



## *This year's highlights so far.....*

We are mid-way through our financial year and now seems like a perfect opportunity to bring you some updates on the exiting things we've been up to since the last newsletter!

It has been 6 months since we launched our **Strategic Planning document**, and we are almost half way through the year of celebration for our **10th anniversary**, so there has been a LOT happening and still much more to come!



*(Pictured: Board Members and Community Investment Fund recipients at the 10th anniversary press event)*

It's been quite a year! UOG celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 12<sup>th</sup> January and held a press event to mark the occasion. This event also saw the launch of a £10,000 funding stream of the Community Investment Programme.

2017 is a new chapter for the UOG and the community; a decade of community ownership, a refreshing Strategic Plan and a fully functioning Community Investment Programme. We are excited to already see relationships becoming stronger and partnerships forming in a bid to deliver against the priorities established as part of the consultation process undertaken throughout 2016.



## Strategic Planning

We've had much interest in our Strategic Plan since its launch in October 2016. Strategic Planning is all about ensuring a successful future and having identified our critical priorities, we are in a position to consider how, as a community, we address these.



## Befriending Lewis

The project offers full training to anyone who can spare a couple of hours per week to support someone as a befriender. Anyone who wishes to find out more and sign up to the project should visit the project website. We have already recruited some volunteers, but would love to have a small team to meet the needs of those who have requested a befriender and live on the estate.

One small, yet important project in relation to the Strategic Plan is in partnership with "Befriending Lewis", where volunteers can become Befrienders. This comes as a response to some of the feedback the Urras has received about the loneliness and social exclusion experienced by some of the elderly and most vulnerable in our community.



## UHI Evening Talks

It was great to have such a great turnout for the UHI evening talk delivered by Prof. Frank Rennie in late January. The topic was "**Galson: The Evolution of a Crofting Township**" and the evening was highly informative as well as thought provoking.

In February we were introduced to "**Weather Systems in the Western Isles**", delivered by Dr Edward Graham. His talk was equally well received and attracted an almost entirely new audience.



**Our next talk** will be by Catriona Murray in the UOG Business Center at 7:30pm, Tuesday 25th April. Catriona's topic will be "**The Gaelic Community and the Otherworld: Folklore and Culture.**"

It was excellent to have so much interest in the talks we've had so far, and to also have input from the audience afterwards. It was fantastic to see so many children in attendance!

**The talks have been recorded** and will be available to watch on our website and social media very soon.



Dr Mary Macleod delivered the most recent talk at the end of March, and her topic was "**The Vikings in Lewis**". Mary has agreed to come back in the Autumn and update us on some work she is undertaking in Swainbost over the Summer. We very much look forward to this and were equally happy to be able to award £5000 through our [Community Investment Programme](#) to support the project. More information on the project will be available soon and we will be supporting Mary to recruit volunteers to support the work. Keep an eye out on our social media, our website and *Fios* for details.



## FAS Workshops

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn has launched a new initiative called *Fàs* as part of its ten year anniversary programme. *Fàs* kicked off with a series of workshops and supporting advice, designed to assist businesses and organisations to develop and prosper.



Topics covered by these workshops have already included; managing projects, human resources, leadership development, market research, digital marketing, customer service, succession planning, finance and social media. We are keen to explore more topics and support businesses/ organisations. If you would like to discuss any training/support needs for your business then get in touch.





URRAS OIGHREACHD  
GHABHSAINN  
GALSON ESTATE TRUST



Carloway Estate Trust



An exciting new joint project led by Tighean Innse Gall (TIG) and funded by the Climate Challenge Fund, working in partnership with Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn and Urras Oighreachd Chàrlabhaigh, will help households take steps towards becoming more energy efficient, has recently been announced. The aim of this project is to reduce carbon emissions across both estate areas, by providing householders with information and knowledge as well as encouraging them to save money through behavioural change. Whilst carrying out home visits as well as replacing older, inefficient bulbs with efficient LED bulbs the clients will also benefit from tailored energy efficiency, tariff and switching advice alongside referrals to partner agencies. This incentive, along with TIG's reputation, as the local energy agency, was led by the high demand shown by both Galson and Carloway land trusts, to look at fuel use and the cost of heating. Watch this space for more information on this exciting project!



## SCHOOL VISITS

We have had several school visits this year so far, with school groups visiting the office, turbine site and us going out to the schools themselves! Topics ranged from community ownership, to community enterprise and crofting.

Pictured above are Sgoil an Rubha who visited us for their enterprise week. We were again delighted to experience their enthusiasm for crofting and interest in land use and community ownership.



## PHOTO PROJECT

Fiona, our graduate placement, is now in full swing with her social documentary photography project with us. She has been busy out and about in the community speaking to a variety of people and photographing them for an exhibition we'll be hosting in June. **To be part of this project** yourself get in touch with Fiona at [fiona@uoglt.com](mailto:fiona@uoglt.com)

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