



WELCOME TO CARBETH

Buying a Hut at Carbeth: Important points

There are two ways to get a hut at Carbeth – either by buying an existing hut from a hutter who is selling, or by contacting the Committee to go onto the waiting list for either new sites or for a hut being sold on behalf of a hutter.

NEVER buy a hut before contacting the elected Committee who run the Carbeth Hutter's Community Company for the community's benefit. No matter how much you've paid to buy a hut, you have no right to keep it on land at Carbeth until you have signed a lease with the Company.

Breach of the lease can result in eviction and loss of your hut. Carbeth is a Conservation Area. Any new builds or significant alterations to existing huts MUST be approved in advance by Stirling Council Planning Department. Contact the Committee for advice.

On signing a lease, you become a member of the Community Company, with the right to vote for Committee members, and to stand to join the Committee.

The Committee holds a surgery between 1-2pm on the first Sunday of each month, at the Community Hut just behind the Carbeth Inn. Or you can email: director@carbethhutters.co.uk

We hope you enjoy Carbeth as much as we do.

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Building/Extending/Rebuilding a Hut

There are full details about hut construction on the Carbeth Hutter's website at www.carbethhutters.co.uk

You will also need to consult the hut design Guidelines issued by Stirling Council's Planning Department, which you can get by emailing planning@stirling.gov.uk or by phoning Catherine Malley on 01786 442453. You must also keep the CHCC Committee informed of your plans. The Committee will be happy to help you.

As long as you work within the Guidelines the planning process should take no longer than about 8 weeks.

Your site at Carbeth is 60' by 60'. The main hut area should be no more than 250sq ft. Smaller extensions that do not dominate the main structure can be added in time, but the hut must not occupy more than one-third of the site area, and it must be at least 2 metres back from site boundaries.

Guidelines allow that hut designs show originality and diversity of appearance, and they stipulate that recycled and environmentally friendly materials should be used wherever possible.

Huts should be of a scale and character that fits in with other huts, and reflect that the building is a holiday hut and not a bungalow or house. Two storey huts are not allowed.

We recommend that you spend plenty of time at your new site becoming aware of the views, sunny areas, areas of shelter from the wind, natural drainage etc., in order to plan how to position your hut and begin gathering construction materials.

You will need to work with your site as it is: tree-cutting and major landscaping is not permitted. Trees on site are protected and written permission is required from the Committee and Stirling Council to cut one down. Felling a tree without permission is illegal, and Stirling Council may take action. If you believe a tree is in a dangerous condition, contact the Committee with details.

Much of Carbeth is woodland; most huts have trees very close by and this is part of the charm of Carbeth. If you don't want a tree overlooking your hut, don't choose a site (or hut) with trees close by.

Existing huts are protected by law under the Conservation status, so it is an offence to destroy an old hut without prior written permission. If the hut you have acquired genuinely is beyond repair, you must consult the Committee and then apply to Stirling Council for Conservation Permission to demolish.

Being a Hutter

Hutting at Carbeth has been a way of life for generations – it has been enjoyed for a hundred years.

Hutting is all about peaceful and enjoyable living and relaxation – making a space away from the city and the pressures of daily life, to spend time in harmony with natural surroundings. It's also about self-reliance combined with a willingness to help your neighbours when they need.

You have a responsibility to protect and enhance your plot, your local hutting area and the overall estate. You are required to be respectful of their environment, their neighbours and the wider local community.

The rule is: do nothing which your neighbour could reasonably object to.

Keep noise levels down, especially at night.

Anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated, and could cause you to be evicted.

You are responsible for the behaviour of your guests.

Look out for your neighbours. In most areas neighbours share phone numbers so they can contact each other in case of anything of concern.

Share – advice, skills, machinery.

Use of generators or other noisy machinery is strongly discouraged, except for occasional construction work or grass/hedge cutting.

Solar panels coupled with batteries can supply most of the power you need, more cheaply than generators. If you must use a generator, then make sure it has excellent sound insulation around it, and never use it after 10pm at night.

Do not leave any rubbish around the site. Do pick up any rubbish you find – if you don't pick it up, no-one else will.

Do not burn plastics or other toxic and/or polluting materials at Carbeth – your neighbours will have to breathe in the poisons they produce and look at the mess produced. If possible compost garden waste, rather than burn.

Drive slowly and carefully on site. Children may be playing on the track round any corner. There is a speed limit of 10mph on site, and once you have arrived at Carbeth try to minimise any vehicle movements.

Water

There are standpipes in each hutting area which provide fresh mains drinking water. Ensure that your local standpipe is not abused, damaged or left running unnecessarily. CHCC is charged for water usage – and that charge comes out of your rent.

You are advised that Scottish Water monitors usage on the site, and has threatened to charge water rates to any hutter who has a visible connection running from a standpipe to their hut. This has not happened yet, but Scottish Water (Business Stream) may inspect and do this at any time.

You are recommended to collect rainwater from your roof for cleaning or washing purposes, but note it is not safe to drink collected rainwater, unless it has been boiled or filtered.

There is no mains drainage so you should use a compost or drop-pit toilet, being careful to site your toilet so that you do not pollute the ground water table. Other waste water should drain into a soakaway. The Committee can advise on this.

Heat, cooking and light

The Hutter's website has information on setting up a 12v solar power system for lighting etc.

Most hutters heat their hut with a small (e.g. 5Kw) wood stove, and the positioning of the stove is one of the first things to consider when designing your hut. Remember also that badly positioned chimneys, flues or fireplaces can and have caused huts to burn down.

There's plenty of waste wood lying around Glasgow and many hutters heat their huts free of charge purely from wood construction waste.

A coalman delivers fortnightly on Saturday mornings – listen out for his cry of "coal" if you want to buy. Govan social enterprise Gal Gael will deliver wood to Carbeth. Gas heaters are sometimes used – but are expensive and create condensation dampness.

Candles are the most romantic and restful way of lighting your hut – but beware of fire. Huts have occasionally burnt down, and fire insurance is not possible for a hut. Candles can get into a draft and suddenly burn down, so never place a lit candle on wood, or leave one unattended or while you fall asleep.

Most hutters use bottled gas to cook with – but remember a stove with a flat top can be used for cooking; a wood stove with a flat top is particularly useful for slow cooking or for ensuring a constant supply of hot water, saving the (high) cost of bottled gas. Propane gas bottles must be kept outside the hut for safety.

Gas, candles, wood – all are highly inflammable, and if a fire does start, your wooden hut will be gone in a very few minutes. Keep a fire blanket and/or non-electrical fire extinguisher to hand; some hutters also have battery smoke alarms.

Waste

You are responsible for dealing with all your waste. There is currently no waste collection on site, so you must take all your waste home with you, apart from paper and cardboard which you can burn on your stove.

The nearest recycling facilities are at Tesco in Milngavie and Lidl in Baljaffray. You must not burn toxic wastes, such as plastics, anywhere at Carbeth.

Your hut site

You are required to keep your hut tidy and well-maintained at all times. A good water-tight roof is essential to preserve your hut, as well as for comfort. Grass should be cut regularly during the summer. Vegetable, herb and flower beds are encouraged on your site, if the local tree cover permits enough light through. Hedging is encouraged as it provides shelter and protection from wildlife, but if you have timber fencing, it should be kept in good order

Wildlife and the Environment

We share Carbeth with a large number of wild animals and birds. It's one of the attractions – and they were here first. Make sure that your hutting lifestyle and activities do not have a negative impact on the surrounding wildlife and environment.

Do not create new roads, parking or turning areas without written permission from the committee.

Security

Huts are often left unattended for many weeks, and should be kept secure with locks and shutters. We do occasionally have problems with thieves coming in from outside – so please keep the gates at the entrance to the hutting areas locked. You will be given a key to your local gate when you sign the lease, but if you lose it a further key can be obtained from the committee.

Pets

Keep your dog under control at all times, do not assume all your neighbours love dogs. Bell your cat if you bring it with you, to stop it killing wild birds.

Finally

Be nice to each other and to the environment. It's much less hassle.

Carbeth Hutters Community Company (CHCC)

CHCC is a not-for-profit company owned by the community. Each hut has one full voting member of the Company and any number of associate members.

Important matters are agreed at the AGM in the Spring, by discussion and voting, with each full member having one vote. The AGM votes in the Directors of the Company, who form the Committee. Any member can stand for election to the Committee. At the present time there are 8 hutters serving on the Committee, which handles the day to day running of the site. The Committee meets monthly and minutes are emailed to all hutters with email addresses.

Please remember that Committee members (known formally as Directors of the Company) are ordinary hutters giving their time voluntarily to ensure the smooth running of the site. Committee members get nothing for their work, except the satisfaction of seeing Carbeth flourish.

We encourage events which build and strengthen the community and help hutters get to know each other. However, the Committee has its hands full dealing with issues relating to the running of the site, and does not currently have the capacity to organise community events. But if you have an idea for an event you would like to organise, contact the committee and we will give you help as we can – e.g. by publicising it or trying to find people to help you organise it.

Carbeth is not a park homes caravan site. It is a piece of land owned by a community company where each member has equal rights over the land and its future, and equal responsibility. Don't ask "what's the committee doing for me?" but "what am I doing to help ensure Carbeth is still being enjoyed by folk like me in another 100 years time?"

CHCC bought the hutting land in 2012, and purchased extra land, including the site of the original Fellowship Camp, in 2016. We did this with some help from public loans and donations, but mainly through a commercial bank loan from the ethical bank Triodos. We have met all our repayments on time, but occasionally only just, and our finances will be extremely tight until mid-2019 when some of the loans have been paid off. Please be aware that until then it is extremely unlikely that there is going to be spare cash to make the improvements hutters would like. Building the future is a slow process.

History of Carbeth

The origins of the Carbeth community go back to the turn of the nineteenth century. Landlord Allan Barnes-Graham was sympathetic to the ideals of the Clarion movement, (which promoted "the clarion call of socialism") and allowed the Clarion Cyclists to hold an annual summer Fellowship Camp on his land.

A small tented city took root every Glasgow fair fortnight, and eventually the campers built a permanent wooden structure for dances and evening entertainments, and for storing canvas etc during the rest of the year. The foundations of this building are still visible (just) in the Fellowship Camp field, between the Cuilt Road section of Carbeth and the Drymen Road.

Hutting at Carbeth was established from 1919, after the First World War, when the "Homes fit for Heroes" slogan inspired Allan Barnes-Graham to allow working-class people from Glasgow to self-build small wooden huts on his land, in order to escape the smells and smog of the city.

Working folk cycled out to Carbeth carrying what building materials they could on their bicycles, to build huts. There are stories of visitors being encouraged to bring a brick, or other materials, in exchange for a cup of tea.

Every weekend people from Glasgow gathered around campfires to discuss the issues of the day. Men trained at Carbeth to prepare to go out and fight Franco and fascism in Spain in the late 1930s – socialist discussions at Carbeth were described as "The Fire that Never Goes Out".

Hut numbers expanded after 1941 when families were temporarily rehoused at Carbeth after the Clydebank Blitz, and by 1947 there were 191 huts across the estate. During the 1950's Carbeth had its first heyday, with 250 huts, a tearoom, shops, the Carbeth Inn, and a swimming pool with diving boards and changing rooms – "a Scottish Lido set among towering hills."

The landlord was generous with rent levels, but fierce. Huts were only to be used at holiday times and weekends – and Mr Barnes-Graham would tour the site just before the last bus back to Glasgow each Sunday to check that no smoke was still rising from huts, and all hutters had left. Hutters were grateful to "auld Barney", but terrified of the power he had to evict them. During the 70's and 80s, as holidaying habits changed, hutting went through a difficult period, with creeping vandalism, littering, and huts falling into disrepair.

Allan Barnes-Graham's grandson (who shares the same name) took over the site in the late 1980s and in 1996 introduced large rent rises, as the start of a plan to revitalise the site. Hutters objected and went on rent strike. The landlord responded with eviction notices and court summonses, and the rent strike created newspaper headlines on a weekly basis in an attempt to win over public support.

In 1999 the first petition the newly created Scottish Parliament considered was from the rent strike committee, asking for protection. The research the Parliament commissioned in relation to this led eventually to the celebration of the Scottish Hutting movement, and the start of Reforesting Scotland's 1000 Huts campaign for the development of hutting across Scotland. (That campaign has had significant success and is still growing – see Reforesting Scotland's website and facebook page for recent developments).

The rent strike dragged on, stuck in an impasse. The landlord was reluctant to attempt to evict everyone from the site, and the hutters were almost unanimous in continuing the rent strike. During that time, two other historic hut sites (in Angus and Dumfries and Galloway) were evicted and cleared by their landlords; the Scottish tradition of hutting was under severe threat.

A fourteen year rent strike ended in 2010, when Allan Barnes-Graham agreed to sell the land, at market value, to the hutters.

The CHCC was formed, launched a public fund-raising campaign, and secured a mortgage at commercial rates, to buy the land, Central Scotland's first ever Community land buyout. So we now own the land – and the challenge is for us to be good custodians of this unique place, to ensure the protection of both the environment, and the ideals of access for ordinary people to a beautiful part of the Scottish landscape.

CHCC 2018