



URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



NOVEMBER / AN T-SAMHAIN

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LETTER FROM OUR CHAIR

AGNES RENNIE



Fàilte oirbh uile. 'S e bliadhna thrang th' air a bhith againn agus bliadhna shoirbheachail air am faigh sibh cunntas anns na duilleagan a leanas.

Bu mhath leams' ainmeachadh trì raointean obraich tha na samhlaidhean air an liuthad rud anns a bheil sgioba an Urrais an sàs. An toiseach obair rianachd chroitean. Tha an Urras airson taic a chumail ris an liuthad croitear a tha san sgìre ach cuideachd feumar ar pàirt a choileanadh ann an co-cheangal ri obair a' Choimisein. Tha an obair a thathar a dèanamh an luib òigridh na sgìre na thlachd agus sgeama taic nam buidhnean òigridh air leth soirbheachail. Cuideachd tha mi airson ainmeachadh taic le maoin coimhearsnachd agus an liuthad buidheann a tha a' faighinn cuideachadh le pròiseactan de gach seòrsa.

Tha mi an dòchas gun toir sibh sùil tron aithisg; air na dealbhan agus na naidheachdan a tha nan cois, agus ma tha ceist agaibh na biodh leisg oirbh tadhal oirnn aig an Urras no fios a chur thugainn air fòn no post-dealain. Agus mu dheireadh, creididh mi gu bheil sibh air leughadh mu na Dorsan, an carragh-chuimhne air ùr fhosgladh ann an Gabhsann. Tha mi 'n dòchas gun tig sibh a thoirt sùil agus coltach riumsa gun till sibh iomadh turas.

Welcome to the 2024 Annual Report. It's been both a challenging and a successful year as reflected in the following pages.

I would like to mention three areas of activity which I believe are good examples of the wide range of work undertaken by the Urras staff. Firstly, as a crofting estate a large part of what we do supports the work of crofting administration as well as land management. We are also legally required to work alongside the Crofting Commission in some aspects of its regulatory work. Secondly, I'd like to highlight the ongoing financial support for children's clubs; continuing and growing attendance makes this very worthwhile. I also want to mention the Community Investment Fund which is now in its tenth year and continues to provide useful financial, and other, support to many community groups.

I hope you will take the opportunity to read the stories and look at the photographs in the report and if you have any questions or comments please call in or write to the Urras.

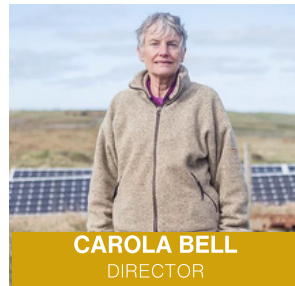
Finally, I'm sure that you have read in Fios and elsewhere about na Dorsan, the newly opened monument in Galson. I hope you can visit and maybe, like me, return many times.

ABOUT UOG / MU DHÈIDHINN UOG

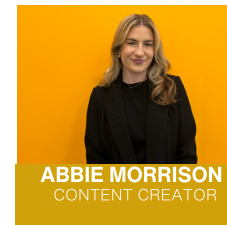
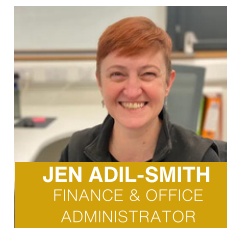
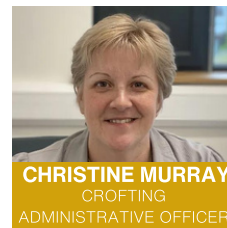
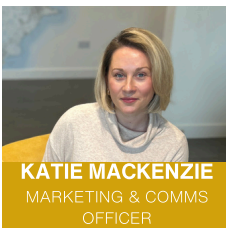
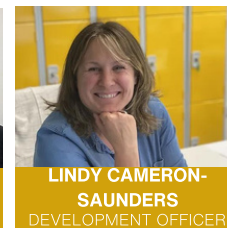
Galson Estate is a community-owned estate of 56,000 acres of coast, agricultural land and moor in the North West of the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides. The estate comprises 22 villages running from Upper Barvas to Port of Ness with a population of nearly 2,000 people. The estate passed into community ownership on 12 January 2007, to be managed on their behalf by Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (UOG).

We work to ensure that the community of Galson Estate benefit from community ownership, and we manage all estate business, whilst also overseeing a range of projects, to support and develop the area. Our current projects range from renewables, to tourism and youth engagement, and we also provide funding to community organisations via our Community Investment Fund.

Board of Directors / Bòrd-Stiùiridh



Staff / Luchd-Obrach



OUR VISION / AR LÈIRSINN

Coimhearsnachd a tha soirbheachail le deagh cheanglaichean anns a bheil sàr sheirbheisean agus ghoireasan ionadail, a' cleachdadh a stòrasan nàdarra gus cultar agus àrainn a tha sònraichte a dhèanamh seasmhach.

A thriving and well-connected community with excellent local services and amenities, harnessing its natural assets to sustain a unique cultural and social environment



Strategic priorities



Crofting & land use



Care & wellbeing



Exceptional place



Tourism

CROFTING & LAND USE / CROITEARACHD & CLEACHDADH FEARAINN

“To promote collaborative working in the stewardship of our land. Offering enhanced horticultural facilities benefiting from expert guidance and tuition.”

HOUSING

As the cost of purchasing homes and croft tenancies continue to rise, we have been investing in a number of ways to deliver affordable efficient housing, both for our local community and to encourage more working age families to relocate to the area.

We are continuing to engage with partners on the proposed development for Upper Barvas to create a mixed housing tenure site. The current suggestion is for rentals, rent to buy and self build plots, along with housing with additional care, to allow people to live independently in their own community for as long as possible.

A croft in Knockaird was renounced by an absentee tenant earlier this year so UOG has taken the opportunity to develop the croft, creating two crofts with house sites and a feued house site. This will give three families access to affordable housing, two of which would include the associated croft tenancy to encourage new entrants. This project is currently in the process of obtaining planning permission in principle, with delivery hoped for late 2025.

We are also working in partnership with Tighean Innse Gall (TIG) to investigate opportunities to bring empty properties back into use as affordable rentals. We are focusing on properties which have an associated croft and are currently only available to cash buyers to ensure they are accessible to local people who are keen to engage in crofting practices.

Following our partnership work with Western Isles Citizen's Advice Service (WICAS) in early 2024, a pilot project is being devised with TIG to offer renovation to home owners who are living in homes below the tolerable standard. Taking inspiration from equity release models and offering lifetime rental agreements, local residents could live in the comfort and security of their family home, contributing to improving their health and well-being.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to housing, which is why effort has gone into creating a variety of opportunities. Community consultation will commence in the winter to ensure the delivery matches the needs and aspirations of our community.

CROFTING & PEAT CUTTING

This year we have made a conscious effort to engage closer with our crofting communities. This Spring we held our first meeting of grazings clerks to bring all the townships together and discuss how UOG can best support and encourage sustainable crofting practices. As a result, later in the year, we invited SAC Consulting to host a session on the Whole Farm Plan in Galson. This was attended by 40 crofters, and we hope to be able to host more of these sessions in partnership with crofting organisations. We have committed to holding clerk meetings twice a year and have just held our October meeting, where we reflected on the Whole Farm Plan event and discussed peat cutting. All were in support that peat cutting should be continued in a traditional and sustainable manner, where individual banks are cut by hand, or when required the crofter can contract a machine cutter to cut their bank in a way that the turf is re-laid, e.g. the sausage cutter. We will continue to work closely with grazing committees to encourage sustainable practices, host educational events and support to take action when activity is not in keeping with traditional crofting or causing environmental damage.

INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

The weather has not been kind for spraying gunnera this year, so we are trialling a new method - injecting the chemicals directly into the stem of the largest plants. Although time consuming, this method can be undertaken during windy and rainy conditions. The gunnera plants are continuing to spread rapidly throughout the estate, so it is essential that we continue to tackle the problem, despite the Hebridean weather. Community Land Outer Hebrides continues to support UOG and other estates to address the island-wide problem by providing funding for chemicals, equipment and training.

DEER MANAGEMENT

We continue to work closely with our three sporting syndicates to manage the deer population. During the 2023/2024 season, 69 deer were despatched. We are in regular contact with NatureScot who provide us with support and advice, as well as out of season and night shooting licenses. We are also working closely with Stornoway and Barvas Trusts. Between the three estates, we have a target number of deer to despatch, which, if achieved, will help keep numbers at a sustainable level in the north of the island. Our stalkers are on track to reach their target in the 2024/2025 season.

**69
deer**

culled from a 100 deer target



Junior winner of Galson 2025 calendar, Connor Graham

GEESE

We are aware that greylag geese continue to be a pest for crofters on the estate. We are working in partnership with Urras Oighreachd Chàrlabhaigh, which is continuing to administer the NatureScot goose management scheme which took place in the spring. This year, 227 geese were shot (although one return was not submitted at the time of print).

FEASIBILITY PLAN FOR PORT TO EORPIE TRAIL

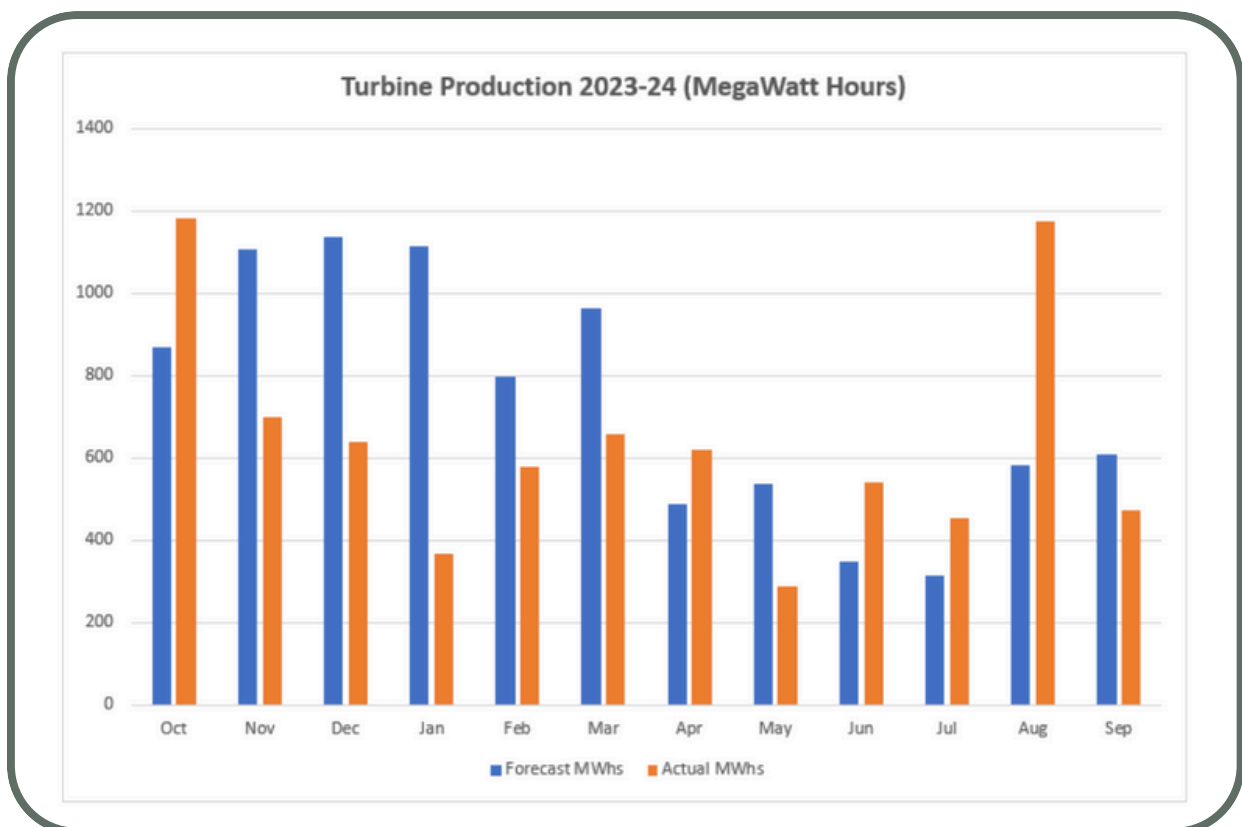
This summer, we welcomed UHI student Hugh MacDonald to our team for a 12-week placement. He concentrated on researching and subsequently writing a feasibility report for the upgrade of the walking trail between Port of Ness and Eorpie, along the coast. He met with experts from RSPB and NatureScot for advice on the area and inspected areas of coastal erosion. His findings are laid out in the report and the aim is to upgrade the trail with new markers in 2025.

Surf's Up at Eorpie Beach, winner of 2024 Galson Estate calendar, Philly Hare

WIND ENERGY INCOME

Wind energy income continues to be critical for activities undertaken during the year, and the turbines at Baile an Truiseil produced well once again. The total yield for the year to September 2024 was 7,576 MegaWatt Hours, which is 86% of the target production. A major generator fault in one turbine over the winter reduced the production to a lower level than would normally be achieved; this was the first major repair required in ten years of operation.

Gross income generated by Galson Energy remained high for a second year, primarily due to the effect of high wholesale prices in the electricity market, but is set to fall back significantly in future years. Insurance has become more challenging, with the extent of cover being reduced, and more stringent requirements placed on insured parties such as Galson Energy. Maintenance costs have increased considerably as the turbines age and the existing contract will be due for renewal in 2025. On a positive note, loans taken out against the project around nine years ago will be fully repaid in 2026 which means that around 75% of the current annual expenditure will cease, resulting in significantly more net income for the remaining life of these assets.



FUTURE INVESTMENT READY

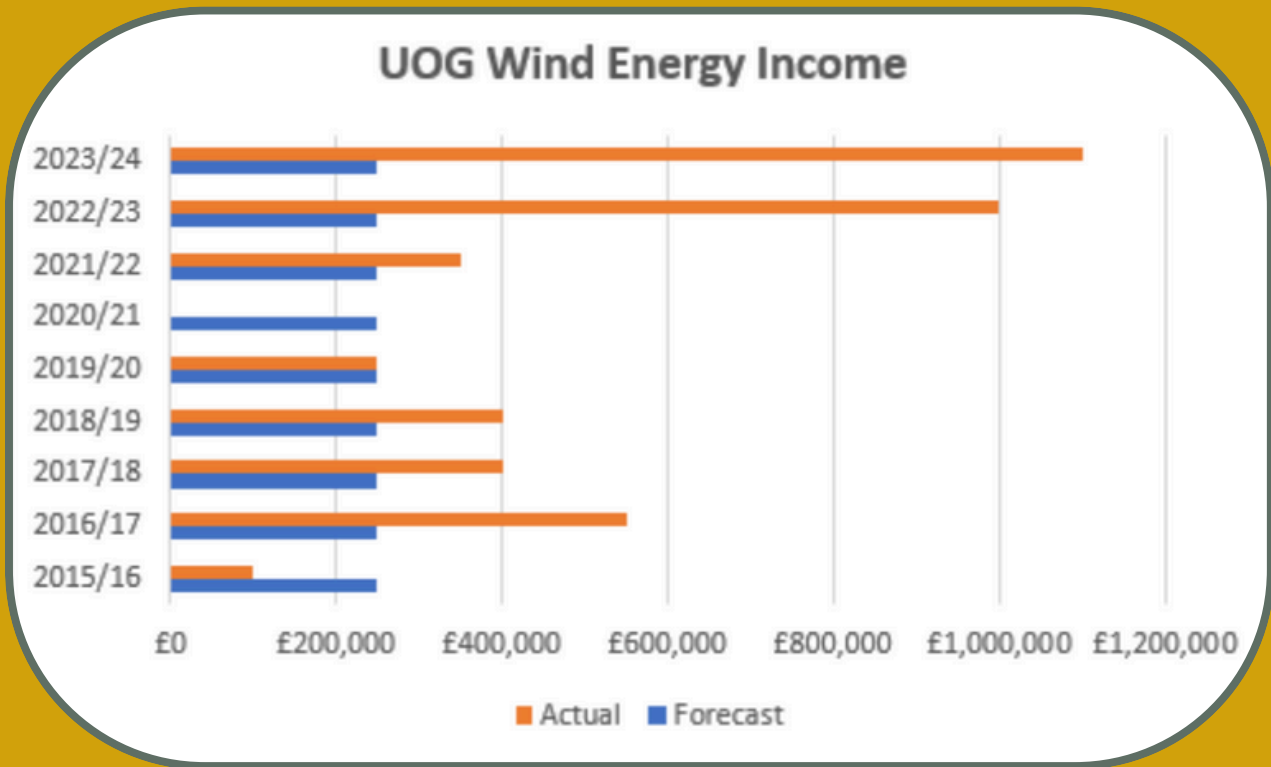
Thoughts are turning to the future of the existing turbines with various options being considered after the expected lifespan of these assets. Options include replacing with new or second-hand turbines, or extending the lifespan with new components. None of these are straightforward; there are no directly comparable replacements available as the market has moved to much larger turbines and there may be little of the existing infrastructure that can be re-used.

There will be insurance challenges, potentially, with insurers generally not willing to provide cover for second-hand turbines or extensions of lifespan. As it takes many years to plan and deliver wind energy projects, technical studies are being undertaken through Community Energy Scotland to determine the most achievable ways forward for community generators.

In addition, UOG is working with two other community landowners, Urras Sgìre Oighreachd Bharabhais and Urras Oighreachd Chàrlabhaigh, to develop a new windfarm to provide sustainable income into the longer term. As income from the Baile an Truiseil turbines is expected to run out in 2035, and neither of the other partners have been able to secure an independent means of support, identifying alternative revenue generating assets is becoming important. With financial support from the Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) and Community Led Local Development initiatives, the landowner group has been able to carry out technical studies and submit an application for a grid connection on land on the Barvas Moor.

Surprisingly, the application resulted in a firm offer for 44 MegaWatts being provided by SSEN which was not expected, in light of speculation about the lack of capacity, and this has given significant momentum to the project, which is still in the early stages. The grid offer brings very demanding timescales to undertake environmental surveys and apply for planning permission. CARES funding has been reduced and may not be available in the future so alternative funding sources are being investigated to ensure that momentum can be maintained. There are many regulatory and economic hurdles to be navigated in the years ahead and Community Energy Scotland is leading on trying to improve electricity market regulations and procedures for community generators.

The importance of independent income sources has become so clear over recent years as UOG has moved away from dependency on public funds, towards self-financing, with all staff on permanent contracts of employment (almost unheard of in the community sector). Despite some major setbacks, the Baile an Truiseil turbines have provided almost double the forecast income to UOG, at the halfway point of their lifespan. **This is 34 times the Scottish Government recommended level of community benefit from commercial developers for onshore wind projects.**



RENEWABLE ENERGY

UOG is one of four landowners comprising the Westside Estate Group (WSEG) that entered into discussions with Northland Power, the lead developer for the Spiorad na Mara windfarm. The purpose was to understand what landfall implications there could be for these landowners if the project proceeded, pressing for improved consultation and engagement for communities and also identifying benefits from the project, so that communities are better placed to weigh up the pros and cons. These discussions were lengthy and very difficult at times but culminated in an announcement by Northland Power of a £4.5m annual fund for the west of Lewis, if the project proceeds. As with all the landowners involved in these discussions, UOG has not made any decision to support or oppose the project. Consultation will now be undertaken by Northland Power and WSEG to allow residents, organisations and businesses to comment on how the fund should be administered and spent.

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

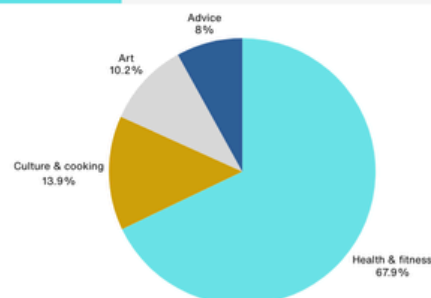
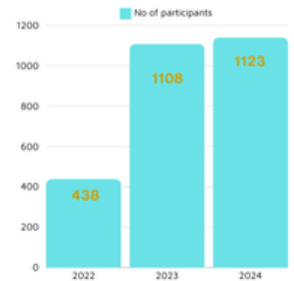
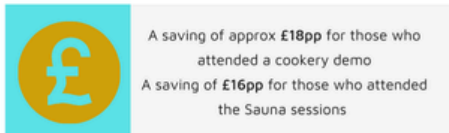
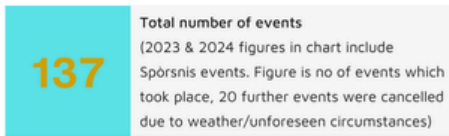
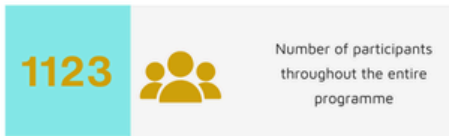
UOG has started to prepare a Climate Action Plan, with support from Community Energy Scotland. Baseline analysis is being undertaken and this is expected to lead to community participation in discussing the findings and offering feedback on personal experiences in tackling fuel poverty and reducing carbon footprints. It is hoped that the Plan will be completed in Spring 2025.

CARE & WELLBEING / CÙRAM AGUS SOIRBHEAS

“To promote overall well-being through the encouragement of wellness, accessibility, and engagement.”

SUNND

Sunnd 2024 was the 6th year of the health and wellbeing programme and the biggest yet, with 137 activities delivered by partner organisations, while being coordinated and subsidised by UOG. Partners this year included Comunn Eachdraidh Nis, Spòrsnis, Barvas and Brue Community Centre, Western Isles Citizen’s Advice Service and Alzheimers Scotland, to name just a few. The programme has become firmly established in the community’s annual calendar, providing the opportunity for residents to try something new and stay informed, while remaining active and social through the long dark Hebridean winters.



“This was extremely generous, and I feel we are very lucky for the opportunity to take part in such great events at such a low cost - thank you”

“Thank you so much to everyone at UOG and the event hosts for all the hard work put into the Sunnd programme. It is very much appreciated, and the events are always something to look forward to! Ceud mile taing!”



SUBSIDIES

Our £1 subsidy for kids' clubs continues to be popular; children in Galson Estate can attend any sports, music, arts or recreation club for just £1, removing cost barriers for families, and ensuring young people are exposed to the widest range of activities to enhance their skills, health and interests. This summer also saw Urras Sgìre Oighreachd Bharabhais join the incentive by offering the subsidy rate to Barvas Estate residents for summer Plòigh; this saw a marked increase in the number of children attending. We value this partnership approach to allow all young people of North West Lewis to enjoy the activities on offer. **The subsidy saved parents £3535 on the previous rate, and a further £7765 on the average cost of holiday clubs in Scotland.**

£7765

saved on
holiday clubs

Our partnership with Comunn Eachdraidh Nis (CEN) saw over 60s lunches subsidised again for 23/24, with 100 lunches provided either in-person through the day club, or delivered to those at home, thanks to CEN's dedicated bank of volunteer drivers.



LIFTING CUSHIONS

To launch Sunnd 2024, lifting cushions were gifted to Habost and Borge surgeries, meaning those who fall at home can be treated quickly by the district nursing team, preventing the need for an ambulance crew to attend and hospital admittance. Our preference would always be that this facility was never needed but knowing it will allow those who unfortunately do need assistance to be quickly lifted, preventing further injuries and the need for hospital treatment is reassuring to our community. The lifting cushions have been successfully used four times this year, allowing patients to be cared for in their own homes by local nursing staff.



YOUTH TRANSPORT FUND

Ness FC and Lionel School have benefited from our new Youth Transport Fund. The fund covers 80% of the cost of transporting young people to activities, including football games and competitions, to educational visits and pantomimes. If you are involved with a youth group that requires assistance for transport, please do get in touch.



COST OF LIVING SUPPORT

Our cost of living support services have proven beneficial to the community and will continue to run while the need is there. Along with our subsidy schemes, we continue to give out heated blankets to the over 70s. If you have not received yours yet, or recently celebrated that big birthday, please get in touch to arrange collection or delivery.

As we adapt to life under a new government we'll keep a close eye on how this impacts life for our community. Work has begun to engage with WICAS to support residents to claim any entitlements that they are eligible for and to identify where the shortfalls are to target our financial support in the most effective way.



SOME 2024 HIGHLIGHTS



P7 pupils on the JMT transition programme



na Dorsan procession



na Dorsan monument



Simon Fraser Memorial Lecture as part of Dùthchas



Kevin Donner's winning entry for our 2025 calendar - on sale now!



Den building during Plòigh Summer 2024!

EXCEPTIONAL PLACE / AITE AIR LETH

“To facilitate activities that will draw individuals to the locality while fostering an environment that enables families to flourish.”

Plòigh
Seiseanan samhaidh do chloinn air Oighreachd Ghabh-sainn
Holiday activities for children on the Galson Estate

1,208 places booked for Children & Young People

Over all 3 2024 Plòigh programmes, we have engaged with:

- 299 individual children & young people. (169 Galson, 68 Barvas & 62 Non Residents)
- 184 families

Saving families £5118

68 sessions

34 activities

8 partners

We delivered a total of 68 different sessions. The Programme typically runs over the 5 weeks of all 3 Plòigh programs in 2024

The range of activities has grown considerably since our launch & will continue to grow. We offer mountain biking, surfing, drama classes, acrobatic dance & more!

Plòigh runs in partnership with 8 organisations. This collaborative approach is efficient & ensures the programme has a wide variety of activities.

Never a dull moment!

“ Good variety of activities, friendly helpful playleaders, nice to meet new people in the area ”

URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

Barvas Estate Trust
Urras Oighreachd Bharabhais

spornis nls

RSPB
COTLAND

tda

LANARNAID

PLÒIGH

Plòigh, our children’s holiday activity programme, ran in the Easter, Summer and October holidays, offering an array of exciting activities for children to enjoy, while easing the burden of holiday childcare on parents. We were delighted to partner with Urras Sgìre Oighreachd Bharabhais this year to extend the £1 kids’ club subsidy to children from the Barvas Estate too. This year’s programmes included everything from surfing to mountain biking, art to drama and lots more. Partner organisations collaborated to create a full programme for all interests and abilities. 299 children from 184 families attended 68 sessions over the five-weeks this year.



DÙTHCHAS

Dùthchas is UOG's annual heritage festival which ran over two weeks this September. The festival kicked off with a family ceilidh hosted by Comunn na Gàidhlig to celebrate its 40th anniversary; it was a delight to see the dance floor filled by all ages taking part in ceilidh dancing and song! This was followed by a fortnight of a variety of events showcasing the unique culture and heritage of Galson Estate, concluding in the privilege of being able to co-host a memorial lecture in honour of the late Simon Fraser with Community Land Scotland. Over 25 events took place throughout the estate, welcoming locals and visitors to learn, and share, skills and stories from our community.

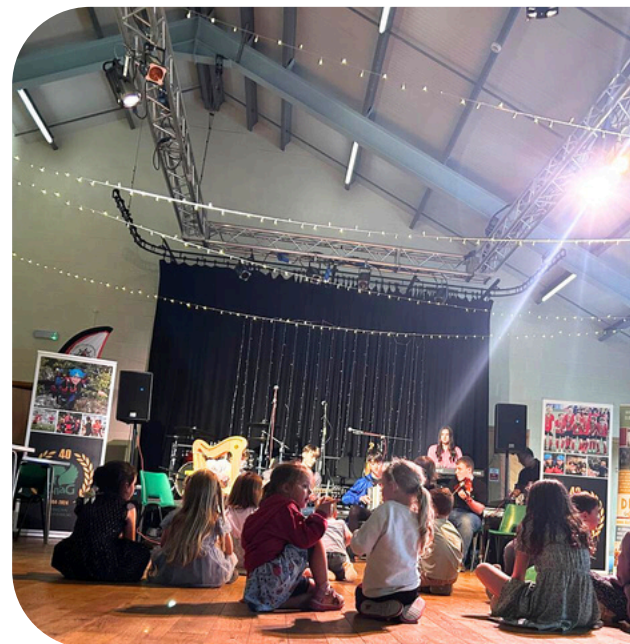


* The Niseach Chef wowed attendees with some delicious cooking and entertaining tales; musicians Robert John MacInnes and DB and Murdigan shared their talents over lunch at Comunn Eachdraidh Nis;

* Adabrock Weaving Company hosted a tweed workshop with participants creating stunning lampshades; Joni Buchanan shared stories from her latest book, Women of the Hebrides; Frank Rennie and Roddy Martin delved into the history of Galson and Borge; and lots more!

Every year, Dùthchas is made possible thanks to our partners; we partner with local organisations and groups to highlight events and workshops that are already running, with additional talks and workshops added that further emphasise the wealth of heritage Galson Estate is home to.

We're very grateful to all our 2024 partners for working with us to produce such an interesting festival programme and are thankful to those who shared their wealth of knowledge and talents with our audiences throughout the festival; Comunn Eachdraidh Nis, Acair Books, Clan Macquarrie Community Centre, The Niseach Chef, Adabrock Weaving Company, Taigh Dhonnchaidh, Comunn na Gàidhlig, Blas Festival, James Hutton Institute, and Community Land Scotland.



NA DORSAN

na Dorsan, which is the Scottish Gaelic for the doors, was unveiled in South Galson on 1st November, marking 100 years since a community worked together and resettled on their land after it was cleared to make way for a sheep farm.

In 1924, Galson's story underwent a profound transformation as 52 families found new homes in Melbost, South Galson, and North Galson. People, hailing from Dell, Borve, Shader, Carloway, Fivepenny Ness and further afield, were able to make their home in Galson, but not without significant confrontations by some; in 1863 the community of Galson was cleared to make room for a sheep farm and in 1888, Galson Farm was raided by a large group, resulting in the arrest, and transfer to court in Edinburgh of four men; Malcolm Smith, Malcolm Saunders, Malcolm Maciver and John Nicolson. Fast forward to 2007, the entire estate passed into community ownership, to be managed by Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn on behalf of the community.

The exhibition, which accompanies the monument, details Galson's fight for land and significant historical documents were used to learn more about the challenges, including original mortgage documents and deeds for croft houses, including those of Seonaid Ruairidh 'an Mhàrtainn and Murchadh 'an Bhàin Dòmhnallach, two of the people to be resettled in 1924, and the grandparents of Agnes Rennie.

Designed by artists Will Maclean and Marian Leven, commissioned by UOG, na Dorsan was unveiled in an opening ceremony, which featured musical and poetry contributions



from community members, including a piper, Ian Alex MacDonald, and primary school pupils who had written poems to celebrate the day. There was an Open Day on Saturday 2nd November, offering locals and visitors to the area, the chance to visit the monument and learn more about the history of Galson.

Thanks to all those who were involved in the project; in particular Chris Barrowman, Juliette Desportes, Baxter Foundation, Dòmhnall U. MacGilleMhoire and Willie Taylor.

Please do visit the monument when you get a chance, and the exhibition at the UOG Business Centre is open Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm. There will also be online resources available on our website in the coming weeks.



NA DORSAN LAUNCH EVENT



JOHN MUIR TRUST P7 TRANSITION PROGRAMME

In March, 30 primary school children from Sgoil an Taobh Siar, Lionel, Shawbost and Breasclete primary schools spent three days exploring Shader, Barvas and Arnol as part of the John Muir Trust Discovery Award and P7 Transition programme, in partnership with Urras Oighreachd Chàrlabhaigh.

The primary seven pupils bonded while discovering new areas and activities, and learning how to protect and conserve our environment, with the help of local experts.

The programme was funded and delivered by Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn and Urras Oighreachd Chàrlabhaigh.



“ I loved learning about the way they used to live hundreds of years ago and how different it was to how we live now. ”



The outdoor learning activities they participated in included mountain biking, canoeing, learning survival priorities in a woodland session, learning crofting skills through sheep dosing, nature walks, cleaning up our beaches and a visit to Arnol Blackhouse. The main aim of the programme is to allow pupils from the four schools to meet one another before going to the Nicolson Institute, as well as learning about the area they come from and acquiring new skills.

“ It was fun wobbling and standing up in the canoe and when we were on the loch it was fun swapping canoes, jumping to other ones plus it was very sunny. ”

“ I feel more confident about going up because I know some of the people I will be going up with! ”

TOURISM / TURASACHD

“To improve our facilities and focus on providing a unique experience for our visitors”



Cruise tours



£13,525

Income generated



450

Passengers



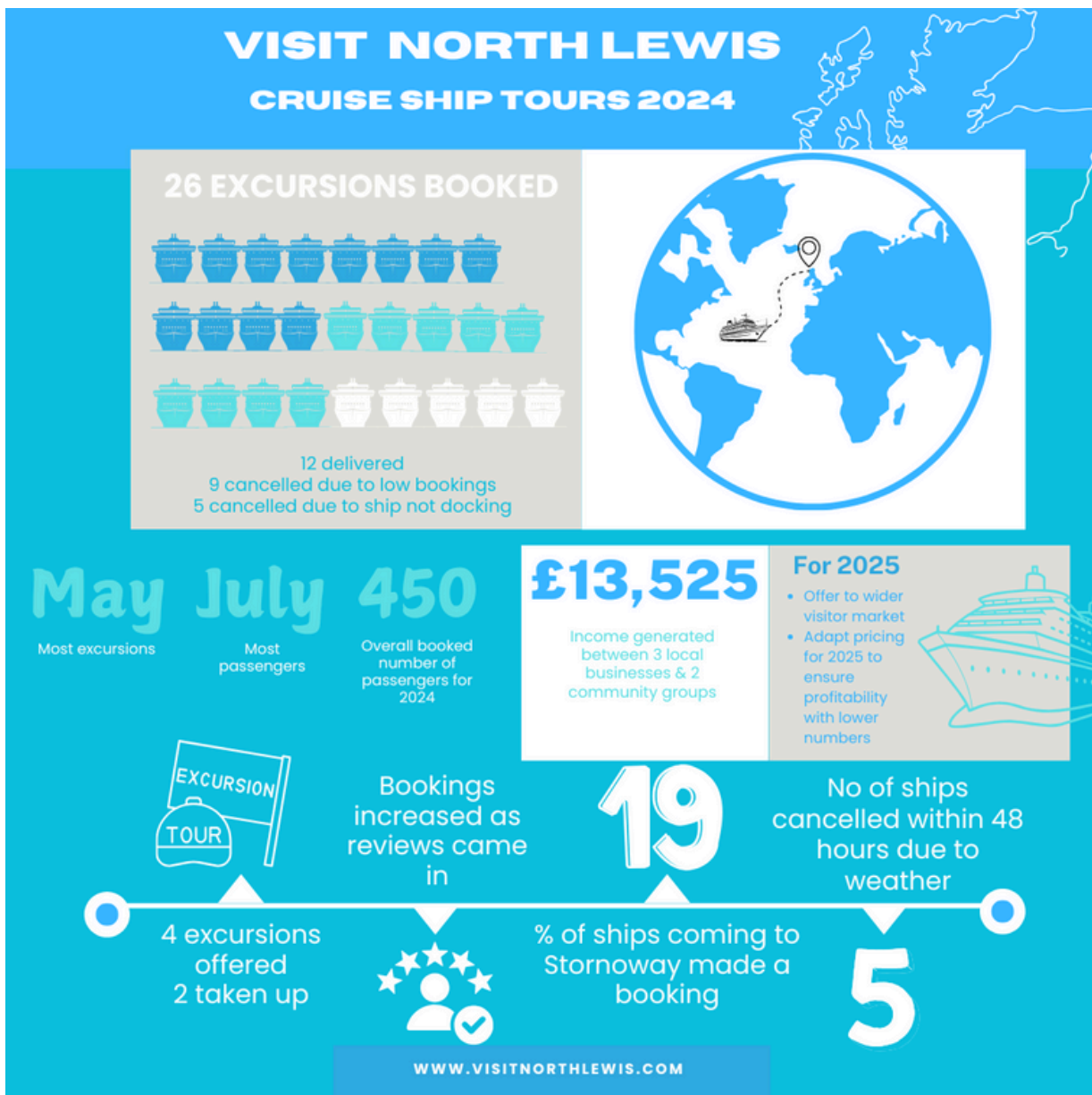
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Excursions booked

The deep water port in Stornoway opening in April 2024 brought opportunity to local tourism providers to benefit from increased visitor numbers. 450 passengers booked experiences through Visit North Lewis to attend either a cookery demonstration at Clan Macquarrie Community Centre with The Niseach Chef (Allan Macritchie), Paul Moorby or James Mackenzie, or immerse themselves in local history at Comunn Eachdraidh Nis, with a visit to Air an Lot to experience crofting with Donald MacSween. These tours brought £13,525 of additional income to the local organisations involved and it is hoped to grow in 2025 as the offering will be made available to all visitors to North Lewis.



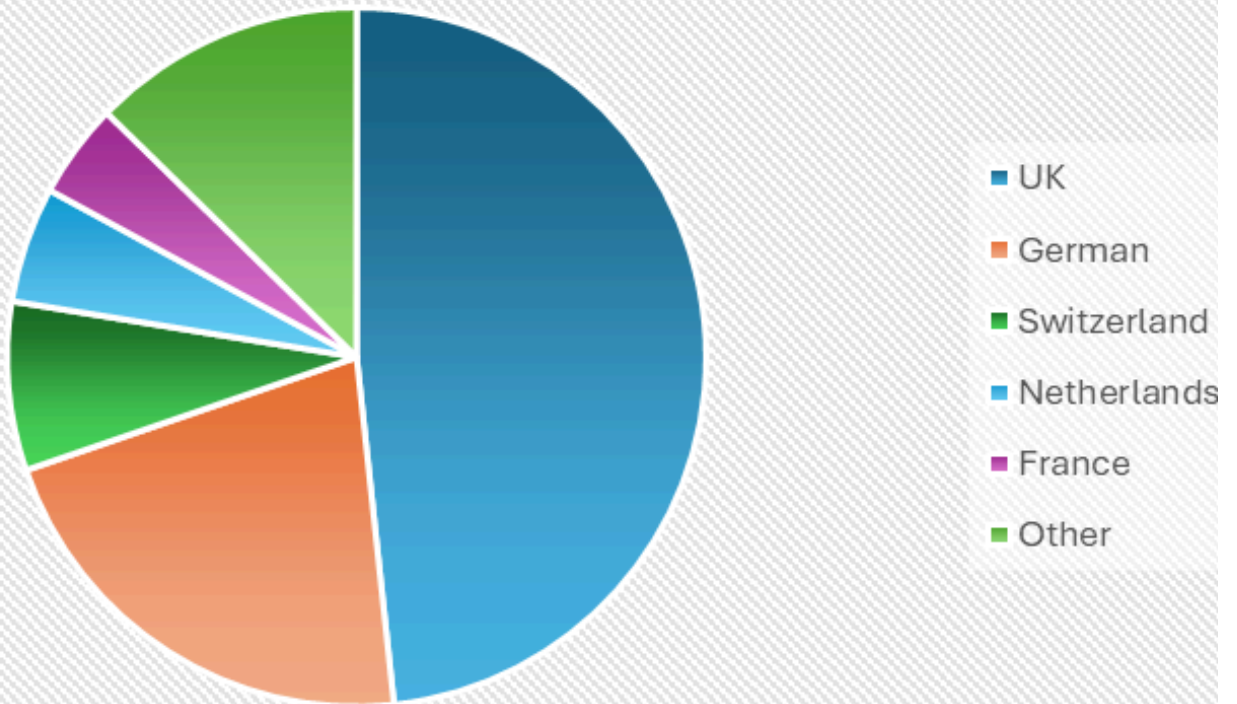
If you are interested in your business being involved in future cruise tours please get in touch with us.



BUTT OF LEWIS

Our plans to develop the Butt of Lewis site are still in progress, as talks go on with the Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) to agree a lease agreement. This agreement will allow for renovation of the redundant buildings surrounding the Butt of Lewis Lighthouse to begin. We had hoped to have the lease in place by early 2024 but NLB's lack of resources have meant this process is taking much longer than anticipated. In the meantime, we are aware of the need to provide some service to the 70,000 visitors to the site each year. With support from the Highlands and Islands Enterprise Tourism Infrastructure Fund, we have been able to install toilet facilities at the site as an interim arrangement. We had hoped to have catering, in the form of a food trailer, but did not have interest from operators for 2024. However, a number of expressions of interest for the 2025 season have been made and this will go out to tender this winter.

Nationalities



CAMPSITE

Our campsite continues to be a busy hub of visitors from all over the world. Throughout the year we ran at 51% occupancy, the same as in 2023. May was our busiest month with 94% occupancy, followed by June with 81%. Throughout the summer, the average occupancy was 78%. 52% of all our visitors in 2024 were from outside the UK.



Toilet and showering facilities were clean and modern. Best we have been to. No hassles in booking and setting up 15 mins from the lovely Eoropie beach and 30-40 minutes from Stornoway.

Pitch-Up Camper, May 2024





COMMUNITY INVESTMENT / MAOIN-AIRGID NA COIMHEARSNACHD

The Community Investment Fund has continued to receive applications for a varied and exciting array of local development projects. This year, projects ranged from the much needed expansion and upgrades to community defibrillators, to repairs to war memorials, as well as larger island-wide projects such as the development of Macaulay College, a valued resource used by some of our residents, and Gaelic Young Leader Training from Social Enterprise Scotland.

The Community Investment Fund also hit a major milestone this year; a decade since its launch in 2014. Over the last ten years, almost 150 projects have been supported through nearly £600k of funding. The return on this investment is also noteworthy as for each £1 invested, a further £7 was brought in through other funding sources, equating to £4.2m of investment in local projects across the decade.



£66,137

awarded via CIF
in 2024 across
16 grants

£564,055

awarded since
its launch in
2014



- Ness Running Club - £1,178.90**
- Lucky2BHere - £11,688.80**
- WICAS - £2,000**
- Ness FC - £2,000**
- Taigh Dhonnchaidh - £1,941.96**
- Taigh Dhonnchaidh - £5,000**
- Barvas & Brue Community Centre - £2,000**
- Islands Book Trust - £1,879**
- Spòrsnis - £966**
- Macaulay College - £10,000**
- North Lewis War Memorials - £20,000**
- Clan MacQuarrie - £2,000**
- Stornoway Running & Athletics Club - £2,000**
- Ness Cemetery Association - £1,500**
- Comunn Eachdraidh Nis - £963.33**
- Carthannas Nis - £1,400**



SUPPORT FOR GROWTH

As the funding landscape becomes increasingly challenging for community organisations, we have been supporting organisations to build their income generation to create a more sustainable business model.

Spòrsnis has been supported with £40,000 throughout 2023/24 to invest in training and developments to achieve targets relating to increased revenue generation. This support will continue on a lower level for a further two years to build an economically stable business model. As well as an increased offering in services to the local community and visitors, this investment will improve employment prospects and staff development opportunities at Spòrsnis.

EMPLOYMENT/ COSNADH

UOG is committed to creating a positive work environment, and build a reputation as an employer which invests in its people and offers opportunities for further learning and development. Along with this comes an aim to create opportunities for young people to seek meaningful employment on the island without feeling the need to move away to gain opportunities.

SUMMER PLACEMENT

This summer we hosted Hugh MacDonald, a third year Sustainable Development student, on a work placement. During his 12-weeks, Hugh utilised his skills from his studies to construct a feasibility study on the improvement of the Port to Eoropie coastal route. Work is due to commence on this project in the spring of 2025 and we are thankful for Hugh's efforts in giving it a head start.

Hugh was also an asset in the delivery of Plòigh and proved a hit with the kids! He also contributed to the na Dorsan monument, offering many days of labour to support Chris Barrowman with the dry stone wall construction.

We wish him well as he continues his studies, and hope to see him back in the UOG office soon.



You will find details of any current vacancies on our website,
www.galsontrust.com/careers

COMMUNITY CONTENT CREATOR



MG Alba has recruited four Community Content Creators across the Western Isles and partnered with community organisations, one of which being UOG, to host the apprentices on their two-year placement. Abbie Morrison joined us in April this year and has been working hard to capture the breadth of work from UOG and the activities of the wider community. We are thankful to have such a resource available to capture story sharing and events to create an archive for the future, and being able to enhance our communications through social media films and share with our community all that is happening at UOG. Abbie is studying towards a film-making qualification with UHI during her placement.

CATHERINE'S JOURNEY

Catherine Thomson successfully completed her Community Development Apprenticeship this summer, a first for the Western Isles! We are incredibly proud of her achievements and the fact that we can offer these opportunities to allow young locals to remain at home while pursuing their own ambitions.

She has proven herself to be a valuable member of the team and has now moved on to become a Project Management Trainee, supporting UOG's energy and development projects. She will be leading community consultation for a local climate action plan over the coming months, so expect to see her out and about at an event near you soon.

STAFF CHANGES

In February Heather Macleod joined as a Development Officer (maternity cover for Mairi Graham) and Katie Mackenzie took on the role of Marketing & Communications Officer. In October, Joanne Matheson left UOG after 17 years, and we have now amalgamated the roles of Finance Officer and Administrator to create two new Finance & Office Administrator roles which Jen Adil-Smith and Matthew McClymont filled in October.





URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

HABOST HOUSEHOLD WASTE AND RECYCLING CENTRE

**Bulky Household Waste Disposal and Recycling Point for the
disposal of Household Waste Only**

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

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, visit us at our
office in South Galson or call us on 01851 850411**

CONTACT US / CUIR FIOS



01851 850411



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