

# SUMMER 2025

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

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RENNIE

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BAROMETER

AND LOTS MORE!



URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN  
GALSON ESTATE TRUST



**Agnes Rennie**  
UOG CHAIRPERSON

“

*Working with several local partners, UOG delivered a full programme of activities at venues across the Estate, as well as subsidising activities with Ness F.C and Spòrsnis. Attendance levels were exceptional and the weather was kind, on most days!*

”

Às dèidh samhradh th’ air a bhith cho math, tha sinn a-nise le coltas an fhoghair agus Floris air breab a thoirt dhuinn uile airson gnothaichean a sgioblachadh a-muigh.

‘S e bliadhna mhath th’air a bhith ann airson obair fàs agus tha coltas math air stoc. Tha toradh math air a bhith aig daoine tha fàs glasraich is measan, gach cuid a-muigh agus fo chòmhdach. ‘S e cheist a faodadh sinn a bhith a’ dèanamh barrachd dhan a seo mar sgìre agus mar eilean agus tha ùidh mhòr aig an Urras anns na cothroman sin.

Bidh sibh air faicinn ann am Fios agus meadhanan eile cho soirbheachail sa bha Plòigh. Ghabh teaghlaichean air feadh na sgìre an cothrom pàirt a ghabhail san iomadh cur-seachad a bh’ aig an Urras agus an com-pàirtichean air a chuir air dòigh. Chan eil teagamh nach do chuidich an aimsir le sin cuideachd – mar bu trice!

Faodaidh sibh leughadh sa chuairt-litir seo mun iomadh rud anns a bheil an Urras an sàs airson taic a chumail ri muinntir na sgìre agus tha Maoin Taic Coimhearsnachd fosgailte airson taic airgid a thoirt do bhuidhnean san sgìre. Na biodh leisg oirbh tadhal a-staigh no fios a chuir ma tha sibh airson tuilleadh fiosrachaidh mu gnothaich sam bith anns a bheil an Urras an sàs.

After Storm Floris catapulted us into autumn, it provided a hasty warning to tidy up everything left lying around crofts and gardens.

It has been a great year for crops and stock, and a lot of sunshine has encouraged excellent produce in kitchen gardens and under cover. UOG follows these developments with interest and has a continuing interest in finding ways to encourage more use of croft land and gardens.

The school holidays started with a very successful Plòigh and working with several local partners, UOG delivered a full programme of activities at venues across the Estate, as well as subsidising activities with Ness F.C and Spòrsnis. Attendance levels were exceptional and the weather was kind, on most days!

You can read about all of these initiatives and other projects all for the benefit of the community, in this newsletter. This includes the Community Investment Fund which continues to provide important financial support to many local projects. Please visit the UOG business centre in Galson or email us if you would like to discuss any of the many activities in which we are involved.





# Housing

CREDIT PHILLIP WALKER

UOG is planning a major mixed use development project in Upper Barvas as part of its vision for the Galson Estate community.

A masterplan produced includes 30 homes, 16 extra-care units and a number of self-build plots together with commercial and community spaces. The total cost of the project is estimated at £35m with five different phases of development envisaged over the longer-term.

These proposals offer a range of housing types, including self-build plots, live/work possibilities and affordable homes, for inclusivity and long-term viability with modern methods of construction. Designing housing clusters with shared amenities will encourage a sense of community and collective ownership of resources. Introducing Live-Work opportunities through community and commercial spaces will attract and encourage more home-based microbusinesses and bring further diversification to the economic base of the area.

Housing has regularly been cited as a barrier to population growth and retention. To address this, an area of land was identified by the Upper Barvas Grazings Committee in 2017 for potential new housing. It was agreed that UOG, as the landowner, should develop initial proposals to cover a range of housing types and tenures, elderly care, childcare, support services and community outreach.

UOG's initiative coincided with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES) seeking to consolidate existing carebeds into one location in Stornoway and another location to serve rural Lewis. This site has since been acknowledged by CnES as a firm contender for any future extra-care facility for rural Lewis but the funding model to deliver such facilities has not yet been identified. UOG expects that these type of facilities could act as an anchor activity on the site around which would encourage further community health and wellbeing partners to co-locate over time.

Household and employer surveys have been completed to identify potential demand. There are around 28 households both within and outwith the Estate seeking housing solutions. These range from larger families requiring four-bedroom properties to young individuals aspiring to leave the parental home and start living independently. Only three of the respondents were on the HHP waiting list which shows the latent demand across the area. Employers have identified a need for a range of family-sized properties for rental to accommodate workers they are trying to attract to the area at times.

Another source of demand is renewable energy projects, particularly the proposed interconnector being progressed by SSEN. This could create 'legacy housing' for the community where properties would be available for local residents after the renewable energy contracts have been completed.

Promotion of these proposals has been carried out at agricultural and community events in recent months and a display of plans is available for viewing at the UOG Business Centre in South Galson.



## **Gunnera**

This summer's weather hasn't made our efforts to manage gunnera on the Estate any easier. Persistent rain, gales, and haar have left the ground saturated and often made it too windy to spray safely. We're now hoping for a calm, dry September to continue the work.

So far, we've managed to treat most of Borge and parts of Port and Skigersta, the three villages with the heaviest infestations.

If you have gunnera in your garden, please remove the seed heads, place them in a plastic bag, and dispose of them in your general waste bin. This helps reduce further seed dispersal. You can then treat the remaining plant with a weedkiller such as Roundup.

## **2026 calendar**

Thank you to everyone who entered our 2026 calendar - we received an impressive number of fantastic photographs, making the judges' decision very difficult! We will be announcing all the winners on social media shortly but in the meantime we are delighted to share the Junior winner's photograph, taken by Isla Matheson, which features on the cover of this newsletter.

The calendar will be available to purchase from next month.



## **Deer management**

We're preparing for the 2025/2026 season. While stags can now be culled year-round, their meat isn't always suitable for consumption. However, the stags are currently in good condition, and our volunteer stalkers are already back out, when weather conditions allow.

The hind season begins on 21<sup>st</sup> October and runs through the winter until 15<sup>th</sup> February. NatureScot recently approved night licenses and continues to provide valuable guidance on cull targets.

## **Dates for your diary**

1. Dùthchas: 6-13<sup>th</sup> Sept
2. October Plòigh: 13<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> Oct
3. Community Land Festival: 17<sup>th</sup> Oct - 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov



## Renewables

UOG and its community partners, Urras Oighreachd Chàrlabhaigh and Urras Oighreachd Sgìre Bharabhais, continue to develop proposals for the West Coast Community Energy (WCCE) windfarm at Barvas Moor. It has been a busy summer with a series of deadlines in relation to the grid connections. Despite favourable offers being received from SSEN and the national grid operator (National Energy System Operator), the project has now been moved to a fall-back position due to the lack of capacity on the planned interconnector. It appears that three community-owned projects on the island will be denied access to the grid at this point. However, there is an expectation for changes to occur over the next five years and the WCCE partners are determined to continue with preparatory works. WCCE has just received a grant of £179,477 to assist with these preparatory works which will be focused on submission of a planning application in mid-2026.

## Climate Hebrides Roadshow

★★★★★★★★

# EV ROADSHOW

Test it. Drive it. Ask us anything.

IONAD GNÀTH-SHÌDE  
INNSE GALL  
OUTER HEBRIDES CLIMATE HUB

URRAS OIGHREACHD  
GHABHSAINN  
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

**FREE EVENTS ACROSS GALSON ESTATE**

- ✓ Try an electric vehicle (test drive or ride-along)
- ✓ Learn how EVs are charged
- ✓ Get info on grants & running costs
- ✓ Bust the EV myths!

**Drop-in sessions 2-5pm**

**19/08 - Spòrsnis**  
**29/08 - Comunn Eachdraidh Nis**  
**08/09 - Clan MacQuarrie Hall**  
**15/09 - Barvas Hall**  
**17/09 - UOG**

CLIMATE HEBRIDES

Designed to raise awareness, combat misinformation, and support local climate goals, the Climate Hebrides roadshow offers residents the opportunity to learn about electric vehicles, speak with experts, and even get behind the wheel.

The initiative is part of Climate Hebrides' broader mission to support communities across the Outer Hebrides in taking meaningful climate action. Its Climate Hub now has over 220 members across the island chain, including Galson Estate.

The EV Roadshow also supports Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn's Community Climate Action Plan by helping residents and staff explore practical steps toward reducing transport emissions.

Jemma MacVicar, Executive Manager, Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn, commented: "We're delighted to be working with Climate Hebrides to bring the roadshow to Galson Estate, particularly in light of our recent Community Climate Action Plan which highlighted a need for supporting people in the transition to electric vehicles to reduce carbon emissions and live in a sustainable way. This is a great opportunity for our community to explore the benefits of electric vehicles first hand; from lower running costs to reducing our environmental impact. Supporting sustainable transport options is a key part of our commitment to a greener, more resilient future for the estate."

All sessions are free to attend, with trained staff on hand to offer one-to-one test drives (insurance permitting), passenger rides, and advice on grants, charging, and ownership.

## A black pudding demo, maritime musings, spinning and song, and lots more during next month's Dùthchas!

Fancy learning how the Ness black pudding is made? Or what about joining conversations about a life at sea? Perhaps Gaelic song or ceilidh dancing is more your thing? Or what about making your own tweed cushion? As part of this year's Dùthchas, running from 6<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> September, you'll have the chance to do it all!

The black pudding demonstration will take place at Cross Stores on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> September at 10am, and visitors and locals alike are invited to learn how this traditional delicacy is made in a session that celebrates local culinary heritage.

Paddy Furey, owner of Cross Stores, commented: "Black pudding is more than just food here, it's part of our story. The way we make it in Ness and the recipe we follow has been passed down through generations, and it means a lot to be able to share some of the processes with people during Dùthchas - we might not be able to share our exact 'secret' recipe, we don't want to spoil the intrigue too much, but we will definitely share some of the processes behind our black pudding. Whether you're local or just visiting, pop in and see what helps to make our black pudding special, and you might even get a wee taste at the end!"

Dùthchas is a week-long festival celebrating the heritage of Galson Estate and this year we have another full programme of events, from guided historical walks and daily Gaelic lessons to ceilidh dancing, films, and more.

Other highlights of this year's festival include **Maritime Musings and Salty Snacks** on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September at the Clan MacQuarrie Community Centre in Borge; an evening of conversation with Alastair Smith and John Smith who will regale the audience with their tales of a life at sea, accompanied by a selection of sea themed canapés, prepared by Paul Moorby. On Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> September, get a glimpse into the history of one of the island's key harbours when you join Dods Macfarlane for **A Seafarer's Stroll**. For those who enjoy a song or two, join Gaelic singer Elizabeth MacKenzie and spinner, Mary Smith for a unique event: **Spinning and Song** will give participants the opportunity to see Mary in action on the spinning wheel whilst Elizabeth shares some Gaelic spinning songs. There will be an illustrated talk with David Mackay, an experienced landscaper and arborist from Shader, **The Memory of Trees** on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September, exploring the history of Hebridean woodlands and our Celtic connections to the natural world.

The full programme of events is now live and available to book via [www.galsontrust.com/events/duthchas](http://www.galsontrust.com/events/duthchas) - the programme is also available on the next page.





# 6<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> Sept

SAT 6TH

## TWEED LAMPSHADE WORKSHOP

- 10am-12pm / 2pm-4pm, £45
- Adabrock Weaving Shed
- Learn how to make a tweed lampshade with Adabrock Weaving

## NESS SOCIAL CAFE

- 2-4pm, cash only at cafe
- Ness Social Club
- Enjoy a cuppa & chat with friends.

## BARVAS TRAD MUSIC SESSION

- 8pm - 11:30pm, FREE
- Barvas & Brue Community Centre
- Music session - all welcome, bring an instrument!

SUN 7TH

## CHURCH SERVICE

- 3pm, FREE
- St Moluags, Eorpie
- Church service at St Moluags. All welcome.

MON 8TH

## COFAIDH AGUS CABADAICH

- 11:30am - 12pm, FREE
- Comunn Eachdraidh Nis
- A chance to sit and chat in Gaelic! All levels of fluency welcome.

## MARITIME MUSINGS AND SALTY SNACKS

- 7pm-9pm, FREE
- Clan MacQuarrie Community Centre
- Join seafarers Alasdair Smith & John Smith for a conversation about life at sea, try your hand at net-mending & view a maritime exhibition. All accompanied by sea themed canapés by Paul Moorby.

TUES 9TH

## COFAIDH AGUS CABADAICH

- 11:30am - 12pm, FREE
- Comunn Eachdraidh Nis
- A chance to sit and chat in Gaelic! All levels of fluency welcome.

## CALLIGRAPHY, PAINTING & DRAWING

- 12pm-5pm (Drop in), Free
- St Moluags, Eorpie
- Try your hand at calligraphy, painting or drawing in the beautiful St Moluags.

## OIDHCHE LE FIOILMAICHEAN

- 7:15pm, Donation to CEN
- Comunn Eachdraidh Nis
- An opportunity to view local archive films. This event will be in Gaelic.

WED 10TH

## BLACK PUDDING DEMO

- 10am - 10:45am, FREE
- Cross Stores
- Join the team in Cross Stores to learn how the Ness delicacy is made!

## COFAIDH AGUS CABADAICH

- 11:30am - 12pm, FREE
- Comunn Eachdraidh Nis
- A chance to sit and chat in Gaelic! All levels of fluency welcome.

## CALLIGRAPHY, PAINTING & DRAWING

- 12pm-5pm (Drop in), Free
- St Moluags, Eorpie
- Try your hand at calligraphy, painting or drawing at St Moluags.

## A SEAFARER'S STROLL

- 2pm, FREE
- Port of Ness Harbour
- Join Dods Macfarlane for a harbour stroll, taking in the area's rich history.

THURS 11TH

## COFAIDH AGUS CABADAICH

- 11:30am - 12pm, FREE
- Comunn Eachdraidh Nis
- A chance to sit and chat in Gaelic! All levels of fluency welcome.

## CÈILIDH FEASGAR

- 2pm, Donation to CEN
- Comunn Eachdraidh Nis
- Lionel School pupils will join with local singers for this ceilidh - open to all.

## SPINNING AND SONG

- 7:30pm - 9pm, FREE
- Taigh Dhonnchaidh
- Try your hand at the spinning wheel whilst learning Gaelic spinning songs.

FRI 12TH

## GUIDE IN THE HIDE - RSPB

- 10:30am, FREE
- Loch Stiapabhat
- Join a RSPB guide in the bird hide to explore the vast birdlife at the loch

## COFAIDH AGUS CABADAICH

- 11:30am - 12pm, FREE
- Comunn Eachdraidh Nis
- A chance to sit and chat in Gaelic! All levels of fluency welcome.

## SEIRBHEIS GÀIDHLIG

- 7:15pm, Donations to Bethesda
- Comunn Eachdraidh Nis
- A Gaelic service with Roddy John Campbell.

SAT 13TH

## TWEED CUSHION MAKING WORKSHOP

- 10am-12pm / 2pm-4pm, £45
- Adabrock Weaving Shed
- Learn how to make a tweed cushion cover with Adabrock Weaving

## A MEMORY OF TREES

- 7-8pm, FREE
- Barvas & Brue Community Centre
- Join David Mackay for a history of Hebridean woodlands and our Celtic connections to the natural world.

## CÈILIDH DANCING

- 8:30pm, FREE
- Borve Country House Hotel
- Don your dancing shoes and join the ceilidh dancers! Beginners welcome.

TO FIND OUT MORE AND TO BOOK, PLEASE VISIT  
[WWW.GALSONTRUST.COM/EVENTS/DUTHCHAS](http://WWW.GALSONTRUST.COM/EVENTS/DUTHCHAS)



URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN  
 GALSON ESTATE TRUST







# Plòigh

We had a fantastic fortnight full of fun and educational activities for children during our Summer Plòigh; from rolling up their sleeves on the croft to surfing the waves, exploring the CEN archives to enjoying the great outdoors, there truly was something for everyone.

A huge thank you to all our partners this year: Spòrsnis, Comunn Eachdraidh Nis, Taigh Dhonnchaidh, Clan MacQuarrie, Surf Lewis, Comunn na Gàidhlig, Stornoway Library, RSPB Highlands & Islands, Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Roddy John Macdonald, Edith & Finlay's Habost Hens, Rebecca Robson, Murdanie Macleod, and James Mackenzie. We couldn't have done it without you!





# A piece of maritime history returns to Port of Ness



A piece of maritime and meteorological history has returned to Port of Ness, as a working barometer, an exact replica of the original FitzRoy barometer, has been installed in its historic location, more than a century after the first was put in place.

The restoration was initiated by Angus Murray (Aonghas a' Ghaisean), whose family come from Port of Ness, who discovered a functioning barometer, an exact replica for the original, for sale online, after the original barometer had been taken out by Comunn Eachdraidh Nis to see whether repairs would be possible. Recognising its significance to Port of Ness, Angus approached Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn and the Trust funded the purchase and installation of the new barometer. Janet Macleod, Cultural Engagement Officer, Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn commented: "This barometer isn't just a scientific instrument, it's a cultural landmark. It connects us to the maritime heritage of our community and the pioneering work of Admiral Robert FitzRoy. We're thrilled to see a working barometer back in place for the local community and visitors to enjoy."

Admiral Robert FitzRoy, a pioneering meteorologist and naval officer, who invented this barometer, founded the Meteorological Office in 1854 and devoted his efforts to improving weather predictions for the benefit of mariners. FitzRoy's barometers were placed in fishing ports across Britain to provide local mariners with accurate weather forecasts, an innovation that saved countless lives.

The original Port of Ness barometer was installed in 1863 and remained under the care of the Met Office until 2024, when it was officially gifted to Comunn Eachdraidh Nis.

Janet Macleod, added: "We're very grateful to Angus for bringing this opportunity to us and for his dedication throughout the project. Special thanks also go to Donnie Campbell, whose expertise was invaluable during the sensitive installation process and to Derick Mackay for dressing the cabinet housing the barometer. Thanks also to local residents for their cooperation during the installation."

The barometer can now be viewed in its original location in Port of Ness. Those interested in learning more about its fascinating past can explore archival material at Comunn Eachdraidh Nis.



Have you visited na Dorsan and the accompanying exhibition at our Business Centre yet?

The exhibition delves into the history of Galson, offering an insight into the events which unfolded, whilst the monument offers a quiet spot for reflection as well as time to admire the artistry and views. The exhibition is open from Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm, so please pop in, it won't be open for much longer so don't miss your opportunity! You can walk up to the monument at any time!

**Location:**

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

## Investing in our Community

As well as awarding funds through our Community Investment Fund, this summer we also subsidised places at the Ness F.C Charlie Miller Football Academy Summer Coaching Skills and the Spòrsnis Summer Camp. We were delighted to support the Western Isles Island Games Association with their trip to Orkney for the Island Games 2025 - congratulations to everyone involved!

We are also subsidising a new Baby Massage class which will run from five weeks throughout August and September. This is available to book at [bookwhen.com/uogevents](http://bookwhen.com/uogevents).



## CIF awards May - August 2025

£2000

**WESTERN ISLES SUPPORT  
FOR CATS & KITTENS**

£900

**NORTH LEWIS WAR  
MEMORIAL COMMITTEE**

£2000

**TAIGH DHONNCHAIDH**



## 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](#).



# Summer placement

We were delighted to have Faye Smith with us over the summer through the Gaelic Student Placement Scheme. During her time here, Faye made valuable contributions to the North Lewis Gaelic Plan and developed a Gaelic policy for UOG. She also created subtitles for our Gaelic films and supported Abbie Morrison, MG ALBA Content Creator, in filming community interviews. Mòran taing Faye!



## Mo Ghreis Gniomhachais aig Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn

*Le Faye Smith*

Thairis air an t-samhraidh rinn mi greis gniomhachais aig Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn mar phàirt den sgeama aig Bòrd na Gàidhlig agus Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Fhuair mi a-mach gu luath nach robh dà latha coltach ri chèile san oifis. Aon latha bhithinn ag obair air a' chomputair, laithean eile bhithinn togail a mhòine no a' spreadhadh gunnera.

Bha mi uabhasach fortanach a' ceangal an obair leis a' chùrsa agam le bhith a' cur seachad seachdainn aig Anderson Macarthur as leth an oifis. Cuideachd chuidich mi le bhith a' sgrìobhadh poileasaidh Gàidhlig airson an oifis.

Chòrd e rium gu mòr a' cuideachadh le Plòigh, far an robh mi a' cumail taic ris na seiseanan iasgaidh agus sealg airson biastagan, a' bharrachd air iomadh seisean eile.

Fhuair mi faicinn mar a tha an Urras ag obair, le bhith a' dol chun an AGM, coinneamhan an sgioba agus coinneamh subgroup. Cuideachd bha mi fortanach a' suidhe a-steach air òraid mar phàirt den NORA Conference san oifis, coinneamh de daoine air a' chruinneachadh fo air feadh a' Chuain a tuath, le daoine bho Innis Tìle, an Nirribhidh, agus Na h-Eileanan Faàò nam measg.

Dh'obraich mi còmhla ri neach-ealain gus Open Studios Hebrides a chur air dòigh san oifis, far an robh mi fhìn a' taisbeanadh m'obair cuideachd. Chruthaich mi fo-thiotalan beurla airson FilmG Na Dorsan, chuidich seo na sgilean Gàidhlig agam leasachadh.

Chòrd an Greis Gniomhachais rium gu mòr air sgath 's gun d'fhuair mi eòlas a' bhith ag obair ann an oifis 's cuideachd ag obair san coimhearsnachd air feadh an oighreachd. Bha mi taingeil nach robh an obair dìreach co-cheangailte ris a' chùrsa agam, ach cuideachd a' ceangal ris na h-ùidhean eile agam. Bha e uabhasach inntinneach a' facinn an obair a tha an Urras a' deanamh agus an fharsaingeachd de dh' obair a tha a' dol air adhart ann.

To find out more about placements, apprenticeship opportunities and available vacancies, please visit [www.galsontrust.com/careers](http://www.galsontrust.com/careers)

## Become a member

Do you live within the Galson Estate for more than nine months of the year and want to get involved with the community, support local development, and keep up-to-date with your local community land trust?

Membership of the trust costs just £1 and is available to all those over 16 years of age who are:

- resident within the Galson area, or
- resident within the Isle of Lewis and registered with the Crofters Commission as the tenant of a croft within the Galson Estate area, or
- resident elsewhere and registered with the Crofters Commission as the tenant of a croft within the Galson area and actively working that croft.

**Become a  
member online or pop  
into the office to  
complete a form**



## Stay in touch



**01851 850411**



**office@uogltd.com**



**Tom na Bà, South Galson,  
Isle of Lewis HS2 0SH**



**@urrasog**

## Habost Household Waste & Recycling Centre

Managed by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, operated by Urras  
Oighreachd Ghabhsainn

### Current opening hours

**Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri - 11am-1pm, 4-6pm**

**Sat - 10am-1pm, 2-5pm**

**Tues & Sun - Closed**

We have a list of accepted and prohibited waste items on  
[our website](#).

You will find the Habost Amenity Site by turning off at  
the garage at 55 Cross Skigersta Road, HS2 0TQ.

@urrasog | office@uogltd.com

**WWW.GALSONTRUST.COM**