



# Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn

## Winter Newsletter 2021



### **GALSON BUSINESS CENTRE RETURNS**

Pg 3

#### **ALSO READ ABOUT:**

**CLS Artist in Residence  
Project Update - p4**

**The Hebridean  
Community Garden  
Project - p4**

**Tourism Packs - p6**

**Health Walks - p7**

**Sunnd 2021 - p6**



### **GAELIC AWARD FOR TOURISM WEBSITE**



### **HOUSE NUMBERING PROJECT**



### **FILMG 2021 - CROSS STORES**

**WWW.GALSONTRUST.COM**



# Facal bhon Chathraich

## NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

Bliadhna mhath ùr dhuibh uile. Cò aige bha dùil aig toiseachd bliadhn' ùr eile gum biodh a' choimhearsnachd fhathast glais' agus bho sgàile a' bhioras Covid19? 'S iomadh dòigh anns a bheil seo a buailleadh air daoine agus tha gu leòr fhathast ag obair on taigh mur a feum iad dhol a-steach chun àite obraich. Tha sin a fàgail oifis eadar-amail an Urrais fhathast falamh agus an luchd-obrach ri cumail cùisean a' dol gu dicheallach. Coltach ris a' mhòr-shluagh tha clann aig an taigh agus uallaichean eile tighinn trom air iomadach dachaigh. Tha sinn an dòchas air sgàth a h-uile duine gun tig piseach air cùisean an ùine gun a bhith ro fhada.

Tha sinn air leth toilichte gu bheil luchd-togail air tòiseachadh obair air an làrach an Gabhsann agus bidh e math an Ionad Gnìomhachas ùr fhaicinn a' dol an àrda mean air mhean. Se ceum mòr tha seo, an iomadach dòigh, 's tha sinn an dòchas gum bi cùisean fàbharach eadar aimsir is eile gus am faigh iad air adhart.

Tha mi an dòchas a-nise gu faigh sibh naidheachdan beaga a chòrdas ribh agus a bhios feumail dhuibh anns a' chuairt-litir seo. An dòchas gum bi sibh uile slàn sàbhailte.

*Happy New Year to you all. I never imagined at the start of Lockdown in March 2020 that we would start 2021 with the country still at a high level of Lockdown and struggling to control Covid19. Nevertheless I am immensely grateful that we live in a community where there is still a strong sense of community and neighbourliness.*

*We have all had to make changes to how we live and work and for many that means working from home unless it is essential to be in the usual workplace. I know that this places great strain on many homes, especially those struggling to work and home school and all the other things that are part of family life. Like everywhere else the Urras temporary office at Comunn Eachdraidh Nis remains mostly empty but staff can be contacted through the usual ways.*

*It is very encouraging to see work start on the new building in Galson to replace the business centre lost in the fire two years ago. It was also good to hear at the end of the year that a decision had been made to replace the damaged cable bringing electricity to the island. All of this and other news will be covered in full in the newsletter.*

*Take care everyone and stay well.*

## GALSON BUSINESS CENTRE RETURNS



Significant progress has been made with the replacement building at Tom na Ba after a lengthy delay. Designs had advanced to tender stage around a year ago and prices were submitted by local contractors. However, with the construction sector booming at that time, it was not possible to finalise a contract. Following the lockdown, the project was re-tendered and much lower prices were received as workloads had reduced. From this exercise, CalMax Construction emerged as the most competitive and were duly awarded the contract last November.

Works commenced in December and are due to be completed in the early autumn. Initial siteworks are well advanced and the timber kit is due to arrive in mid-February when more noticeable progress will be evident. It is hoped that the process will proceed relatively smoothly although there are concerns over availability of materials due to the ongoing COVID challenges and supply-chain constraints arising out of Brexit. Meantime, UOG continues to rent accommodation at Comunn Eachdraidh Nis, although staff remain home-based until restrictions are lifted.

## AN UPDATE FROM LISA

Since our previous newsletter, we have faced many more "ups and downs" - as a society, a community, and as an organisation! We continue to live through a pandemic and navigate all the various changes and challenges that brings. Winter is never easy, but it's fair to say a pandemic winter is a true challenge. I urge as many as possible to tap into all that our Sunnd wellbeing programme offers ([www.bookwhen.com/sunnd](http://www.bookwhen.com/sunnd)). The programme includes a series of guided health walks on the estate each week (restriction permitting). If Sunnd is not for you, then why not turn your attention to the Hebridean Garden Project which offers opportunities to learn more about gardening, house plants and how to prepare for spring and beyond. All details of our initiatives are on our website as well as being available in this newsletter and the community newspaper, 'Fios'. The staff team are also working hard on the Plòigh outdoor activity programme in the

hope we can offer something during the holidays. All details of this are on the website [www.ploigh.co.uk](http://www.ploigh.co.uk)

Galson Energy Ltd has faced a huge challenge in recent months with the failure of the subsea cable. This has meant that UOG's main source of income has been compromised for as long as the cable remains out of action. Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SEN) have confirmed a new cable will be required, but exact timescales are yet to be advised. UOG have undertaken a full review of all activity and considered the impact of the large downturn in income. UOG is a resilient organisation but does have to consider the commitments already made and look at how best to move forward for the next 1-2 years, until it is hoped the cable will be operational and the turbines can generate once again.

Following our AGM in November, we welcome two new directors onto the

board of UOG. Murdo Macritchie, Skigersta, and Joanne Havinden, Upper Barvas. For details of our current board of directors please visit our website.

A positive step forward was the commencement of the building works at Tom na Ba on the UOG business centre. The work is later than expected due to the pandemic, but we are commencing sooner than we had expected to when we re-assessed the situation in spring 2020, so this is a positive. We continue to work with the insurance company on the project and are grateful to be at this stage, having committed to a rebuild within two years from the 2019 fire.

As planned, we completed the prescription deliveries at the very end of 2020 and were sorry this service could not continue. Covid-19 funding supported the work and we hope in the future to be able to use some of the learning from this service

to understand what is required, as well as to work closely with surgeries to look at ways of working together for priority groups within the community. Covid-19 has demonstrated that co-production of services etc. can work, and we hope there is some way to put something long-term and helpful in place for those who need it most within the community. Thanks to everyone who volunteered and delivered prescriptions, especially those who helped during the winter months. The dark evenings did not make the task easy!

This year the team have once again produced a great short film for submission to the 'FilmG' Gaelic film competition. The focus was on Cross Stores, who we all recognise as heroes of the pandemic! If you haven't seen the short film or voted, then please visit: [www.filmg.co.uk/en/films/2151/](http://www.filmg.co.uk/en/films/2151/)

All the best to everyone for the year ahead, stay safe during the winter months.

## FILMG 2021 - GET VOTING!

This year, FilmG, the Gaelic short film awards, set the theme of 'Éirich/ Rise'. In response to this, we created 'Sgìre le Spiorad' ('Community Spirit'). This film centred upon how Cross Stores rose to the challenges of the pandemic to assist the most vulnerable in our community, and gave recognition to the great work they continue to deliver.

We are delighted to say that this film has been shortlisted for two awards at the 2021 FilmG awards - 'Best Film' and 'Film Dùthchais as Fheàrr', which celebrates Gaelic films interacting with their heritage and environment. We were the recipients of this award in 2020, when along with our team of young people, we created 'An-Dràsta!' ('Now!'), which focused on the effects of climate change here in the Western Isles.

To vote for our 2021 film 'Sgìre le Spiorad' visit the FilmG website using the link: <http://filmg.co.uk/en/films/2151/>





# UPDATE ON COMMUNITY LAND SCOTLAND ARTIST IN RESIDENCE - BY VIRGINIA HUTCHINSON

Over the last few months I've been working alongside the Urras and Community Land Scotland to produce a series of bronze 'talking' objects. Moulded from cut peat and embedded with digital QR codes, the artworks will form part of a larger audio archive that documents the journey through community land ownership since 2007. We hope to site the bronze artworks around different places in North Lewis in the spring and to invite people to a series of walks and talks around the area. The artworks are a living archive and ongoing conversations, stories and recollections will help to shape the project and aspirations for the future.



# THE HEBRIDEAN COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT

Whilst we are all adapting to these new lockdown measures, we remain extremely positive about delivering this healthy and sustainable project to you all. Though our call out for green-fingered volunteers will have to wait a little bit longer, there is plenty of exciting news to share.

We have been very fortunate to receive further funding from a number of organisations and charities, for which we are very grateful. Scotland Loves Local, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar – Crown Estate and Western Isles Development Trust (WIDT) join National Lottery and Action Earth in supporting our new horticulture venture based at Clan Macquarrie Community Centre (CMCC).

The garden is already beginning to take shape and I am sure many of you who have driven past CMCC of late will have noticed two new polycrubs on site. These will be the heart of the garden and will help to protect our plants from any Hebridean storms that pass through. To this we plan to add plenty of growing space in the form of raised beds, a tool shed and a sensory garden, which will be a place of sanctuary, healing and beauty for the residents of the Galson Estate.

We passionately believe that in these challenging times, community gardens offer a blueprint for sustainable community engagement. They are green spaces where people

can come together in a safe way to grow, to learn and to live healthy lifestyles. Also keep an eye open for new social media channels and online information for the garden – we will keep you updated on these developments.

We very much look forward to sharing this with you all in the coming year.



Find us on instagram and facebook!

# DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

## SUBSEA CABLE UPDATE

After only a few months of coming out of lockdown, UOG was hit with another major blow when the island's subsea electricity cable to the mainland failed. This failure has had a devastating effect on all the community turbines in Lewis and Harris with dramatic reductions in the amounts generated, which is expected to last until August 2021 at least. SSE, as the owner and operator of the cable, has ordered a replacement, which will take 4 months to be manufactured and is hoping for a late summer weather window to complete the installation.

Community generators including Galson Energy have come together to meet with SSE over recent months in an effort to review the options available. It had been hoped that SSE would give consideration to the installation of a larger capacity cable to enable further community renewables projects to be built but the company decided to proceed with a like-for-like investment. Discussions have been held with Ofgem, the electricity regulator, which has highlighted other possible solutions to improve future resilience

and capacity and these are now being discussed with SSE.

This set-back has had serious repercussions for local charities and projects that community wind farms have been supporting across the island and it appears that nearly a year of funding will have been lost. Successful insurance claims have been submitted by UOG and other community generators but that will only provide compensation for 6 out of the 10 months of expected outage.

## PORT OF NESS HARBOUR

UOG is pleased to be assisting Port of Ness Harbour Ltd. to generate proposals for redeveloping the marine facilities after many years of decline. Fisher Advisory was appointed by the company in November to carry out a masterplan and feasibility study into potential investment in the facility that would help to regenerate the local economy. Some initial consultations were carried out in December and engineering surveys are now underway with a view to concluding the whole exercise by the end of March. Funding for this work has been provided by Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

## HOUSE NUMBERING PROJECT

A great number of you applied for our free house numbers for the exterior of your properties. We are delighted to say that these island-made, slate house number plaques are beginning to be distributed, with the first batch delivered at the end of January.

We are distributing these house numbers as we receive the batches from the supplier. Please be patient whilst we deliver these as quickly as we can.

It is still not too late to apply for a house number if you would like to receive one. To submit an application form, visit:

[www.galsontrust.com/housenumberingscheme](http://www.galsontrust.com/housenumberingscheme)







# Habost Household Waste and Recycling Centre

## OPENING HOURS

***Winter Timetable: Monday 28 September 2020 – Saturday 27 March 2021***

	Open from	Open to	Open from	Open to
Monday	10am	12 noon	2pm	4pm
Tuesday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Wednesday	10am	12 noon	2pm	4pm
Thursday	10am	12 noon	2pm	4pm
Friday	10am	12 noon	2pm	4pm
Saturday	9am	12 noon	1pm	4pm
Sunday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed

**Please refrain from disposing items out with these times as this will be treated as fly tipping**



URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN  
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn  
c/o Comunn Eachdraidh Nis  
Cross  
Isle of Lewis  
HS2 0SN

**Tel: 01851 850393**

**[www.galsontrust.com](http://www.galsontrust.com)**

A company registered in Scotland - No:27390

A registered Scottish charity: SC03690