

I believe that encouraging recreational Huts as second or holiday homes would support many of the aims for NFP4.

- Energy Use/Carbon Footprint

Smart meters are being installed in homes across the country on the basis that the more clearly we can see and measure the use of gas and electricity the better we will understand and manage it.

Renewable technologies installed in an off grid hut offer comfort and convenience. But, in contrast to gas and electricity coming through the national networks, living with off grid renewables brings greater sensitivity to the importance of energy conservation. This would gradually alter habits towards energy use generally.

Holidays often involve long distance travel by air. Huts in the Scottish countryside would normally be no more than a few hours' drive. Making use of a hut as a holiday home would reduce the carbon footprint associated with travel.

- Equality & Well being

Wealth inequalities and an increasing detachment from the natural world, along with stress and associated poor physical and mental health are some of the unintended yet obvious consequences of pursuing economic growth.

Currently only the wealthiest in Scotland can afford to own or frequently rent a holiday home for weekend breaks and holidays. They are it seems well appreciated as a home away from home, a space to relax, rejuvenate, reflect, and enjoy quality time with family and friends.

Huts could be easily accessible holiday homes, located in the countryside and close to the outdoors and nature. Time outdoors tends to promote physical exercise and feelings of well being.

Huts are by definition (less than 30m²) small, and can consequently be constructed relatively cheaply, with less regulatory hurdles, and using far fewer resources than an average house. This cost advantage makes a holiday hut affordable for far more of the population than the wealthy few.

Currently most holiday homes were once 1st homes in rural locations. This trend, mainly unhindered by regulations, has raised the cost of owning property in many popular rural areas beyond the reach of many locals, leading to depopulation and an ensuing lack of local services.

Hut communities could be developed in many suitable rural locations. They would bring frequent visitors and possibly substantial economic benefits to the area without impacting home ownership for locals.

Hut culture is relatively new and there will be a wide range of potential models for growth. Careful consideration of the location and regulation of hut sites, especially larger ones, will be needed, but in general huts should be promoted and permitted to develop sympathetically across all the Scottish regions.

Spending time regularly in an off-grid hut will encourage a natural exploration of what makes for a good life, especially in less materialistic ways. This is surely integral to the aims of the planning framework.

Hopefully many of those looking forward to the New Year on 31/12/2049 will be doing so in their family hut!