

# WINTER 2024/25

The latest news from Urras Oighreachd  
Ghabhsainn (Galson Estate Trust)

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PHOTO CREDIT PHILLIP WALKER



# FOREWORD BY AGNES RENNIE, UOG CHAIRPERSON



Fàilte oirbh chun chuairt-litir seo aig toiseach bliadhn' ùr. Tha ochd bliadhna deug a nise bho chaidh an Urras a stèidheachadh agus ghabh muinntir na sgìre sealbh air an fhearann airson maith na coimhearsnachd. Chan e slighe fhurasta a th'air a bhith ann an-còmhnaidh ach mar a leughas sibh anns a' chuairt-litir seo 's mòr na tha dol air adhart agus is iomadh leasachadh a chaidh a chur gu gnìomh thar nam bliadhnachan.

'S e co-obrachadh agus com-phàirteachas aig iomadh ìre a tha air cuideachadh le soirbheachas an Urrais agus òs cionn a h-uile càil eile tha an ceangal le muinntir na sgìre. Gach cuid iadsan tha nam buill agus gu leòr eile a tha fuireach san sgìre nach eil nam buill fhathast.

Tha an Urras air leth moiteil cuideachd leis a' chom-phàirteachas a th' againn le cuid de bhuidhnean san sgìre a tha a' toirt seirbheisean air leth do mhuinntir an àite. Tha sinn uile nas èifeachdaich mar bhuidhnean nuair a tha ceanglaichean làidir le ar nàbaidhean. 'S e sin aig deireadh cùis a tha fhathast a' dèanamh coimhearsnachd air leth anns na sgìrean seo.

Aig toiseach bliadhna ùr tha mi an dòchas gur e bliadhna air leth bhios againn airson co-obrachadh agus nàbachd agus anns na duilleagan a leanas gheibh sibh blas beag air cuid de na tha dol aig an Urras.

Welcome to the first UOG newsletter for 2025. Last month we marked 18 years of community ownership, a milestone towards the establishment of the Trust for the benefit of the community. As with most initiatives there have been challenges and successes along the way, but as you will read in the following pages there have been many projects developed and delivered.

The common thread running through nearly all of these activities is partnership and collaboration and especially at community level. We are especially grateful for the continuing support of the members, and we are always ready to welcome new members on board.

At the Urras we recognise the important role played by many community groups who provide services across the community ranging from health and wellbeing to music and culture and heritage. There is no doubt that as a community we all benefit from strong community connections and township structures and the Urras values these relationships.

I hope the year ahead will continue to provide more opportunities for new projects and that many more of you can participate in initiatives such as those featured in this newsletter.

## RABBITS

The rabbits are making a comeback and when spring finally arrives, there will be babies hopping around our crofts. Numbers are still low but without management, they will continue to increase. A representative from UOG is planning on attending a rabbit management course and would like to invite representatives from grazing committees to attend too. If you would like further information, please contact UOG.

## WOODLAND TRUST

We are working in partnership with Laura from Woodland Trust to tackle the issue of deer eating tree saplings. Laura advises that there are certain trees that deer find less palatable, and recommends planting eared willow and alder on crofts, particularly if the soil is peaty. Trees are excellent for encouraging birds, soaking up excess water and improving and stabilising the ground. Community groups and schools can apply for free tree packs from [Woodland Trust](#).

## COASTAL WALK

In 2024 our student Placement Hugh MacDonald carried out a feasibility study on the current coastal walk from Port of Ness to Eoropie, it concluded that the route was in need of some improvement works and in particular the way markers required replacing as many were missing or damaged. In 2025 we plan to replace all of the posts to improve the navigation of the route for locals and visitors, install new signage and develop an interpretation leaflet. We look forward to delivering another upgraded walking route on the Estate for both locals and visitors to enjoy.

# DEER MANAGEMENT

We have come to the end of the 2024/2025 stalking season. Our volunteer stalkers, from three syndicates across the estate, have been roaming across the moor, day and night, in all weathers, and we would like to thank them for their hard work, time and investment – it is not an easy task.

A target of 100 deer was set by NatureScot and we are pleased to report that our volunteers exceeded this target, culling 108 deer throughout the season. The open moorland on Galson Estate is particularly challenging in comparison to most other areas on the island, due to the flat, open land, with no hill sites to shoot against. It also means that the deer can see stalkers coming. The soggy moorland makes it difficult for vehicles to access inland areas, which can make removing carcasses from the moor problematic. Safety is paramount so shooting cannot take place in villages or near houses, and our volunteers often respond to requests for help with deer which have been injured or caught in fences and goal nets.

Currently, the meat is used by the syndicate members. However, with increasing numbers being culled, we are working on a future strategy for meat distribution. There are strict guidelines regarding commercial venison and in partnership with the Lewis and Harris Deer Management Group, we are looking at how to overcome these challenges.

The public are reminded that deer do gather at the roadside and to be mindful of this, particularly in the dark. If you do have an accident and hit a deer on Galson Estate, please report it to us (01851 850411) and we will pass the information to NatureScot and Police Scotland. This information helps secure our night and out of season licenses.

It takes time and considerable investment to overcome the many barriers in the world of deer management, and as we investigate further ways to manage these challenges, we will continue to work hard for the safety of the community.

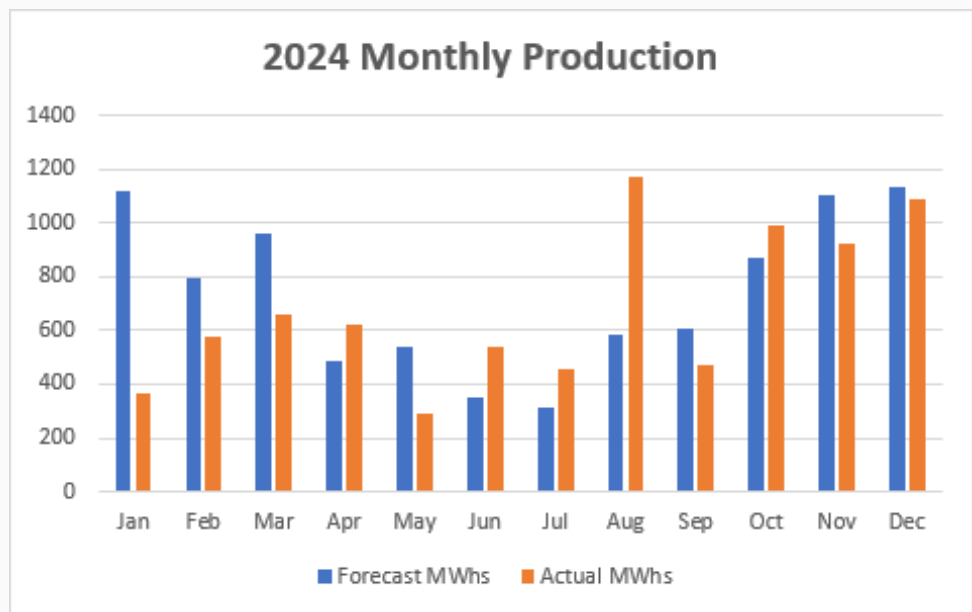


PHOTO CREDIT ALI FINLAYSON

# RENEWABLES

The **Ballantrushal turbines** performed well during 2024 but were hit with a number of faults and outages that reduced the electricity exported to the grid compared to previous years.

A total of 8,159 MegaWatt Hours were recorded, representing 92% of the annual target. January, August and December were the windiest months of the year but production from January-May was constrained by a major fault so the actual output over that period was not reflective of the good windspeeds. The maximum windspeed recorded was 107 mph in January.



The **West Coast Community Energy** project moved forward considerably over recent months.

- An offer from Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution to connect to the grid was accepted in the autumn and a second stage application to the National Energy System Operator has now been submitted.
- Ecology surveys started on Barvas Moor in the autumn and need to continue over two years before a planning application can be submitted.
- Funding from the Scottish Government CARES programme was awarded in November and this will support key activities until the spring. Further funding will be required to continue preparatory works from April.
- Feedback from the public consultation events held in December was very positive with the vast majority of attendees supportive of community owned renewables.

# COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND

From January to December 2024, the Community Investment Fund awarded £51,738 in grant funding towards projects of benefit to the community of the Galson Estate. If you would like to find out more, please visit our website [www.galsontrust.com](http://www.galsontrust.com) or email [cif@uoglt.com](mailto:cif@uoglt.com)

## Aug - Dec 2024 grants

£963.33

### COMUNN EACHDRAIDH NIS

For the purchase of shed for storage for mobility aids and vehicle seating

£1400

### CARTHANNAS NIS

For the purchase of a new washing machine for laundrette

£8000

### BARVAS CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Towards the Barvas Cemetery access road repairs

£1029.04

### NESS RUNNING CLUB

For the purchase of 5K/10K and Fun Run 2024 medals and other prizes.

£2000

### WESTSIDE FOOTBALL & RECREATION CLUB

For the Westside FC Development School to purchase Coaching Equipment



## TRANSPORT GRANTS

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn offers funding of up to 80% towards transport costs for schools and youth clubs from within the Galson Estate. Whether it is to attend competitions or for island school trips, UOG can provide financial support towards travel costs.

If you would like to find out more, or to complete a claim form, please get in touch.

# SUNND & NA DORSAN

Sunnd is 7 years old! The health and well being programme continues to go from strength to strength each year with a mix of familiar favourites and some brand new events to get us all out of the house during these dark months.

Joining the Sunnd line up this year is **Sewing Surgery**, with Margaret Rowan, who can thread and ease the tension in any sewing machine and indeed sewer. Comunn Eachdraidh Nis is hosting Alison with her **Cofaidh agus Cabadaich**, a great chance to have a blether in Gaelic.

Taigh Dhonnchaidh's lights have been burning bright; on Mondays Elizabeth Mackenzie's beautiful voice filling the room for **Seinn Sing Song** and Tuesdays see Jayne's busy **step dance** class; step, shuffle, tap, tap, step... and again!

Always wanted to have a spin on an **e-bike**? Look out for the dates being released in the March programme, where Simon from Spòrsnis will be leading a group cycle around Ness.

We welcome Catriona Hill to Clan Macquarrie on Wednesdays for **Gentle Movement to Music**, a popular session for our regulars. If that all sounds too energetic, **Craft and Chatter** also meet at Clan Macquarrie on Tuesday afternoons.

This is just a flavour of what is on offer so to find out what else is coming up, [head to our website to view the programme and to book!](#)



To accompany the na Dorsan monument in South Galson, there is an exhibition at the Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn Business Centre, which delves into the history of Galson, offering an insight into the events which unfolded.

The exhibition is open from Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm, and anyone is welcome to come and visit the exhibition. You can walk up to the monument at any time!

Location:

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn Business Centre,  
Tom na Bà, South Galson,  
Isle of Lewis, HS2 0SH

## VISITOR EXPERIENCE

After learning from a successful 2024 season, visitor experiences are set to grow for 2025 with Visit North Lewis.

Bookings are in for the experiences offered at Clan Macquarrie Community Centre with The Niseach Chef, croft visits at Air an Lot with a delve into local heritage with Commun Eachdraidh Nis and, new for this year, a Ceilidh with Taigh Dhonnchaich at Ness Social Club.

Last year focused on cruise passengers and this year's growth is set to focus on international visitor groups.

If you have an experience to share and would like to be involved, please do get in touch with [tourism@uogltd.com](mailto:tourism@uogltd.com)

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

We currently have a variety of tourism opportunities for local businesses:

**Food vendors:** Are you a food vendor? Would you like a pitch at one of the busiest tourist spots in Lewis? We are currently looking to speak to local catering businesses interested in having a pitch at the Butt of Lewis Lighthouse during the summer months. Please email [tourism@uogltd.com](mailto:tourism@uogltd.com) for more info.

**Accommodation providers & local business owners:** If we haven't been in touch, please get in touch with your accommodation/business details so that we can advertise it on the new Visit North Lewis website and app, and send you tourism packs ready for the upcoming tourist season. Please email [tourism@uogltd.com](mailto:tourism@uogltd.com) for more info.

**Advertising in new local map:** We are working on producing a map of North Lewis, aimed at visitors to the area. The map will highlight key landmarks and areas of interest, and will also include adverts for some local businesses, particularly retail and restaurants/cafes, as well as important visitor information. If you would like to find out more about advertising in this new map, including cost, design & suitable ads, please email [comms@uogltd.com](mailto:comms@uogltd.com).



# CALENDAR COMPETITION

Credit: Murdanie Macleod

We received so many fantastic photos of Galson Estate; it was great to see so many places on the Estate being celebrated with incredible photos, from Shader to Port of Ness, and Adabrock to Dùn Èistean. Each photograph tells a different story, and collectively the calendar this year showcases many aspects of Galson Estate's heritage; and judging by the quality of the photographs, you are all very proud of the community we live and work in! The winner of the adult category was Kevin Donner, with his stunning photo of Taigh 'an Fiosaich. This photo features on the cover of the calendar. Connor Graham was the winner of the Junior category with his peat stacks. Congratulations to both!

Thank you to everyone who took the time to enter and well done to all the featured photographers this year: Kevin Donner, Connor Graham, Roddy John Macdonald, Donald Mackenzie, Philly Hare, Phillip Walker, Kiera Macdonald, Fiona J Mackenzie, Murdanie Macleod and John Woods.



Credit: Kevin Donner



Credit: Connor Graham



Credit: Philly Hare



Credit : Roddy John Macdonald

# STAFF UPDATE

In October we wished Joanne Matheson, our Finance Officer, well as she moved on to a new role with Group Practice. Joanne was the first employee of the Urras supporting the board with the administration of the newly formed Galson Estate Trust. We thank her for her dedicated 17 years of service and wish her only the best as she embarks on a new challenge.

Jen, our office administrator, has now added finance to her new role as Finance and Office Administrator.



Joanne's leaving do at Morven Gallery in October 2024



Jen Adil-Smith



Should you be interested in joining our board please do get in touch to discuss

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

### SCF ROADSHOW

- 21st February, 7-9pm, Scottish Crofting Federation Roadshow at Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn Business Centre.

### PLÒIGH

- 31st March - 4th April 2025, Our Easter activity programme for children - stay tuned for more information coming soon

### AGM

- May 2025 (date TBC), Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn Business Centre, Tom na Ba, South Galson

### SIUTHAD!

- 29th April - 1st May 2025, Our Primary 7 transition programme - with a new name this year!

You can find more information about our upcoming events on our [website](#).



# HABOST AMENITY SITE

## WINTER OPENING HOURS 28 OCTOBER 2024 - 31 MARCH 2025

### MONDAY

10AM TO 12 NOON  
2PM TO 4PM

### TUESDAY

CLOSED

### WEDNESDAY

10AM TO 12 NOON  
2PM TO 4PM

### THURSDAY

10AM TO 12 NOON  
2PM TO 4PM

### FRIDAY

10AM TO 12 NOON  
2PM TO 4PM

### SATURDAY

9AM TO 12 NOON  
1PM TO 4PM

Operatives will be onsite during opening hours.  
Please refrain from disposing items outside these times as this  
will be treated as fly tipping.

Contact Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn – 01851 850411

### OUT OF HOURS

Zero Waste Western Isles (CNES): 01851 709900

SEPA: 01851 706477

SEPA 24 hour pollution report line: 0800 80 70 60

UOG: 07469 189 449

Site Licence Number: WML / N / 0220269

## Acceptable Waste

- Furniture (excluding upholstered cushions)
- Carpets & Rugs
- Linoleum & laminate flooring
- Bedroom furniture including mattresses
- Kitchen and bathroom furniture
- Dining room furniture
- Stairgates
- Ironing boards
- Luggage
- Electricals
- Metal parts from stoves and boilers
- Garden furniture
- Small sheds (dismantled)
- Garden toys including trampolines
- Clothes poles and rotary driers
- Small garden gates and a limit quantity of fencing
- Garden equipment and tools
- Christmas trees and decorations
- Manageable wood
- Prams and buggies
- Metal car parts from DIY repairs
- Lead acid car batteries

## Prohibited Waste

- Black bag waste
- Construction waste
- Demolition waste
- Crofting waste
- Stoves
- Asbestos
- Chemicals
- Fireplaces
- Soil
- Silage wrap
- Back boilers
- Upholstered cushions
- Fitted kitchens
- Sanitary ware
- Plasterboard/gypsum
- Commercial waste
- Oil based paints
- Windows or doors
- Oil tanks
- Tyres
- Gas cylinders
- Garage doors
- Fish or animal by-products

Commercial operators are not permitted to dispose of waste and must take commercial waste to Bennadrove Landfill Site. Please take prohibited household waste to Creed Park for disposal. Fly tipping is a criminal offence with fines of up to £40,000 or six month imprisonment. To report fly tipping, please call 01851 709900.



## BECOME A MEMBER



### BECOME A PROUD MEMBER OF YOUR COMMUNITY LAND TRUST!

Are you a resident of the Galson Estate for over nine months each year? Are you eager to play an active role in your community's growth, support local initiatives, and stay in the loop about all things community land trust related?

#### Membership Perks:

- **Voting Power:** Have your say and vote at the AGM
- **Your Voice Matters:** Opportunities to voice your opinions
- **Get Involved:** Take part in various local working groups
- **Stay Informed:** Get registered for our E-Newsletters

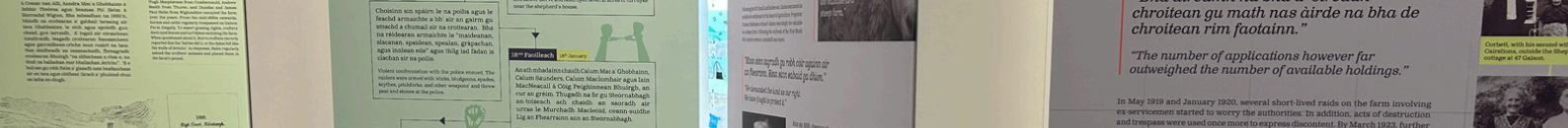
#### Becoming a member is easy and costs just £1 for a lifetime membership!

If you're 16 or older and fall into any of the following categories, you're eligible:

- Live within the Galson Estate Trust area
- Reside on the Isle of Lewis and registered with the Crofters Commission as a tenant of a croft within the Galson Estate area
- Live elsewhere but registered with the Crofters Commission as a tenant of a croft within the Galson Estate Trust area and actively work on that croft

**Join us today and help shape the future of our wonderful  
Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn!**

**Become a member at [www.galsontrust.com](http://www.galsontrust.com), visit us at our  
office in South Galson or call us on 01851 850411**



# STAY IN TOUCH



# CONTACT US



01851 850 411



office@uog ltd.com



Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn, Tom na Bà,  
Gabhann bho Dheas Eilean Leòdhais, HS2 0SH



Search @urrasog on Facebook & Instagram

