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ReStore open for business! Page 3

the newsletter

of the voluntary sector in Uist

Edition 1

Summer 2017

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

**WELCOME TO YOUR
NEW NEWSLETTER**



All the latest news and helpful advice for voluntary organisations in one place...for the first time ever!

12 PAGES OF NEWS AND INFORMATION INSIDE

Welcome

to the very first edition of this brand new newsletter for the voluntary sector in Uist!

Uist Council of Voluntary Organisations (UCVO) was reformed two years ago to provide support and representation for third sector organisations in Uist.

UCVO works to assist the development of voluntary groups and support third sector organisations to deliver quality outcomes through being well governed and well managed.

One of our most important priorities is to help voluntary organisations in Uist to feel better connected. It is our wish that this newsletter goes some way towards bringing local organisations even closer together.

Local voluntary groups are doing great work, much of which sometimes goes unnoticed. We want this newsletter to be a platform for highlighting the achievements of the local voluntary sector. It is our hope that the more we know and understand about the work of different local organisations, the more cohesive and co-operative the local third sector will become.

We hope that over time there will be great interaction with this newsletter, which will be published quarterly, and that lots of content will be forthcoming for future editions. We aim to balance news items with helpful information for charities and voluntary groups. We will always be open to suggestions on how we can improve the newsletter.

Sheena Stewart

Sheena Stewart
Manager - Uist Council of Voluntary Organisations

sheena@ucvo.org.uk

Please send news items for the newsletter to the above email address.

Exciting times coming up with Ceòlas



Uilleam Dòmhnallach leads a walk at Teampull na Trianaid during the Song Conference.

Ceòlas is involved in an exciting partnership with Lews Castle College (UHI) to build the Cnoc Soilleir centre in Daliburgh, South Uist. The project has received over £1.5 million in funding to date, with more announcements expected in the near future.

Read more here:

www.ceolas.co.uk/cnoc-soilleir

Ceòlas has hosted a range of events so far this year, with more to come! Ceòlas kicked off the year with the Fèis Chullaig featuring song, fiddle and Gaelic classes. Then the annual song conference took place during May. This year's 'Òran 's Fonn' featured Rona MacDonald's cèilidh play 'Fuaigh,' a concert featuring Kathleen MacInnes and workshops with Dr Will Lamb and Naomi Harvey among other events.

Read more here:

www.ceolas.co.uk/2017/05/uist-mallaig-and-london-a-busy-month-for-ceolas

Ceòlas hosted the highly successful annual Summer School between 2nd and 7th July this year.

Read more here:

www.ceolas.co.uk/events/sgoilshamhraidh

Later in July the Summer School will be followed by the Symposium event, which this year focuses on Stilligarry, Drimsdale and Clann 'ic Mhuirich.

Read more here:

www.ceolas.co.uk/events/symposium/

All new ReStore building now open for business!



Staff and volunteers pictured outside the new ReStore centre. Photo: Sandie MacIver / Highlands and Islands Enterprise

A new carbon neutral sustainable facility has been opened by Cothrom for its furniture recycling and training project, ReStore.

Funding for the new building was secured from the Big Lottery, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, LandAid, Western Isles Development Trust, Stòras Uibhist and the Scottish Government Regeneration Fund.

Cothrom offers a range of flexible learning opportunities to adults including training and employability skills, and is supported by a full time Gaelic nursery.

ReStore was established by Cothrom in 2006, operating from a small workshop in Bornish, to provide a valuable furniture refurbishment and textile recycling service to the communities of Uist and Barra.

The new facility is situated beside Cothrom's learning centre in Ormiclate and will allow ReStore to diversify its training and expand its activities.

A broad range of retail and training opportunities will be developed, focusing on recycling furniture, textiles and white goods, gardening and landscaping services, and making and selling recycled timber items such as wooden benches, bookcases and hen houses to order.

Café and squash court plans for An Caladh



Caladh Trust's tag line is 'Working Towards Changed Lives' and the services offered are open to all local communities from Berneray to Eriskay.

Plans are in progress to re-roof the An Caladh building, home of the Caladh Trust, and Sguais Uibhist also have plans to re-open the squash court.

Caladh Trust is delighted that Uilleam MacKay has recently run some pop-in days at the Caladh Café, and we look forward to opening the doors to the general public once again.



Volunteers at Benbecula Thrift Shop after receiving their certificates during Volunteers Week.

Volunteers receive recognition for work in Thrift Shop

Hard working volunteers at Benbecula Thrift Shop were thanked for their effort and dedication during Volunteers Week. Volunteer Centre Western Isles and UCVO presented certificates and flowers to the ladies who keep the popular shop ticking throughout the year. Based at 41 Airport Road, Balivanich, the thrift shop is open Monday to Friday from 11am to 3pm. Selling clothes, shoes, books, toys and crockery, all money raised through sales funds the UCVO Trust Fund which supports vulnerable and disabled individuals in the community.

Latest news from Caraidean Uibhist

Caraidean Uibhist is an inclusive charity providing free and confidential support to anyone aged over 16, aiming to reduce loneliness and social isolation in our community. Providing one-to-one visits, one-to-one telephone calls and weekly group activities, Caraidean Uibhist supports people from Berneray to Eriskay and is a dementia friendly organisation.

“The start of the year did see some uncertainties over our future and since then we have been in a transition period. Following a busy six months we have a broadened board of directors, new staff members and a secure financial position for a guaranteed three years. Our next steps are to appoint an administrator to support the project manager and enable us to work through our backlog of referrals and volunteers. Looking towards the future we want to develop our charity to lead the way in ensuring no one feels alone in our community. Our activities are tailored to meet individual needs and current group work includes arts, crafts, and community reminiscence events. We are always open to further suggestions as to how we can improve our service and we look forward to working with you over the coming years”

If you would like any more information please contact us on 01870 60 32 33 or admin@caraideanuibhist.org or gemma.steele@caraideanuibhist.org

Improvements made to OSCR website

OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) has made changes (detailed below) to improve your experience using www.oscr.org.uk

NEWS IS EASIER TO FIND

A dedicated news section on their homepage will always have their latest stories on it for you to view, and they have changed their news page to contain more stories in a cleaner, simpler format.

CHARITY REGISTER SEARCH IS MORE PROMINENT

Many users were not able to see that they could search the Scottish Charity Register from the homepage because it was too far down. It is now right at the top and so far more prominent.

YOU CAN CONNECT WITH OSCR ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In addition to the Twitter account, OSCR has recently created a Facebook page and a YouTube channel. If you want to view their channels, there are social media links on the top bar of every page on the website, and they have put a link to their helpful blogs on there as well to make them easier to find.

BETTER REGISTER ENTRIES

Register entries will now contain information of incorporation going forward, so you can see if a SCIO used to be another organisation.

If you have any feedback on their website, OSCR would be very happy to hear from you.

Meanwhile, OSCR has published a brand new booklet to make the basics of Scottish charity law easier to understand.

'Being a Charity in Scotland' sets out the key points charities need to know about Scottish charity law. Within the guide there are links to detailed guidance pages contained on our website and it also has information on other organisations that can provide help and advice to charities.



Curtis Ireland received his Saltire 500 hours award during Volunteers Week.

What's happening at the Volunteer Centre?

It has been a busy start to the summer at the Volunteer Centre Uist with 88 pupils at Sgoil Uibhist a Tuath recently taking part in a community clean-up in the area surrounding the school.

Pupils cleared ditches and other open spaces of rubbish, separating into bags for recycling. Local Volunteer Centre Development Worker, Adam Keltie, supplied bags, hi-viz tabards and gloves and presented all pupils with a Callanish Award certificate.

Adam said: "It's great to see Sgoil Uibhist a Tuath pupils helping to make the local community look clean and tidy for both visitors and locals. All those that took part should feel proud of the contribution that they have made."

Volunteers Week (at the beginning of June) also saw one of the most dedicated local young volunteers receive his Saltire 500 hours award. Curtis Ireland (pictured above) has volunteered at Oasis Youth Club, Uist Youth Café, Tagsa

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Sustainable Uist Migration Survey (2017 - 2018)

National Records of Scotland (NRS) published new statistics last year showing continuing population decline in the Western Isles, a situation which the organisation also forecasts to continue over the next decade.

However, this change is not expected to be consistent across the different Western Isles communities, with greater Stornoway increasing, Barra relatively stable, and Uist, and rural Lewis and Harris, all in decline.

There are difficulties with the forecasting as population numbers are small, thus making the figures statistically unreliable. In addition, and linked to the same reason, the separate islands of Uist and Barra are considered together, even though they work very differently as communities. Nationally, the Western Isles are also usually considered as a single entity, which often masks the very different fortunes of the different island communities within.

What has also become evident in the months since the NRS publication is that there is little evidence based understanding of why these changes are taking place, particularly those relating to migration. On Uist around half of the decline over the past five years has been due to natural causes (births and deaths), and the balance due to migration (numbers emigrating and immigrating).

As a result, on Uist at least, developing policy proposals for reversing the de-population trend is challenging, so to help improve understanding of the reasons, Sustainable Uist is proposing to carry out a medium term study on population migration on Uist over the next two years.

Survey Aims

Aims of the survey are twofold:

- To gain a better understanding of the reasons for population change on Uist
- To improve community understanding of this important issue

Once the work is complete, a second follow up project would seek to consult with the Uist community on possible long term solutions.

Survey Methodology

Fifteen members of the community have agreed to carry out short interviews with local residents to find out their reasons for moving to Uist, or moving away. Interviews will be based on two standard questionnaires, one of which will be addressed to those who were born on Uist, the second to those who have moved here. These surveys will establish the reasons as to why people live on Uist, and why they might leave, or have already left.

Resulting data will be collated locally, and then passed to St Andrews University for analysis and conclusions. Work will last around 18 months and be published in the autumn of 2018.

Scottish Government commissions evaluation of Scotland's Third Sector Interface model and Voluntary Action Scotland

As a first step towards strengthening local third sector infrastructure, the Scottish Government has commissioned an independent evaluation of the existing Third Sector Interface model and Voluntary Action Scotland. The evaluation report is intended to provide robust evidence to be used as part of a broader engagement process with the network, the wider third sector, and with public and private sector partners on the future infrastructure model at a local level. The vision is to have the most effective and most efficient local third sector infrastructure for Scotland from 2018 onwards.

To view the full report and the Executive Summary on the Scottish Government website:

www.gov.scot/Topics/People/15300/EvaluationofScotlandsTSINetwork

First ever festival of food and writing for Uist

Harvest / Toradh will run over four days beginning on Thursday 24th August. Events are planned all the way from Berneray to Eriskay, with an exciting programme close to being finalised.

Updates will be posted on the festival website (www.toradh.org) between now and the start of the four-day feast. Information about some of the festival participants is already available to read online.

With financial support from Awards for All and Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Harvest / Toradh will feature a strong Gàidhlig element, including a workshop on creating content for the Gàidhlig version of Wikipedia, Uicipeid na Gàidhlig, an initiative by the National Library of Scotland and Wikipedia. Professor Magnus Course will speak about the deep-rooted relationship between Gàidhlig and fishing as part of an all-day event at Lochboisdale Harbour.

Several intriguing panel discussions are planned, including 'Our Food,

Our Future', which will include crofters and food thinkers and be moderated by Iain Stephen Morrison from Am Pàipear. It will look at some of the forces driving local food production, and relate the local scene to national trends. Another discussion will explore alternatives for the croft, successful and otherwise, with various Scottish producers.

Authors will discuss their writings at a Book Fair to be held in the library at Sgoil Lionacleit, and a special 'Uist Noire' evening will take place featuring local mystery writers.

If you are a local author who would like to have books for sale at the Book Fair or you have any books to donate to a Book Swap, please contact the library at Sgoil Lionacleit.

During the festival, Grimsay Community Association is to revive

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Help with water and sewerage charges for registered charities

Scottish Government introduced a new scheme to assist charities registered with OSCR and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) with the payment of water and sewerage charges in January 2015.

However, the scheme has some exceptions. For instance, OSCR registered charities and CASCs will **NOT** be eligible if:

- The organisation holds a permanent alcohol licence to sell alcohol at the premises.
- The premises are a charity shop or other premises used for the purposes of retailing new or second hand merchandise.
- The premises operate as a café that is open to the public and operated on a regular basis to generate income (this excludes canteens that have been provided by the charity to support its own volunteers).
- The organisation is a Local Authority or an Arms Length External Organisation (ALEO).

Many voluntary organisations which used to receive an exemption from their water bills now have to pay from £200 to £2,000 per annum.



Full details about the scheme are available at:

www.gov.scot/Topics/Business-Industry/waterindustryscot/watercharges/exemptionscheme

OSCR has also produced a briefing note about the scheme which is available at:

www.oscr.org.uk/media/2321/2016-08-10-exemption-scheme-article-3.pdf

Foodbank to be established for Uist and Barra

Work has started on the establishment of a foodbank for Uist and Barra. It is hoped the emergency facility will be up and running by the end of the year, with several local groups and agencies involved in its delivery...



It is hoped the food bank will be operational before the end of the year.

Almost a decade after the onset of the financial crisis and the adoption of the austerity programme, foodbank use has continued to rise across the UK. Earlier this year, anti-poverty charity the Trussell Trust reported the number of people accessing emergency supplies from a foodbank was at a record high.

It seems that Uist and Barra is not immune from the spread of poverty and hunger, with plans to establish a dedicated foodbank for the Southern Isles now set in motion. Several local organisations are working in partnership to set up the emergency facility.

Helen MacLean, Manager of the local Citizens Advice Bureau, is the chair of Uist and Barra Foodbank. She explained how changes to the benefit system have created a real need for a food bank based within the community.

"Benefits are not and never have been generous and with the changes to the system coming through welfare reform, benefits are taking longer to come through to individuals. If you were to

claim Universal Credit tomorrow, you will be told you will not receive any money for six weeks. What do you do?

"If you change from one benefit to another, it is not a seamless process, it all takes time. Unless you are in that situation, you might not know what it is like, but people are going hungry."

While there is a foodbank based in Stornoway which has supplied emergency parcels to the Southern Isles in recent years, there have been problems with delivery. On some occasions it has been difficult finding transportation for boxes of food and in the winter ferry cancellations have interrupted supply.

Helen continued: "From that point of view, setting up a foodbank for Uist and Barra, which we hope will include a distribution centre, operating along the lines of a shop, where people can choose what they require, makes complete sense. "We hope to be able to provide a range of goods, including food, toiletries, pet food and supplies for babies. Many of these products do not feature in an emergency parcel because they are not made to meet the specific needs of any individual."

In addition to setting up a distribution centre, it is hoped the Uist and Barra Foodbank can manage some local distribution using the Tagasa Uibhist community bus network.

If possible it is also hoped that fresh produce grown through the Local Food for Local People project can be made available for the foodbank. Local shops will be asked if they are prepared to host a donation box so customers can support the foodbank.

While in the process of becoming established, Uist and Barra Foodbank is working with and accessing advice from the Trussell Trust, which runs a network of more than 420 foodbanks across the UK.

Helen continued: "We will be working on the legalities over the coming weeks, setting up a bank account, putting policies and procedures in place, and starting to look for volunteers. We are aiming to be operational within the next six months, if we can manage. "If we get it going and it is something the community wants, they can keep it going through volunteering and donations. I would be quite happy if we did not need a foodbank, or if the need goes away and we close down, that is fine. We do not want people hungry in the second decade of the twenty-first century."

Get involved with the Uist Third Sector Forum

UCVO organises the local Third Sector Forum, an independent group made up of representatives from voluntary organisations based in the area...

If you would like to get involved, please email sheena@ucvo.org.uk for more information. Some of the objectives of the Uist Third Sector Forum are:

To consult with the third sector, to provide opportunities for feedback, and to agree consensus on particular issues related to the voluntary sector in Uist.

To provide an opportunity for the third sector to identify needs and bring these to the attention of planning groups and agencies.

To provide an opportunity for information exchange, bring to the attention of third sector organisations examples of good practice adopted by others, and help all organisations become more effective and efficient.

To identify training needs among third sector organisations and encourage collaboration between statutory and voluntary training providers whenever appropriate.

To consult the voluntary sector about who can best represent them on particular bodies, and to appoint representatives.

To act as a filter for information, both upwards to higher planning authorities and downwards to individual organisations and their members.

To lobby on issues affecting the third sector in Uist.

To take a supporting role in progressing, monitoring and reporting progress against all national outcomes in the new Locality Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP), which will by the end of 2017 replace the current Single Outcome Agreement (SOA).

What's happening at the Volunteer Centre?

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Uibhist Horticultural Project, Uist Camanachd and Sgoil Lionacleit PE Department.

Volunteer Centre Western Isles is always there to support organisations and to help people find suitable volunteering. If you need volunteers or want to volunteer, the Volunteer Centre offers free, confidential advice.

Contact Adam Keltie at the Volunteer Centre, 41 Airport Road, Balivanich, Benbecula on 01870 602 604 or email uist@volunteeringwesternisles.co.uk.

An all new website will be launched during July. Keep checking www.volunteeringwesternisles.co.uk for the new site and all the latest volunteering news.

First ever festival of food and writing for Uist

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the 'Dark Island Quaich for Best Traditional Food'. Previously awarded at the Grimsay Boat Day between 2003 and 2008, the prize will now be presented in memory of the late Bella MacLean of Grimsay.

This year the trophy will be given for the best food prepared from wild ingredients, meaning gathered or foraged in Uist. Ingredients might include carageen, cockles, winkles, brambles, or even silverweed. The category does not include game, wild birds or any other moving animal. Entries must describe approximately where the ingredient was collected and will be judged for competence, taste and imagination by a panel of local and invited experts.

Look out for a full schedule for Harvest / Toradh in the next edition of Am Pàipear. Linda MacLeod has been employed as the event administrator and can be contacted at toradhuibhist@gmail.com.



North Uist has some of the best views of the St Kilda archipelago from anywhere in the inhabited Outer Hebrides.

St Kilda viewpoint centre planned for North Uist

Sealladh Hiort is the name of the community group that prepared and submitted Uist's entry for the St Kilda Visitor Centre competition jointly run by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and the National Trust for Scotland in 2009. Although the Sealladh Hiort entry was shortlisted, it was the entry from the Uig group, Ionad Hiort, which eventually won.

A key element of the original competition was that whichever project won, there was an obligation on that group to engage with those in second and third places to develop satellite projects in those respective communities, to ensure that the economic benefits of a key new tourist attraction would be felt across the Outer Hebrides. Sealladh Hiort Working Group (SHWG) is now working on a proposal for a Uist based visitor centre to deliver that objective.

North Uist has the best views of St Kilda from anywhere in the inhabited Outer Hebrides and it was always the intention to use that unique selling point as a key element of the original Uist proposals.

A number of sites were looked at in 2009, and although the west facing slopes of Cleitreachal were originally chosen as the location, a new site has been selected around three kilometres north of Cleitreachal, on the slopes of Beinn Riabhach, on land owned by the MacLain family. The best views of the St Kilda archipelago are obtained at high level, and a site has been chosen at an altitude of around +75m AOD. This will involve building an access road up the hill for a distance of some 700 metres. The other main elements of the proposals will include car parking, the visitor centre and its associated facilities, and a footpath network which will lead to Beinn Riabhach summit which has 360° views towards Harris, Skye, the South Uist hills and Barra and Mingulay.

From the site itself it is possible to see a continuous view from the Monach Islands to the south west, right round to Vallay House and Udal to the east, with St Kilda, Boreray and Hasgeir effectively in the centre. A special viewing observatory will form the main part of the visit, and multiple viewing technologies will be employed to make sure visitors can see live images of St Kilda whatever the weather and visibility.

A mini design competition is currently being held to produce conceptual ideas for the buildings and the SHWG hopes to submit an outline planning application for the proposals in July.

Polycrubs set up through 'Grow Your Own Community'



Bornish residents checking out their new polycrubs constructed through 'Grow Your Own Community'.

'Grow Your Own Community' aims to teach people more about the links between growing food, avoiding food waste and acting on climate change, at the same time strengthening social cohesion and developing a low carbon future for Uist.

Tagsa Uibhist won a grant of £128,411 from the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund to set up the project. 'Grow Your Own Community' will run for one year, continuing until 31st March 2018.

Activities planned as part of the project include providing young families and social housing residents with low carbon community growing facilities and developing a carbon literate network of horticultural trainers, volunteers and a Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Worker. It is also planned to deliver a practical community workshop programme on how to use and re-use local waste materials for food growing purposes.

Three community 'polycrubs' sites are almost up and running across the islands, which are all being constructed on land provided by local crofters. Four support workers are in place to ensure each of the community sites is well supported by local knowledge. 'Grow Your Own Community' sought to secure the services of local people who could impart local knowledge on growing and conditions, as well as sourcing of seaweed and manure.

In addition, 'Grow Your Own Community' is working to achieve a significant CO₂e reduction in food miles by working with local organisations and businesses to increase outlets for locally grown potatoes, and by increasing capacity in the islands crofting community to produce and promote machair potatoes as a highly-prized, island grown product that uses traditional knowledge and practices, as well as locally harvested seaweed as a low carbon fertilizer.

'Grow Your Own Community' offers free support to help people learn how to grow food for their households, as well as supplying information on reducing food waste and climate change.

For more information about 'Grow Your Own Community' please telephone Laura Donkers on 01870 608 906 or email lauradonkers@tagsauibhisttrading.co.uk.

sport

What's happening at the Uist and Barra Sports Hub?

Uist and Barra Sports Hub opened at Sgoil Lionacleit two years ago with the aim of bringing local people together and providing a home for local clubs and sports organisations. Kevin Morrison is employed as Community Sports Hub Officer and works to provide information, support and advice on a wide range of sports and physical activities to make it easier for local people to get involved and engage in a more active and healthier lifestyle.

Community Sports Hubs are now established across Scotland and while the specifics of each hub and what it offers will vary according to local need and local resources, all hubs work to the following five principles:

- Growth in participation
- Engage the local community
- Promote community leadership
- Offer a range of sporting opportunities
- Bring all appropriate (key) partners / groups / people together

In addition, community sports hubs aim to achieve some of the following outcomes:

- A welcome and safe place which provides local communities with more opportunities to take part in sport
- A home where a range of local sports clubs can work together
- Training and development of the people that make sport happen
- An integrated approach led by local partners / clubs
- Self sustainable sports clubs / organisations
- Genuine community engagement and leadership
- Better access for local people and sports clubs at affordable prices

School sport competition plays a key part in the sporting pathway, connecting curricular and extracurricular opportunities with club sport and governing body events. Kevin's role is to assist in organising appropriate competition that in turn supports learning and enhances the 'Significant Aspects of Learning within Physical

Education' through opportunities to compete and perform. The aim is to build a sustainable infrastructure for school sport competition in Uist and Barra and to contribute to the World Class Sporting System for Scottish Sport.

Contact Community Sports Hub Officer Kevin Morrison on 01870 603 599 or kevin.morrison@cne-siar.gov.uk

Athletics Coaching Assistant Course coming up at the end of August or beginning of September (TBC). Expressions of interest welcome - contact Kevin or Christine (details below).

What is Active Schools?

Active Schools aims to provide more and higher quality opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity before school, during lunchtime and after school, and to develop effective pathways between schools and sports clubs in the local community.

Active Schools coordinators also have a key role in developing a network of volunteers to deliver activity sessions. These volunteers consist of teachers, parents, school staff, students, sports coaches and senior pupils who are central to the success of Active Schools.

Active Schools has worked with schools for over 10 years providing opportunities for children and young people to get involved, and stay involved, in sport and will continue to make a significant contribution to a world class sporting system in Scotland.

Contact local Active Schools co-ordinator Christine MacQuarrie on 01870 603 591 or c.macquarrie@cne-siar.gov.uk