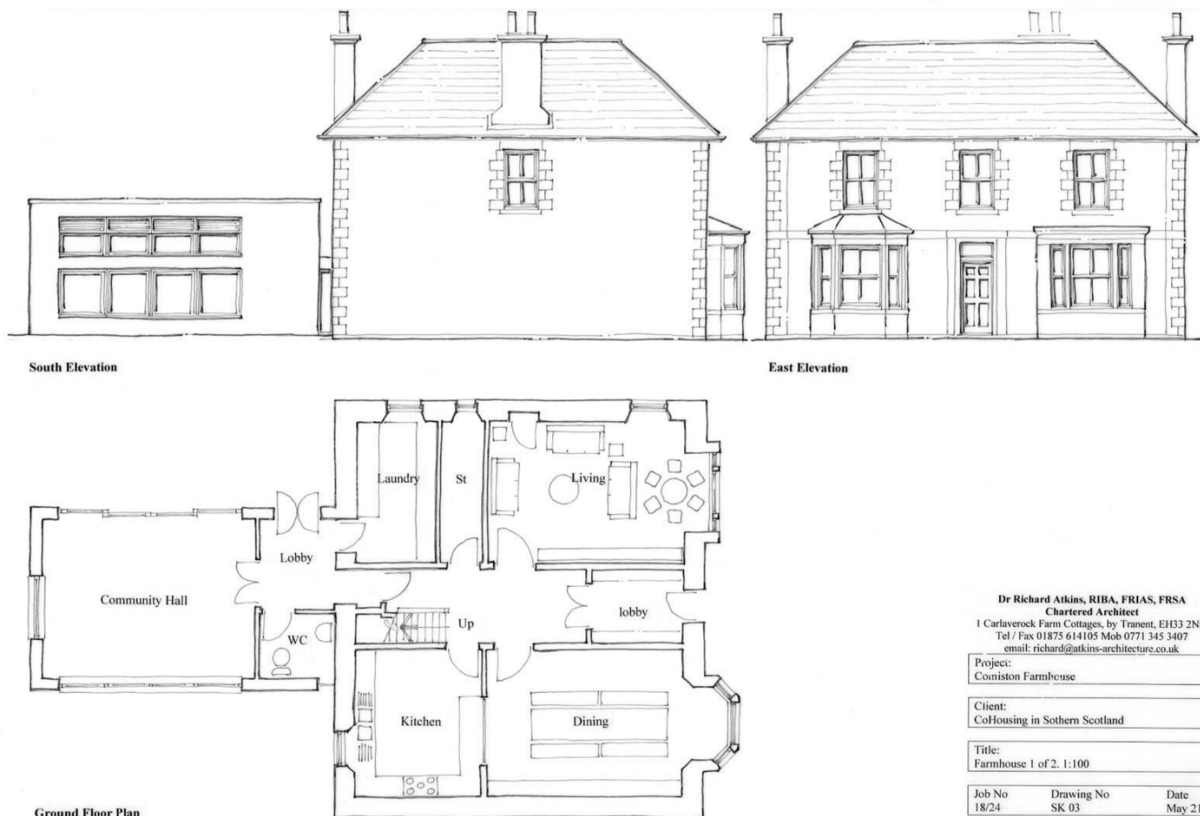
MHOS Model Rules have been approved by the Financial Conduct Authority and this is now the preferred form for many community-led Cohousing groups.

The Mutual Home Ownership Society model has a number of benefits:

- Makes home ownership more accessible / affordable
- Builds community
- Greater financial security
- Finance and maintenance responsibility and workload shared across the society
- Greater control over housing than rented
- Homes remain in the control of residents in perpetuity.

In return for their investment, members get equity shares in the society and the use of one of the homes. As with traditional home ownership, households' investment can comprise capital and a mortgage. In the case of MHOS, the society takes out a collective mortgage; each household is responsible for paying a share of it.

Using this model, the costs can be spread across the group according to ability to pay: more affluent households can buy more equity shares than the value of their home, making other homes in the scheme more affordable for households on modest incomes. When a household leaves, they can sell their equity shares, releasing the capital to buy a home elsewhere.



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 Chartered Architect
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 email: richard@atkins-architecture.co.uk

Project:
 Comiston Farmhouse

Client:
 CoHousing in Southern Scotland

Title:
 Farmhouse 1 of 2. 1:100

Job No 18/24 Drawing No SK 03 Date May 21

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Our Ambition for Comiston Farmhouse: [Comiston Cohousing](#)

Comiston pioneers have a clear [Comiston Cohousing Vision](#) with a determination to listen to every voice and ensure consent-based decision-making using Sociocratic or Dynamic Governance principles and practices.

CHOISS has retained the services of Richard Atkins RIAS, a Chartered Architect with particular expertise in sustainable, low impact, energy efficient buildings.

We understand the planning history and also the Planning Brief for Comiston Farmhouse. We believe our proposals will address the shortcomings from previous prospective purchasers whilst exceeding by some margin, the minimum standards presently set for energy efficiency.

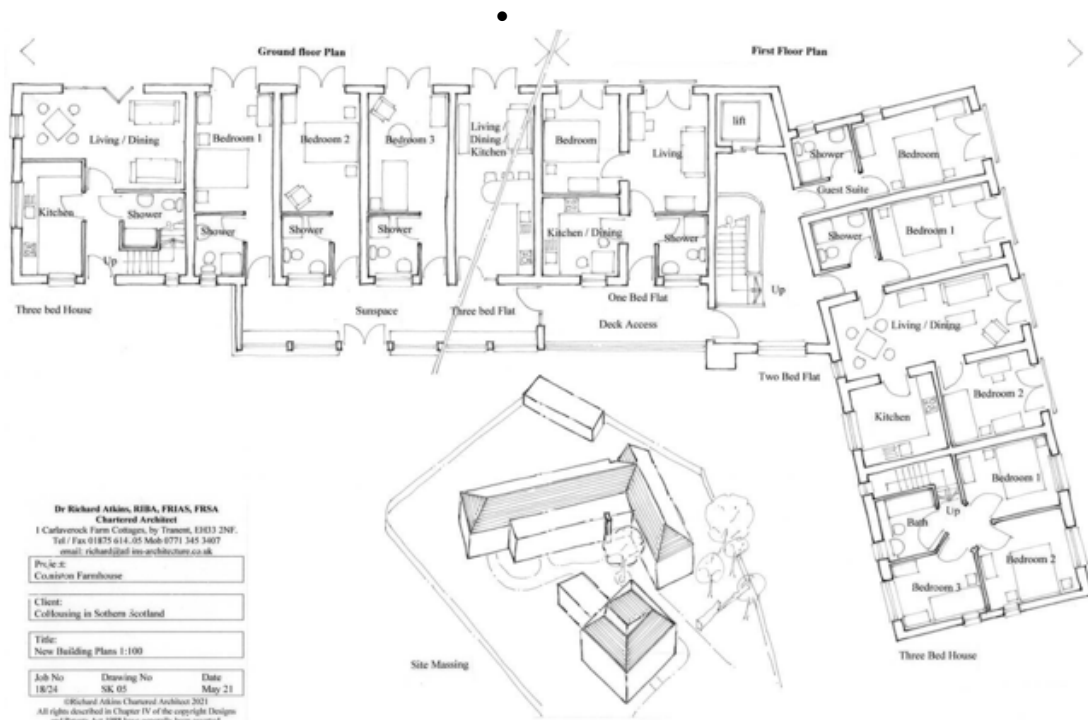
Our ambition is to deliver net zero carbon buildings as required by the City’s 2030 Climate Strategy. A preliminary Cost Plan has been prepared by Pottie Wilson QS to reflect this. The approach is to retain Comiston Farmhouse, making it the principal building for the site; both architecturally and socially.

The Farmhouse will provide the communal rooms for the new community namely our living room, kitchen and dining areas and laundry, etc. Additionally, areas will be allocated for visitors’ bedrooms and a modest co-working office.

To the rear of the Farmhouse, the main residence will be constructed to provide a range of accommodation styles and sizes. This will be built around a new landscaped courtyard providing a more formal social space linking the new and existing buildings.

Complimentary to this, we aim to reinforce the mature planted areas to the front, respecting all Tree Preservation Orders whilst using the land to the rear for our kitchen garden and greenhouse.

Fuller details of the proposal are spelt out in a series of document in the appendices.



Our Due Diligence

CHOISS has approached this opportunity as would any professional organisation. It has scoped out a coherent delivery plan and has sought expert advice where needed.

In preparation of its formal bid significant due diligence work has been undertaken; a summary of which is set out as follows:

Arboreal and Ecology Report - We are aware of the detailed reports held on the Planning Portal setting out the site's Ecology and Tree Preservation Order. We intend to commission a comprehensive Sustainable Landscape Strategy to form part of our Planning Application once Preferred Bidder Status has been secured.

Asbestos - We have noted the contamination identified in the owner's Asbestos Report by Franks Pollock dated 30/4/2021, the removal of which has been accommodated within our Cost Plan. We would expect to be permitted access prior to purifying the Missives of Purchase to undertake our own intrusive survey.

Condition Survey Comiston Farmhouse - We have commissioned Ashlar Consulting to undertake a Building Survey of Comiston Farmhouse. We have accommodated their recommendations into our proposals and Cost Plan. The survey was not intrusive. However, we believe that, subject to a further concise commission, we will be well placed to bring this building into beneficial use.

Corporate Constitution and Tax Planning - Detailed discussions specific to CHOISS's intended purchase of Comiston Farmhouse have taken place with Lynn Molleson of Development Trusts Association Scotland Community Ownership Support Service and Andy Woodcock of Acorn Coop Support. Andy is recognised as one of the UK's leading tax advisors on Cohousing and Cooperatives.

With these two organisations' assistance, CHOISS has been formally incorporated to accommodate an informed view on its corporate structure and efficient tax planning (VAT, Corporation Tax etc).

Cost Plan - Pottie Wilson QS have prepared a Preliminary Cost Plan for our proposals to a Net Zero Carbon specification. We are content that our proposals are deliverable.

Culvert - Our proposals have been drafted to accommodate the stream running across the site three to four metres down in a culvert which cuts across the garden to the west of the farmhouse. We have discussed the integrity and location of the culvert with Bayne Stevenson Engineers and have also undertaken a preliminary visual inspection of the inspection chamber to the north of the property in Cockmylane path.

We do not envisage moving of the culvert. We have ensured the proposed new building is kept away from its line - subject to a formal survey and clarification of the culvert's location. We believe that this approach will reduce project risk, cost and the timetable for completion.

Should it be the case that Planning dictates the need to move the culvert in order to deliver an Acceptable Planning Consent we seek to reduce our offer by £150,000.

Design Development - Please note that CHOISS will undertake at its own risk, all necessary Investigations, Design Refinements, Option Appraisals, Feasibility Studies and Cost Plans to satisfy itself that its proposals are deliverable. These will be completed in parallel to the timetable agreed for securing Detailed Planning Consent and will not impede concluding the Conditional Purchase Missive.

Ground Conditions and Contamination - We have utilised the detailed information held on line as to the Ground Conditions and potential of Contamination. We have also discussed our proposals with Bayne Stevenson Engineers who have extensive knowledge of this site by way of previous commissions. Subject to a formal commission, our engineers do not expect to uncover any unforeseen issues in respect of Ground Conditions or Contamination.

Planning - We are aware that the existing Planning Consent for Comiston Farm is for Institutional Residential accommodation. From preliminary discussions with our advisors and the City of Edinburgh Council's Planning Officer we understand that a Cohousing proposal at this location should be treated as 'Residential with Ancillary Community Uses'.

Pre-Application Planning request was submitted on 11 May 2021. We had the opportunity to review our proposal with the local Planning Team Leader; and attach a copy of our minute of that 3rd June 2021 discussion. She has confirmed that, "based on the information submitted at Pre-Application stage, the proposals can be generally supported in principle subject to further information".

Property Development Advisor and Project Governance - CHOISS has retained the services of John Mark Di Ciacca, Chartered Surveyor. He has conceived and delivered several award winning projects ranging from long term gap sites through to large scale master planning and regeneration projects.

John Mark has served as an External Examiner for Edinburgh Napier University, as well as a national judge for both the Saltire Housing Awards and the British Council for Offices Awards. He is a Community Representative for the Forth Bridge World Heritage Management Group and former Trustee of The Scottish Civic Trust.

Team - We have assembled highly-skilled experts to help us on our journey. Formal office bearers of CHOISS and our retained consultants are listed below under Capacity to Deliver. Should we secure transfer of the property, further consultants will be added.

Title - We understand from our solicitor, Shepherd and Wedderburn, that the owner's Title is held within the Register of Sasines and not the Land Registry. However, we have assumed that the Owner will be able to grant a complete and unencumbered Title so that our proposals can be delivered and funded.

Utility Capacity and Location - We have discussed the site's Utility Capacity with Bayne Stevenson, Chartered Engineers, to ascertain the status of the local utility network. Subject to final design they believe there is sufficient capacity locally to accommodate our proposals. Formal record drawings of the local utility network have been obtained from Cornerstone Projects Ltd.

Valuation Advice - CHOISS has commissioned Savills Chartered Surveyors to advise on the present Edinburgh property market and matters of Valuation.

Our Transfer Request is subject to the following conditions:

- 1 Detailed Planning Permission
- 2 Satisfactory Title
- 3 Confirmation of Location and Integrity of the Culvert
- 4 Strategy to reduce deterioration of Comiston Farmhouse over Contracting Period
- 5 Satisfactory Formal Offer from Funding Partner(s)
- 6 Final Board Approval

In respect of Condition 4, our Building Surveyor has noted the recent water ingress to the roof space of the Farmhouse. We are not aware as to whether the property owner has or intends to attend to these necessary repairs or the full extent of the consequential rot.

CHOISS recognises that the Farmhouse could remain vacant for some time, awaiting the refurbishment. To this end, on conclusion of the conditional missive and subject to full agreement with CEC and reference to all relevant Health and Safety issues, CHOISS wishes to instruct its own contractor to undertake all necessary works to make the building wind and water tight, the cost of which will be entirely the responsibility of CHOISS.

In the event that CHOISS does not purchase Comiston Farmhouse, CEC will reimburse CHOISS to the full amount of the works.

CHOISS will undertake at its own risk, all necessary Investigations, Design Refinements, Option Appraisals, Feasibility Studies and Cost Plans to satisfy itself that its proposals are deliverable. These will be completed in parallel to the timetable agreed for securing Detailed Planning Consent and will not impede concluding the Conditional Purchase Missive.

However, in order to complete the due diligence it is assumed that CHOISS and its consultants will obtain the full cooperation of the Seller, such cooperation to include access to the Subjects in order to undertake all necessary surveys.

Timetable

We seek to agree a transparent timetable for payment of the Subjects once we have been confirmed as Preferred Bidder. As a guide we set out an indicative timetable:

Contracting Period to Conclude Conditional Missives	say 4 Months
Design Development, Community Consultation, Soil Investigations and Preparation of Planning Application	say 6 Months
Planning Period	say 5 Months
Purification of Missives, Confirmation of Funding and Payment	say 2 months

We envisage that it will take 24 months to secure the Building Warrant and deliver the completed project.

4.2 Benefits of the proposal

Please set out the benefits that you consider will arise if the request is agreed to.

This section should explain how the project will benefit your community, and others.

Please refer to the guidance on how the relevant authority will consider the benefits of a request.

Comiston Cohousing will provide the following key benefits:

Residents

- A housing cooperative with Mutual Home Ownership Society model rules
- A cooperative which owns and manages the accommodation, so it remains affordable in perpetuity through an innovative scheme which is not exposed on the open property market speculation - delivering the LILAC and Yorspace not-for-profit model in Scotland
- This will provide tenure secure homes - built to net zero carbon standards - for between 20 and 25 residents
- Diverting 'developer profit' towards social and community benefit
- There will be lower demand on Health and Social Care services due to the buildings being constructed using materials with very low VOC and other deleterious substances
- The mutual benefit offered by the neighbour support offered within the community and the consequent enhance personal wellbeing, will reduce the call on statutory services
- Day-to-day living costs – shared utilities, electric vehicles, other equipment etc will be reduced
- Those formerly experiencing fuel poverty will no longer have high fuel costs due to the net zero carbon construction standards.

Local Community

- The preservation and reconnection with the cultural heritage of Comiston Farmhouse and its grounds for the Oxgangs and Fairmilehead communities
- This will be the opposite of a gated community or a single private dwelling which would bring little or no benefits to the locality.
- As an exemplar "first mover" community adopting sustainable active travel, the impact will be to provide support to others wishing to wheel and walk more often
- As a potential location for a city car club or equivalent with electric charging point there is an opportunity for local households to reduce reliance on first or second car
- The residents of Oxgangs and Fairmilehead will have access to a local community hub as part of the 20-minute neighbourhood network comprising: some 200 square meters of community rooms – to include a communal kitchen, social spaces, laundry, a modest coworking space within the building

- Social benefits by bringing Oxfords and Fairmilehead neighbours together to address loneliness experienced by many - contributing to the improved wellbeing and social cohesion
- Increased pride in the community and a bridge between the communities of Oxfords and Fairmilehead
- Within the extensive green space around the Farmhouse – extending to one acre of land - community growing opportunities as promoted in the recent City Council Food Growing Strategy - along with training and skill sharing opportunities
- Apprenticeship and training obligation placed on the construction contractors
- Improved diet through growing food and sharing a healthy meal, reduced social isolation, a greater sense of belonging and community, use of active transport to attend social opportunities (e.g. community film night)
- Community development that recognises the skills among community members, with well-designed, fully accessible, facilities
- We estimate that the common elements of the proposal – including the ground floor of the Farmhouse and access to the landscaped areas – will deliver to the Oxfords and Fairmilehead area a conservative £450,000 benefit in kind contributing to health and wellbeing. This will have no legacy costs to the local authority.

Wider community in Edinburgh and Scotland

- Exemplar project for pathfinder delivery of Housing Cooperatives using a Cohousing model. This will assist in implementation of the Scottish Government's Housing to 2040 strategy
- To address the climate crisis and fuel poverty the project will fully explore the technical and practical challenges in achieving net zero construction of new dwellings and refurbishment of existing stone built dwellings
- Clearly recording the story of how the project achieves the journey to net zero carbon. This will be shared with construction, design and delivery personnel together with local authority and government departments or training programmes.

The City Council

- Council Tax income equivalent to around £25,000 annually from 10 dwellings
- The construction will be an exemplar low-energy, offsite construction which requires shorter onsite contract period with less vehicle movements and lower intrusion
- Construction jobs with an exemplar contractor using Modern Methods of Construction and Offsite Fabrication
- The new build will focus on reducing the embodied carbon in the development
- The refurbishment of the Farmhouse will follow best practice in the the Sustainable Renovation Guide published by Scottish Ecological Design Association
- A deliverable pilot project aiming to demonstrate how the City Council's Business Plan 2021-24 and 2030 Climate Strategy can be delivered.

Public Policy Priorities

Many of the city council's stated ambitions will be delivered through this proposal. This includes the Climate Strategy, cohesive communities, energy efficiency, mental wellbeing, circular economy, 20-minute neighbourhoods and tackling social inequality. These are integral to this ground-breaking proposal which supports the following City Council priorities:

City priorities [[Edinburgh 2050 City Vision](#)]

“Community led – power and responsibility for change will be shared with citizens, thanks to voluntary changes from all sectors. Community representatives will have a place at the table and will be given the opportunity to drive change.”

City Priorities [[Edinburgh's Community Plan 2018-28](#)]

“The plan is based on feedback from communities on the issues they face and sets out three priorities:

- **enough money** to live on
- access to work, learning and training
- a good place to **live**.”

Council priorities [[City of Edinburgh Council Business Plan 2021-24](#)]

“- becoming a sustainable and net zero city.”

Council priorities [[City of Edinburgh 2030 Climate Strategy](#)]

“We will support sustainable communities

- **Scoping net zero community pilots** that could unlock and support grass roots activity.
- **We will ensure a fair transition to net zero.**”

Local priorities [[20 Minute Neighbourhood Strategy - Living Well Locally](#)]

“Through the 20-Minute Neighbourhood model we aim to achieve:

- sustainable, safe and resilient neighbourhoods where residents have equal access to most of their daily needs
- support for local economies and businesses who can not only provide for the daily needs of their communities but also create employment opportunities
- better management and use of land and buildings across the city ensuring we also deliver our ambition to reduce carbon emissions
- enhanced voluntary sector facilities, services and networks, which bind our communities together and enhance social capital through voluntary sector hubs
- high quality placemaking in our town and local centres, where accessible green and / or open spaces are provided.

Local Priorities [[South West Locality Improvement Plan 2017-22](#)]

- “Increased supply of affordable and accessible housing
- Communities are placed at the heart of planning new developments
- Local communities understand each other's needs and work effectively together.”

4.3 Restrictions on use of the land

If there are any restrictions on the use or development of the land, please explain how your project will comply with these.

Restrictions might include, amongst others, environmental designations such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSI), heritage designations such as listed building status, controls on contaminated land or planning restrictions.

The [Sale Particulars](#) published by the City Council include a Design Brief which indicates a maximum of four dwellings in the Farmhouse plus six “mews-style” dwellings in the rear of the house. Feedback offered during the Pre-Application enquiry indicates that our proposals will be supported.

There is a [Tree Preservation Order](#) for five mature trees to the east of the Farmhouse. These will be retained and the project will invest further in a productive landscape designed with permaculture principles.

4.4 Negative consequences

What negative consequences (if any) may occur if your request is agreed to? How would you propose to minimise these?

You should consider any potential negative consequences for the local economy, environment, or any group of people, and explain how you could reduce these.

Vehicle movement

Neighbours' have had concerns about additional vehicle movements and car parking. These will be addressed through active car share provision – using electric vehicles – available for use by local residents along with other sustainable active travel measures.

Note that the average vehicle per household in recent UK urban Cohousing is between 0.5 and 0.7 cars per household including the Car Share vehicles.

Project delivery failure

Given that the principal asset - the property at 83 Pentland View - is of a relatively high value in the event that the organisation is prevented from delivering on its aspiration or goes into default, then the asset is still available for completion as a high value residential project.

Great care has been given to explore with the membership the joint and several risks this project entails. We are ever conscious of the need for highest standards of governance and accountability in the administration of this project. As our public profile has grown, new expressions of interest in collaborating on this project have come from a wide range of skilled and experienced people.

4.5 Capacity to deliver

Please show how you will be able to manage the project and achieve your objectives.

This could include the skills and experience of members of the organisation, any track record of previous projects, whether you intend to use professional advisers, etc.

Members of CHOISS have decades of experience being brought to bear on the project:

- Dr. Alexandra Price: Consultant Engineer specialising in Renewable Energy
- David Alexander: Director, Eildon Housing Association.
- David Somervell: former Sustainability Adviser for the University of Edinburgh
- George Burrows - Health and Wellbeing researcher
- Jan Woolley - former civil servant
- Liz Murdoch - NHS Community Health Practitioner
- Mike Wilson - Communications expert in Place Design
- Norrie MacPhail: Project Manager for a Residential Social Landlord
- Stefanie Kaiser - Construction Industry Marketing Specialist

Team of Professional Advisers

We have assembled highly skilled experts to help us on our journey. A summary of our Team is set out below. CVs / summary of their experience can be provided as required.

- Architect: Dr. Richard Atkins RIBA, FRIAS, FRSA Chartered Architect
- Building Surveyor: William Mair MRICS of Ashlar Consulting Ltd
- Community Shares: Morven Lyon, Programme Manager, DTAS
- Community Ownership Support Scheme: Lynn Molleson, Adviser, DTAS
- Cooperative Housing: Andy Woodcock, Acorn Consulting Coop
- Cost Consultants: Mike Armstrong, Pottie Wilson, Quantity Surveyors
- Engineer: Craig Stevenson of Bayne Stevenson Engineers
- Funding Partner: Ecology Building Society
- Property Development Advisor: John Mark Di Ciacca MRICS
- Solicitor: James Dobbie and Vikki Henderson of Shepherd and Wedderburn
- Third Sector Governance: Karina Macleod, Senscot Legal Services
- Valuation Advisor: Craig Timney MRICS of Savills Chartered Surveyors

On securing transfer rights further consultants will be retained – including Arboreal Expert, Contract Administrator and Health & Safety Supervisor.

2nd Neighbours' Meeting 26 May 2021

We listened. And then we shared ideas for Cohousing for Comiston Farmhouse.

Saving Comiston Farmhouse was a second opportunity for neighbours to contribute to the emerging ideas for how to save Comiston Farmhouse!

Altogether nearly 20 people participated in the session where we explained how we are exploring ideas for an intergenerational, environmentally-responsible development at Comiston Farmhouse.

The Pre-Application design reflects a realistic balance between environmental efficiency and cost with low environmental impact, energy-efficient homes, reduced use of cars, shared facilities, food growing and generating renewable energy!

We shared the architect's sketches and were strongly encouraged by neighbours' positive feedback.

Petition of Support

The second leaflet invited local people to sign a formal petition and to join CHOISS in our bid for the Farmhouse. Since mid-May, 107 people have sent in either paper copies or scanned wet signatures on forms with their full contact details. This evidenced a very strong local support during the very strange circumstances of Covid-19 restrictions.

Of particular interest is that four respondents from both communities have expressed interest in hearing more about the prospect of joining the Cohousing project.

On 2 June a story appeared on BBC online News which outlined the potential for Cohousing at Comiston Farmhouse [LINK] and in the following ten days received over 300,000 hits. The phone was ringing from 8am that day and a further six households have submitted formal expressions of interest in joining the pioneer group.

Some comments from local people when sending in their membership applications:

- *Our petition support is attached. Sorry we can't make it to your meeting on 26th May. Would be interested in anything you can share after about it. LC*
- *A Community meeting room would indeed be very useful - for Residents' Association meetings and suchlike. I do not understand the comment that says there are many other meeting places locally (reachable on foot). Oxgangs Library's Fraser Room is now given over to computers and is not open every evening.*
- *Oxgangs Community Centre is not always open and indeed one wonders how long it will survive. The cost of Farmhouse room hire should be low.*
- *The development could be good for the area and save the Farmhouse.*
- *A community cafe would also be great - if Planning permitted it.*
- *The grounds are currently used by much loved local foxes. A wild patch might be reserved for them.*
- *Please see attached - photographs of my signed form in support of your bid to save Comiston Farmhouse. I wish you every success with the project. Many thanks, CW*
- *Thanks for circulating the informational flyer, we have signed both parts. Thanks, JB*

Section 6: Funding

Please outline how you propose to fund the price or rent you are prepared to pay for the land, and your proposed use of the land.

You should show your calculations of the costs associated with the transfer of the land or building and your future use of it, including any redevelopment, ongoing maintenance and the costs of your activities. All proposed income and investment should be identified, including volunteering and donations. If you intend to apply for grants or loans you should demonstrate that your proposals are eligible for the relevant scheme, according to the guidance available for applicants.

At time of writing CHOISS Members have confirmed access to the following funds:

Equity of £2,060,000 comprising:

- £580,000 of free cash is presently available at the disposal of CHOISS to use as equity. This will be invested in CHOISS once asset transfer is approved.
- £1,480,000 will conservatively be generated as surplus cash after the sales of prospective occupiers' current homes.

Plus

Structured Funding of up to £1,500,000 is required to fund the balance of land purchase, secure planning permission and construct our proposals. This will take the form of Short Term Development Finance to complete the development. This will be converted to a Term Loan to pay off the Core Debt. The loan will be repaid monthly as contributions via the Housing Cooperative.

CHOISS presently has two Options to secure the finance needed to deliver its ambition:

Option 1: We are in detailed discussion with the Ecology Building Society and Social Investment Scotland. Both organisations have encouraged us with their feedback.

Ecology BS has undertaken initial due diligence on our proposals and have confirmed that, subject to confirmation of their normal commercial funding requirements, they wish to be CHOISS's Funding Partner to provide sufficient funds for both the necessary Short Term Development Funding and the Term Loan. Ecology currently lends up to £3million at 3.75% or 4% interest rate with up to a 40-year term.

Option 2: Several Cooperatives and Community Led Housing Developments have secured funding by way of a Community Share Issue. Recent local initiatives have used this funding route to great effect.

These include the award-winning Bridgend Farmhouse and Rowan Alba Common Ground Against Homelessness which raised £715,000 in 2020. We believe that this is a genuine option for CHOISS.

Other Funding Partners will continue to be identified in order to secure the most advantageous financing route.

Signature

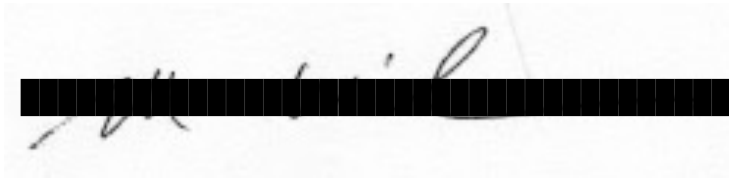
Office-bearers (board members, charity trustees or committee members) of the community transfer body must sign the form. They must provide their full names and home addresses for the purposes of prevention and detection of fraud.

This form and supporting documents will be made available online for any interested person to read and comment on. Personal information will be redacted before the form is made available.

We, the undersigned on behalf of the community transfer body as noted at section 1, make an asset transfer request as specified in this form.

We declare that the information provided in this form and any accompanying documents is accurate to the best of our knowledge.

We understand conditions of transfer will be the subject of separate legal agreement(s) with the Council.



Mike Wilson, Trustee (Convener), [REDACTED]



Jan Woolley, Trustee, [REDACTED]



Liz Murdoch, Trustee, [REDACTED]



David Somervell, Trustee (Secretary), [REDACTED]

Dated 15 June 2021

Checklist of accompanying documents

Please list any documents which you are submitting to accompany this form.

Section 1 – your organisation’s constitution, articles of association or rules

Title of document attached: <https://bit.ly/choissclgsubmitted> and <https://bit.ly/cfvision>
CHOISS – Cohousing in Southern Scotland Ltd Articles of Association plus Vision

Section 2 – any maps, drawings or description of the land requested [None]

Section 3 – note of any terms and conditions that are to apply to the request

Our Transfer Request is subject to the following conditions:

1. Detailed Planning Permission
2. Satisfactory Title
3. Satisfactory Formal Offer from Funding Partner(s)
4. Final Board Approval

It is assumed that CHOISS and its consultants will obtain the full cooperation of the Council, including access to the Subjects, in order to undertake all necessary surveys.

Section 4 – about your proposals, their benefits, any restrictions on the land or potential negative consequences, and your organisation’s capacity to deliver.

Mutual Home Ownership Society (MHOS) Model Rules <https://bit.ly/mhosrules>
Housing to 2040 Strategy <https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-2040-2/>
LILAC MHOS <https://bit.ly/lilacbriefing>
LILAC Impact Report <https://bit.ly/lilacimpact>
YorSpace Business Plan <https://yospace.org/resources/>
MHOS Dwell Software application www.maldaba.co.uk/news/dwell-case-study-lilac/
UK Cohousing Network <https://cohousing.org.uk>
Comiston Cohousing <https://comiston.org>
Pre-Application Design Statement <https://bit.ly/cfdesignstatement>
Pre-Application Design Drawings <http://bit.ly/cfsketchscheme>
Pre-Application Meeting Note <http://bit.ly/cfplgmtg>
Advice Letter from Planning Department <http://bit.ly/cfplgadvice>
Condition Survey Report <http://bit.ly/cfconditionsurvey>
Utilities Report <http://bit.ly/cfutilities>
Preliminary Cost Plan <http://bit.ly/cfprelimcostplan>

Section 5 – evidence of community support

Community Newsletter 1 - February 2021 <http://bit.ly/cfleaflet1>
Neighbour Meeting Report 16 February 2021 <https://bit.ly/cf16feb>
Community Newsletter 2 - May 2021 <http://bit.ly/cfleaflet2>
Neighbour Meeting Report 26 May 2021 <https://bit.ly/cf26may>

Section 6 – funding

Letter from Ecology Building Society <https://bit.ly/cfebs>