

# PRESS RELEASE (18 APRIL 2007): **SCOTTISH COMMUNITY SCORES LOWEST ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT EVER RECORDED**

The Findhorn Foundation ecovillage in Moray, Scotland has recorded the lowest ecological footprint ever recorded in the developed world – just half the UK national average.

The Findhorn ecovillage is demonstrating how it is possible for communities to have a low environmental impact *WHILE ALSO* retaining a high quality of life.

- ❖ The community's 'food' and 'home and energy' footprints were found to be 37% and 21.5 % of the national average, respectively
- ❖ Community-level energy generation, local organic food, energy-efficient house design, low levels of commuting and sharing of resources were found to be the major factors.

'These are remarkable findings and they validate the many approaches that have been adopted here', said the research project manager, Mr Jonathan Dawson. 'What comes out of this study loud and clear is that it is possible to significantly reduce resource consumption while continuing to enjoy a high quality of life'.

Technical support for the study was provided by the internationally-recognised footprinting consultants, the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) based at the University of York. SEI's John Barrett, who played an active role in the study, said: "SEI has now undertaken a footprint analysis of a number of communities across the UK and the Findhorn ecovillage has the lowest to date. We believe that everyone has something to learn from their low footprint lifestyle."



## **Note for Editors**

A study just issued has found that the Findhorn Foundation community in Moray, northern Scotland has the lowest ecological footprint recorded for any permanent community ever measured in the industrialised world.<sup>1</sup> The community's footprint is a fraction over half the

---

<sup>1</sup> Ecological footprinting is a tool used to measure the consumption of resources and the creation of wastes, and is increasingly relevant to today's world where energy efficiency and sustainability are critical in our efforts to combat climate change.

national average, meaning that the average resident in the community consumes just one half of the resources and generates one half of the waste of the average citizen of the UK.

The study was undertaken by GEN-Europe (the Global Ecovillage Network) in collaboration with the Sustainable Development Research Centre (SDRC) in Forres. Technical support was provided by the internationally-recognised footprinting consultants, the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) based at the University of York.

The study was managed by Mr Jonathan Dawson of GEN-Europe. When asked how the community was able to achieve these remarkable results, Mr Dawson explained: 'A high number of people eat food that is locally grown, organic and vegetarian - and this makes a big difference to the size of the footprint.'

'In addition, many residents live in energy-efficient houses and the ecovillage's four wind turbines not only provide for the community's own needs, but make it a net exporter of electricity.'

Other important factors were the widespread sharing of facilities and resources, such as washing machines and a communal dining room, which resulted in a 'Consumables' footprint just 46% of the national average. High levels of employment within the community substantially reduce the need for commuting - community residents' car mileage is just 6% of the national average.

Interestingly, when the footprint of guests attending workshops on courses to the Findhorn Foundation is factored in, the aggregate resident-guest footprint actually drops. This is because while the guests bring with them a good number of air miles, their scores in a number of other consumption categories is significantly lower.

'There remains much to be done to bring the footprint down to the truly sustainable levels that experts are saying are needed. This includes erecting yet more eco-friendly housing, reducing the residents' use of international flights and further increasing the proportion of guests coming from the UK. This has been rising in recent years and currently stands at 45 per cent.'

Bettina Jespersen, Chairperson of the Management Team of the Findhorn Foundation said: "What this shows is that communal living can be part of the solution. Whether you live in London or on a farm in Mexico, shared resources contribute to a lighter footprint."  
ENDS

For further information, contact:  
Jonathan Dawson  
Telephone: +44 (0) 1309 690 448  
e-mail: [jonathan@gen-europe.org](mailto:jonathan@gen-europe.org)

Interviews available for all media

Other Findhorn Foundation images: already on web site: [www.findhorn.org](http://www.findhorn.org)