

URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN AGM
HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 7.30 PM IN THE UOG OFFICES AND ONLINE WITH ZOOM

Directors Present: Agnes Rennie (Chair), Carola Bell, Donald Macsween, Johanna Furey, Agnes Macdonald, Murdo Macritchie

In Attendance: Calum Macdonald, CIB Services

Agnes Rennie welcomed all to the meeting and provided an overview of the evening's format. This is our first meeting in our new building and the first meeting of this kind since Covid prevented this from happening. We will proceed with the formal AGM to start with and once complete, will reconvene with staff reports and guest speaker Magnus Davidson.

1. Apologies for Absence

Murdanie Macleod (Director), Colin Maclean (Director).

2. Minutes of AGM 29 October 2021 and Matters Arising

The minutes of the 2020 AGM were approved by Donald S Macleod and seconded by Fiona Rennie.

3. Chairperson's Report

Failte oirbh uile gu coinneamh bhliadhnail Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn. Se tlachd a th'ann dhomhsa failte chuir oirbh bho'n oifis ur s tha mi'n dochas gun cord coinneamh na h-oidhche nochd ribh.

Welcome, everyone to this year's Annual General Meeting. It's an absolute pleasure to be able to welcome you from our new business centre at Tom na Ba. This report covers a period of 12 months, during which the entire office staff worked from home. The only exception was the Amenity Site, where Ali and John were able to return to work and provided an important service to the community. Looking back on this unprecedented period, we can reflect with some justifiable satisfaction on how the Urras was able to review its resources and worked with others in the community to deliver some essential services. For example, the prescription delivery service was quite literally a lifeline and working with a team of volunteers, the Urras organised the delivery of some 4000 prescriptions, the village What's App groups provided a very local support, especially for people who were living alone and others who had arrived in the community fairly recently.

We were also pleased to work with the Cross Free Church to establish a *hardship fund*. Other local businesses also adapted their own structure and provided some very important services during this time.

The pandemic has not gone away unfortunately. But now with vaccinations at a high level, most people have come to realise that we each of us carry a responsibility to look after ourselves, and others, at this time.

The Urras staff working from home continued to manage crofting administration, progress established programmes such as the Sunnd, health and wellbeing initiative, and of course, Ploigh and Ploigh Mor, the children's activity sessions. The House Number Scheme proved very popular and was a direct response to the need for easy recognition of addresses for services such as the prescription deliveries. During the year of reporting, the LED Communities Programme was completed. This programme was an excellent example of inter-trust cooperation with UOG and Urras Oighreachd Charlabhaigh working together. Free LED bulbs and energy saving advice was provided to hundreds of households across the two Trust areas.

An unexpected spinoff from this project was the video created by young people about climate change. The film won a prize for documentary at the Film G awards, and was recently featured by Community Land Scotland at the COP26 conference in Glasgow. Also on display in Glasgow, were the iconic bronze

peats created by Virginia Hutchison as part of her artists residency with the Urras during 2020/21. The peats will soon be displayed back in the community, starting in the new building.

Another interesting project developed during this time has been the Hebridean Community Garden project, developed in collaboration with partners at the Clan Macquarrie Community Centre. The polycrubs and sensory garden are intended to encourage more people to grow their own food and to look at new and innovative ways to grow and learn from each other. Look out for more exciting information on these projects from Christopher Smail in the coming months.

As many of you will know, the wind generating project at Druim nan Carnan has been a key contributor to the continued success of the Urras. It was therefore a major blow when the cable joining the island to the national grid snapped in October 2020. For a full year, we and all the other island generators were unable to generate any revenue from the sale of power. The link has now been restored and once again the turbines are working for us as a community.

A calculation made just before the outbreak of COVID19 showed that some £300,000 had been provided as grant aid through the Community Investment Fund. The Fund was frozen when the cable broke and it became apparent that it was not going to be repaired or replaced very quickly. However, the cable has now been replaced and we are looking forward to reopening the Fund next spring to coincide with our newly revised strategic priorities.

I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the staff team who have worked so hard to provide a seamless service across the community and the many volunteers who supported the staff during the lockdowns. I want to mention especially Lisa McLean, who left us as manager recently to start a new job in Belfast. We wish Lisa well in her new role.

This meeting is being held tonight in our newly opened business centre. It was of course built to replace the original building on the same site destroyed by fire in February 2019. This is a fit for purpose building designed by Catriona Hill and her team and built by local contractors CalMax. We are grateful to both designers and contractors for the completion of the building in quite challenging circumstances.

We are pleased that staff are now in the building and will be able to welcome our members and other visitors when the time is right. I'd like to thank Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Comunn Eachdraidh Nis for making temporary accommodation available to us when the Urras was effectively homeless.

Finally, I'd like to thank my fellow board members for their support and enthusiasm through the year. We reported recently that founder member James Macleod had passed away and once again we extend our sympathy to his wife and family.

Thank you all for attending tonight's meeting and showing your support to our community owned trust. Please encourage others to become members and play their part in the future of our community.

4. Report on the Director's Report and Audited Financial Statements for the period ended 30 September 2020.

- 4.1 Calum Macdonald, CIB Services spoke to the report and the continuing development of the Trust. Page 1 shows the income and expenditure for the year, with the 3rd column giving a total income of £475,895. This was down from the previous year due to the impact of the cable breakage and the effect this had on the gift aid transferred to the Urras during that time. Expenditure increased by £65k, reflecting a year of increased expenditure on community funds in response to the Covid pandemic. After adjustment the net income is just under £22,000 and given the initial changes for the period the surplus is quite commendable. The Trust had built up reserves to the point of £2.8 million. Page 2 shows the balance sheet. Key numbers are the current assets, large chunks of cash, assets owned by the Trust, original position of the land and subsequent developments in subsidiary companies since then.

As part of our role as auditors, we are tasked to give a report as to the compliance of various and ever-increasing legislation which the Trust faces. To summarise, we gave a clean audit report to the organisation's finances and to the systems that they use.

Calum was thanked for his report and for assistance and support to the Urras through the year. UOG as a board, are reassured by your own response on that.

5. Level of Membership Fee for 2021/22

It was proposed that the fee remains at £1 and this was agreed by all present.

6. Appointment of Auditors

It was proposed that CIB Services be reappointed as auditors of the Company and this was agreed by all present.

7. Election of Directors

Two directors are required to resign as part of the usual rotation (Agnes Rennie and Alasdair Smith). Alasdair did not wish to offer himself for re-election and with regret this was accepted. Agnes Rennie was the only nomination as no others were received and duly re-elected to the board.

This concluded the formal business of the AGM.

The second part of the evening was open to the public and Operations Manager, Christine Amos, gave a round-up of the projects carried out by Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn staff throughout the year.

This was followed by a talk via Zoom with guest speaker Magnus Davidson, Research Associate with the Environmental Research Institute, based at North Highland College UHI.