



URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN  
GALSON ESTATE TRUST



# AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2023

Photo Credit to Anne MacLean

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## A FOREWORD FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON AGNES RENNIE



Tha mi an dòchas gun còrd e ribh leughadh tro'n chuairt litir ùr seo bho'n Urras. Mar is àbhaist tha i loma làn, ach gu leòr eile chàidh fhàgail às le cion rum.

Na biodh leisg oirbh tadhal san ionad an Gabhsann uair sam bith ma tha sibh a' lorg fiosrachadh de sheòrsa sam bith.

Bidh fàilte romhaibh.



I hope you find our latest newsletter informative. It is, of course, simply a flavour of the many activities which the Urras has been involved in over the last while.

If you would like to find out more about anything please do not hesitate to get in touch or better still call at the Business Centre in Galson where you will be warmly welcomed.



## LAND MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Photo Credit to Katelyn MacIver

### **Gunnera - Taking on Invasive Species**

Our small local team has been working hard all summer, using herbicides to control the widespread gunnera, an invasive plant, in the area from Upper Barvas to Skigersta moor. We've treated as many plants as we could reach, but some hidden in crofts, grazing lands, and moorlands may have been missed. The plants on cliffs, which need a specialist with ropes to reach, will be tackled next summer. Also, a few plants might survive the treatment and regrow. We plan to return next summer to spray these again.

### **Good news from RSPB**

Our partners, RSPB have reported that Corncrake numbers on Galson Estate this summer have improved significantly. There are likely to be many reasons for this increase however, the uptake from crofters signing up to the corncrake initiative will have been a huge contributing factor. Thanks to the scheme, there is more crofting activity taking place on the estate proving that crofting and conservation can complement each other effectively.

### **Deer Management**

The deer stalking season is well underway with shooting taking place throughout the summer and autumn. The most sensitive time for deer management is the stag season which runs from 1 July to 20 October, but most stalking takes place from August onwards. Ensuring sustainable deer management is a top priority for us so we are working closely with our sporting syndicates who are concentrating on many areas where the deer are causing a mischief, including along the road between Galson and South Dell. Our goal is to maintain a healthy deer population at a level that preserves habitats, while also considering public health and crofting interests. Shooting deer on open moorland like we have on Galson Estate is a challenge and we are grateful to our volunteers for all their time, commitment and hard work.

### **Loch Stiapabhat**

Due to the avian flu outbreak, the annual habitat management session (strimming the long summer grass around the hide and the loch) did not take place at Loch Stiapabhat. However, Sweeny's cows are currently munching their way through the grass at present and the loch area will still be in fine condition for welcoming the migrating birds next spring.

## COST OF LIVING SUPPORT

Due to the successful uptake of subsidised extra curricular activities, children and young people living in the Galson Estate Trust area can continue to enjoy these activities for just £1!

We want to express our thanks to the activity providers who have chosen to take part in this initiative: Sporsnis, Taigh Dhonnchaidh, Clan MacQuarrie Community Centre, Rocksolid and CnaG Iar Thuath Leòdhais

The subsidised activities will continue until April 2024, after which we will review the scheme again.



As winter approaches, we are once again focusing on ways to assist our community during the cold months.

This year, we plan to distribute heated blankets to anyone in our community over the age of 75. Based on feedback from last year, these blankets helped reduce heating expenses and provided warmth and comfort.

We're also continuing to subsidise the Comunn Eachdraidh Nis over sixties lunches, starting from 23rd November. For just £2, you can enjoy a warm soup, a sandwich, and homemade baked goods, either delivered to your home or available at the day club.

Additionally, we're committed to exploring more ways to help the community save on their energy costs.

# COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND

We aim to fund a diverse range of community projects, focusing on skills development, health improvement, poverty relief, environmental conservation, citizen engagement, promotion of local heritage and culture, and growth in industry sectors.



## AWARDS GRANTED FROM MAY - SEPT 23

**BARVAS & BRUE  
COMMUNITY  
CENTRE  
£250**

**FALMADAIR  
TRUST  
£13, 775**

**NESS F.C.  
£7, 160**

**SOCIAL  
ENTERPRISE  
ACADEMY  
£1, 000**

**BARVAS FOOD  
BANK  
£2, 000**

**WESTERN ISLES  
ISLAND GAMES  
ASSOCIATION  
£8, 000**

# The Hebridean Community Garden

Christopher Smail - Project Manager



Autumn 2023 has been a fruitful time at The Hebridean Community Garden, with plenty of new projects coming to life. The madness of summer – a near constant experience of watering, sowing and transplanting – has been replaced with a more subdued sense of the growing year winding down.

Over the course of October, we ran a set of workshops at the garden on different themes that we devised in collaboration with the community – perennials and grasses; planting wind-proof trees and overwintering vegetables. These were well attended, and we had a great time in sharing knowledge and experience on these subjects with like-minded friends. We also ran our regular Plough session during the school holidays. The children had a joyous time in planting colourful pots full of hyacinth, snowdrop, narcissus and tulip bulbs.

The physical garden itself continues to grow and expand. Our newly positioned wheelchair accessible raised beds will allow us to reach new demographics and ensure that we are as inclusive as possible in designing and maintaining the space. Our new compost bay is now operational, ensuring that we are meeting our sustainable needs and reducing our garden waste to a minimum.

There is still lots growing at the garden, especially in the polycrubs. These wonderful designs allow island gardeners to extend the seasons and grow more exotic species that otherwise would have no hope this far north and west. Citrus fruits I know are a popular place for experimenting in our community polycrubs. We were fortunate enough to receive a visit from one of our biggest funders recently – the National Lottery. We gave Dougie a tour of our many facilities and talked about new developments and the different ways that this community garden benefits the community.

From 2024, The Hebridean Community Garden will be transferred fully to Clan MacQuarrie Community Centre and I know they have lots of exciting plans for taking the project forward.

*We would like to extend our thanks to Christopher for his commitment to this successful project. We wish him all the best for the future in his new role.*



# DÙTHCHAS

*Galson Estate Heritage Week*

In September, Dùthchas celebrated the rich heritage of the Galson Estate community. The week-long event showcased various themes, including History & Genealogy, Music & Dance, Traditional Skills, Food & Drink, and Language & Writing. Collaborating with local organisations and groups.

This year Dùthchas offered 30 events, attracting 153 attendees.

Festivities commenced with Ness Gala day. A few highlights of the week included Gaelic language sessions and a wonderful afternoon of food and ceilidh at Comunn Eachdraidh Nis.



Caroline Envill delivered engaging creative writing workshops.



Dùthchas Church Service at St. Moluag's.



Frank Rennie hosted two events which provided valuable insights into the heritage and sense of place in the Galson Community.

All Dùthchas events were well received and provided a meaningful celebration of Galson Estate's rich heritage.

Thank you to everyone who supported this year's events.

*Mòran Taing!*



# Plòigh MHÒR!

# Plòigh

This year's Plòigh Programme has now come to an end and it has been fantastic! We've held 44 sessions in total, spread across 4 weeks in April, July, and October. We're thrilled to report that attendance has been outstanding, with over 92% participating. Plus, we filled 81% of all available spots, and out of those, 67% were residents. We look forward to bringing you more in 2024!



Tha sinn airson ur beachdan fhaighinn air Plòigh 2023!

We would love your feedback on Plòigh 2023.

Head over to [www.plough.co.uk](http://www.plough.co.uk) to take part in our short survey.

The Plòigh programme is collaborative effort in partnership with Sporsnis, Taigh Dhonnachaidh, CnaG, RSPB, Clan MacQuarrie Community Centre, The Hebridean Community Centre and Barvas & Brue Community Centre.



# Community Land Week



On Friday, October 27, we hosted a delightful local knowledge quiz night, complete with cheese and wine, to commemorate the centennial of community land ownership during Community Land Week 2023.

The evening was truly wonderful, filled with laughter and enjoyment as well as some healthy competition. The Ballantrushal Bandits emerged victorious, choosing to contribute the event's earnings to the Airidhantuim Community Council.



Many thanks to Community Land Scotland, The Good Food Boutique, Cross Stores and Clan MacQuarrie Community Centre for their support which made the night success.

Last but certainly not least, thanks to Tom Maciver and Maggie Mackay for being our quiz masters, filling the night with humour and making it a memorable event.



# SUNND IS BACK! | THA SUNND AIR AIS!

Sunnd is back again for another year, running from January - March 2024!

Keep an eye out for the programme coming out at the beginning of December with details of all the events and activities happening throughout the estate to start your 2024 off right.

Our Health and Wellbeing programme will bring back some of the usual classes and activities including dance, exercise and art classes, first aid courses and cookery demonstrations; while also bringing some new activities to the programme including a book club, creative writing workshops, some adult music classes, and so much more. Thanks to our partners and providers of the Sunnd programme we can offer a large range of activities to help support the health and wellbeing of our community.



**JAN - MAR**  
**2024**  
**SUNND**  
Sunnd: Scottish Gaelic  
1. joy, cheerfulness, hilarity 2. sprightliness 3. health, fitness  
**HEALTH & WELLBEING**

**sunnd**  
COMMUNITY  
HEALTH & WELLBEING

‘S e iomairt a bhios a’ brosnachadh slàinte is fallaineachd a th’ ann an ‘Sunnd’ aig Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn, a bhios a’ toirt chothroman do dhaoine pàirt a ghabhail ann an tachartasan coimhearsnachd a bhios gam fàgail a’ faireachdainn fallain, slàn agus sàbhailte.

# UOG Staff Updates

meet the team



**Calum Mackenzie**  
Amenity Site Supervisor  
Neach-aire Làraich

Calum has taken on the role of Site Supervisor at the Habost Household Waste and Recycling Centre. Since joining us earlier in October, Calum has already begun to make a positive impact, and we're delighted to have him on board.

## Vacancy

### DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Hours: 23 Hours Per Week

Salary: £23 460 (pro rata)

Duration: 12 month (maternity cover)

Location: Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn, South Galson

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (UOG) works hard to ensure that the community of Galson Estate benefits greatly from community ownership. It undertakes all estate business and manages a large range of projects while keeping the community's interest at the heart of everything we do.

We have an exciting opportunity for an individual who already works in community development or has an interest in development project's.

Improving tourism is one of UOG's four strategic priorities. Within this role, you will play a key part in building the tourism sector for North Lewis. Our aim is to encourage visitors to stay longer, bringing economic benefits to the community. For this to be achieved, improving infrastructure and developing locally branded products is essential.

The successful candidate will have good interpersonal and communication skills with a track record in relationship building. Excellent organisational skills, planning abilities and good problem-solving skills are essential.

The trust has an established and supportive team-working environment with ambitious plans. We need great people to help us deliver these ambitions.

This is a fantastic opportunity to apply your skills and to develop your potential.

For details on how to apply, job description and person specification, please visit [www.galsontrust.com/job-vacancies](http://www.galsontrust.com/job-vacancies) or contact:

Christine Amos, Operations Manager  
Email: [christineamos@uogltd.com](mailto:christineamos@uogltd.com)

## Dreuchd Bàn

### OIFIGEAR LEASACHAIDH

Closing date: 12 noon, Wednesday 22 November



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  
30 OCTOBER 2023 TO 30 MARCH 2024

#### 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 the opening times.

Please refrain from disposing of items outwith these times as this will be treated as fly tipping.

Contact Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn - 01851 850393

# CROFT RENTS



**A reminder that croft rent invoices have been issued and are now payable.**

**You can pay by cash, card or cheque at our office.**

**Call us if you wish to pay over the phone.**

## CONTACT US



(01851) 850 393



office@uogltd.com



www.galsontrust.com



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

# AVAILABLE NOW

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn's  
2024 Calendar

£7



URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN  
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

2024  
CALENDAR

For Sale in outlets on the estate and on our  
website:

[www.galsontrust.com/galson-giftware](http://www.galsontrust.com/galson-giftware)

We appreciate everyone who participated in this year's competition! Without you, this would not have been possible. Mórán taing!

