



URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN
GALSON ESTATE TRUST



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2024



A FOREWORD FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON, AGNES RENNIE

Tha mi toilichte fàilte a chur oirbh chun chuairt-litir seo le dòchas às dèidh geamhradh fada gu bheil cùisean a' fàs nas fheàrr. Bha àm an earraich a-riamh a' comharrachadh àm airson fàs agus ùrachadh agus chan eil teagamh nach eil sin ri fhaicinn mun cuairt oirnn a dh'aindeoin na h-aimsire.

Tha e mìorbhaileach a bhith a' coimhead na h-eòin a tilleadh bho thìrean fad às agus chì sinn feadhainn dhuibh sin anns na gàraidhean againn fhèin. Tha tearmann nàdar Loch Stiapabhat a' cur fàilte air na ceudan is iad a' leigeil an anail mus lean iad air an slighe.

Chan e na h-eòin a-mhàin a tha tilleadh dhan dùthaich agus tha sinn toilichte fàilte a chur air luchd-turais a bhios a tadhal oirnn san sgìre. Bheir seo togail dhan iomadh gnothachas a tha san sgìre agus an urra ri cosnadh a dhèanamh tro mhìosan an t-samhraidh. Tha tuilleadh fiosrachaidh san litir seo mu thachartasan agus obair leasachaidh a' dol air adhart do luchd turais agus airson maith muinntir an àite.

Tha an litir seo loma-làn de dh'fhiosrachadh ach tha sibh di-beathta tadhal san ionad an Gabhsann no teachdaireachd a chur ma tha tuilleadh fiosrachaidh a dhìth mu chuspair sam bith.

Welcome to our spring newsletter after what has felt like an exceptionally long winter. Spring time has traditionally been the season of renewal and new life and, despite the best efforts of many storms, we can see evidence of this all around.

There is something quite magical about seeing birds returning to our crofts and gardens after spending winter thousands of miles away, and the nature reserve at Loch Stiapabhat continues to be an important rest stop for migrating birds. It's a constant source of wonder to read about the many exotic visitors spotted by regular watchers.

We are also pleased to welcome other visitors, some who are exploring the area for the first time and others who are returning to visit favourite places. This is a much-needed boost for the businesses who provide hospitality and other services during the short visitor season. Read on to find out more about some of the many activities and events happening in the area for visitors and residents throughout the months ahead.

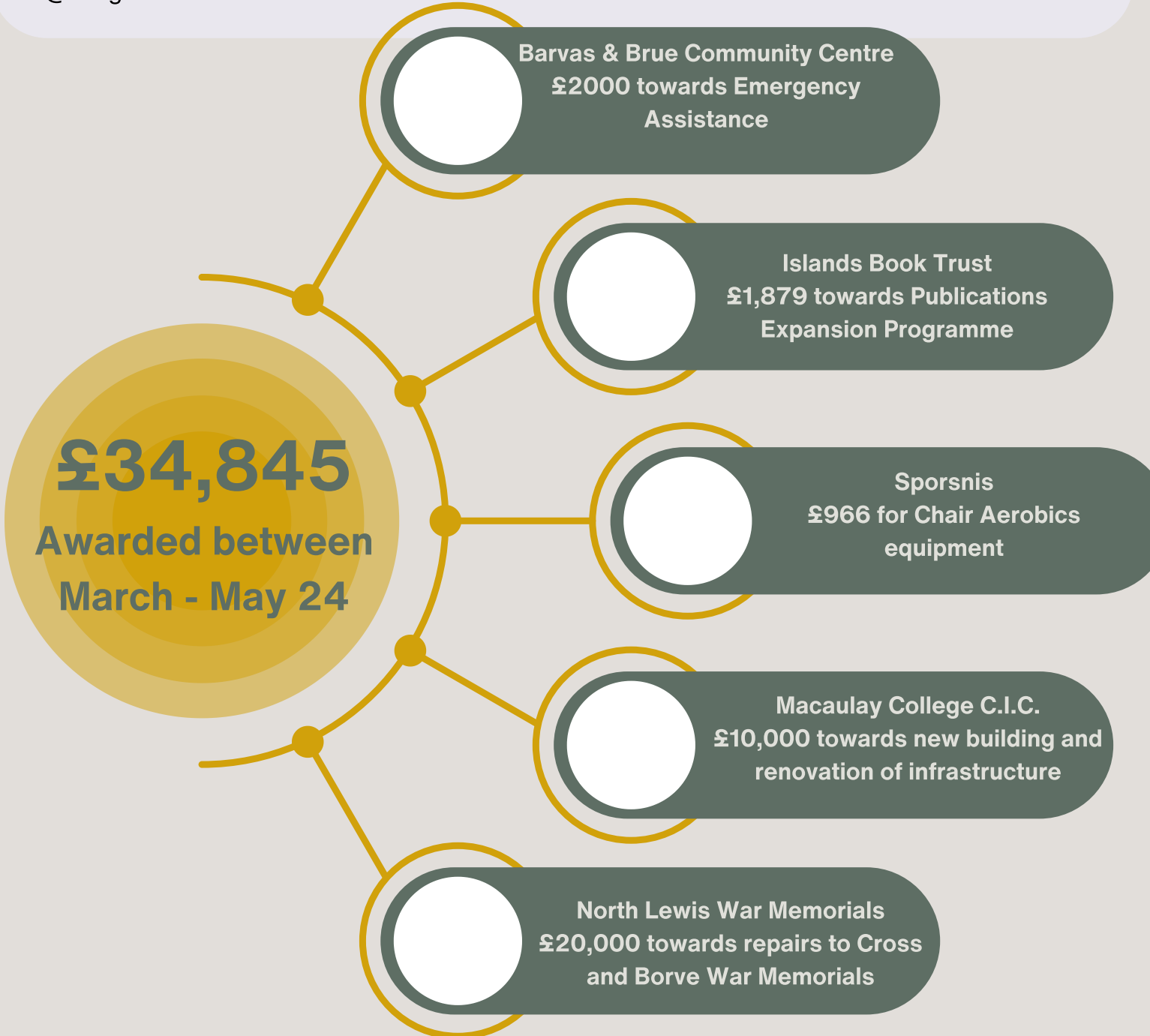
Enjoy the newsletter and feel free to call in or drop us a message if you would like more information about any of the initiatives the Urras is involved in.



COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND

Through our Community Investment Fund, we 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.

If you would like to find out more, please visit our website or email cif@uog ltd.com.



Barvas & Brue Community Centre
£2000 towards Emergency Assistance

Islands Book Trust
£1,879 towards Publications Expansion Programme

Sporsnis
£966 for Chair Aerobics equipment

Macaulay College C.I.C.
£10,000 towards new building and renovation of infrastructure

North Lewis War Memorials
£20,000 towards repairs to Cross and Borge War Memorials

£34,845
Awarded between
March - May 24

LAND MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Photo credit Phillip Walker

Deer Management

Now that the sporting season is over, we are pleased to report that 59 deer were dispatched during the 2023/2024 shooting season. Our volunteers worked extremely hard this season, waking up in the small hours, battling the weather and trekking across the challenging, boggy terrain, all in their own time. We recognise the pressure our volunteers are under to carry out this role on behalf of the community and are appreciative of their commitment, effort and the personal equipment they have used.

There have been a further 15 (approximately) deer killed due to colliding with vehicles so please do take care when driving through the estate. Although we are working hard to manage deer numbers, there is always going to be a risk of deer crossing the roads. If you do hit a deer, please call UOG. We feed numbers and locations to the Lewis and Harris Deer Management Group, Nature Scot and Police Scotland. This evidence assists us with gaining our out of season shooting licenses and night licenses all which help us with the ongoing task of managing deer numbers.

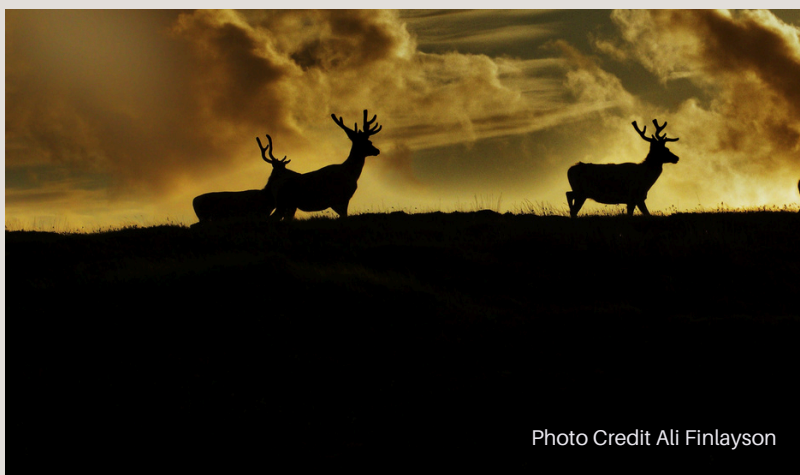


Photo Credit Ali Finlayson

Corncrake Initiative

The RSPB is still looking for entrants to the Corncrake Initiative Scheme. If you can leave your croft empty from the very beginning of April to mid August, then graze it in the winter or cut your silage after 1st August, you may be eligible to enter the scheme, in return for a payment. If you don't have stock and are still interested in the scheme, we could organise stock to graze it. Please contact Shona Morrison on 07825664961 or shona.morrison@rspb.org.uk



SUNND 2024

Sunnd, our health & wellbeing winter programme came to a close at the end of March after three months of activities. Over 1100 participants attended the 137 events over the three months, which ranged from fitness classes to book clubs, and flower arranging classes to ceilidhs, all of which were subsidised by UOG to ensure that they were accessible to as many people as possible. Thank you to everyone who participated and to all those who ran the classes over the winter months.

We value your feedback and invite you to complete our survey here:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/sunnd2024>

1123



Number of participants throughout the entire programme

137

Total number of events
(2023 & 2024 figures in chart include Spòrsnis events. Figure is no of events which took place, 20 further events were cancelled due to weather/unforeseen circumstances)



A saving of approx **£18pp** for those who attended a cookery demo
A saving of **£16pp** for those who attended the Sauna sessions





JOHN MUIR TRUST P7 TRANSITION PROGRAMME

30 children from Sgoil an Taobh Siar, Lionel, Shawbost and Breasclete primary schools have been awarded their John Muir Trust Discovery Award, after spending three days exploring North West Lewis, as part of our primary seven transition programme, in partnership with Urras Oighreachd Chàrlabhaigh.

The primary seven pupils from the four primary schools spent three days, 19th – 21st March, exploring the outdoors, discovering new areas and activities, and learning how to protect and conserve our environment, led by a team of local experts.

The John Muir Trust Discovery Award is an environmental award scheme focused on encouraging people to connect with, enjoy and care for wild places.

During the three days, the school pupils went canoeing on Loch Barvas, mountain biking and litter picking along the Barvas machair, learnt survival skills in a woodland session in Shader, visited Arnol Blackhouse, as well as a trip to the Arnol fank to learn some crofting skills, and lots of other activities.

Here is what some of the children had to say about their experience:

“I learned new skills from the bush craft, and survival skills so I could survive in the wild.”

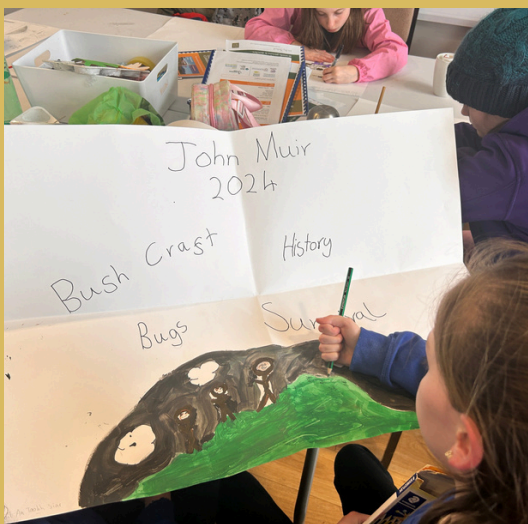
“There are lots of things that you can find outdoors and without looking after the environment there wont be anything left to discover.”

“I’ve met more people and made so many friends!”

“I feel more confident going to the Nicolson now.”

“Canoeing was my favourite, because we all bonded and became friends.”

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn and Urras Oighreachd Chàrlabhaigh started the transition programme in 2020 to ensure that the P7 pupils from the four schools had a chance to meet one another before going to the Nicolson Institute, as well as learning about the area they come from and acquiring new skills.





PLÒIGH

Our Easter Plòigh was a success this year, with many of the activities selling out within the first couple of days of booking going live! Activities including model painting, bird watching, mountain biking, a movie afternoon, baking & crafts, woodland play and lots more, were attended by over 200 participants throughout the week. Plòigh provides subsidised activities during the holidays and the next Plòigh runs from 8th – 19th July 2024.

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





As we mentioned in our last newsletter, we are working in collaboration with Airidhantuim Community Council, Comunn Eachdraidh Nis and Galson Grazing Committee, to commemorate the centenary of the resettlement of Galson village. This historic endeavour, marking 100 years of transformation and community ownership, will culminate in the unveiling of a captivating memorial sculpture, 'na Dorsan', this Autumn.

Great progress has been achieved at Tom na Bà to deliver the first stage of works for na Dorsan. Construction of the gravel base kicked off in mid-March and, assisted by some dry spells of weather, contractor North West Aggregates from Borge has now completed these works. With suitable stone delivered to the site, this allows drystone dyker, Chris Barrowman, to begin construction of the circular stone walls soon.

This year's Dùthchas festival, which will take place over two weeks at the beginning of September, will focus on na Dorsan with a range of events including walks, talks and art workshops, as well as hosting the Simon Fraser Memorial Lecture with Community Land Scotland and Brian Wilson. Local schools will be also involved in a range of activities. Stay tuned for more information coming soon!



Butt of Lewis Development

As the number of tourists, and in particular cruise ship passengers, visiting the Isle of Lewis every year increases, we are keen to ensure that we are able to offer good facilities at spots across North Lewis, whilst also supporting local businesses. The latest developments, including a toilet block and plans for a food vendor pitch at the Butt of Lewis, are part of a long-term plan to expand tourism facilities throughout North Lewis.

The income generated from the campervan site at the Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn Business Centre has partially contributed to the purchase and installation of the toilet blocks at the Butt of Lewis, which will be opening very soon. We are also grateful to Highlands & Islands Enterprise for providing further funding for the development of the toilet block.

We are also keen to speak to local catering businesses who would be interested in pitching their catering truck at the Butt of Lewis during peak season, which we believe could be a profitable opportunity for someone.

We are continually looking to improve our tourism offerings and as such will be developing our Visit North Lewis website and app over the coming months, in terms of branding and content. You can follow Visit North Lewis on [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#) (just search @visitnorthlewis) and you will find the website at www.visitnorthlewis.com. You can download the app from your relevant App Store by searching for Visit North Lewis.

LOCAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Are you a food vendor or looking to start up your own catering truck?
Would you like a pitch at one of the busiest tourist spots on the Isle of Lewis?

We are currently looking to speak to local catering businesses who would be interested in having a pitch at the Butt of Lewis during the summer months.

Email heather@uogltd.com for further information.



VENDORS WANTED

Are you a food vendor or looking to start up your own catering truck?
Would you like a pitch at one of the busiest tourist spots on the Isle of Lewis?

We are currently looking to speak to local catering businesses who would be interested in having a pitch at the Butt of Lewis during the summer months.

Get in touch via the details below for more information.

Tel: 01851 850393

Email: office@uogltd.com

Website: www.galsontrust.com



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Showcase your business with us!

There are so many great businesses across North Lewis and we want to help you shout about your products & services!

We are inviting local businesses to showcase their products and services, free of charge, at our Business Centre in South Galson.

Whether you have a physical product, or a leaflet about your service to display, please get in touch with Heather to enquire about featuring in our new local crafts & services display.

heather@uogltd.com

01851 850393

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

www.galsontrust.com

FREE ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITY

Free advertising opportunity!

There are so many great businesses across North Lewis and we want to help you shout about your products & services!

We are inviting local businesses to showcase their products and services, free of charge, at our Business Centre in South Galson.

Whether you have a physical product, or a leaflet about your service to display, please get in touch with Heather to enquire about featuring in our new local crafts & services display.

Email heather@uogltd.com for more information.



URRAS OIGHREACHD
GHABHSAINN
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**1ST
JUNE**

**FAMILY FISHING
DAY**

**8TH - 19TH
JULY**

**SUMMER
PLÒIGH**

SEPTEMBER

DÙTHCHAS
(INCLUDING NA DORSAN
EVENTS, DATES TBC)

**14TH -18TH
OCTOBER**

**OCTOBER
PLÒIGH**

UOG Staff Updates

Content Creator



We are delighted to welcome Abbie Morrison to the team! Abbie has joined as a Content Creator, through a partnership with MG Alba, and will be working with us to create a wide range of digital content. You will no doubt meet Abbie out and about at various events so please do say hello!

Summer Placement



We will be welcoming Hugh Macdonald later this month for a summer placement. Hugh will be with us until September and will be focusing on land management.





BECOME A PROUD MEMBER OF YOUR COMMUNITY LAND TRUST!

Are you a resident of the Galson Estate for over nine months each year? Are you eager to play an active role in your community's growth, support local initiatives, and stay in the loop about all things community land trust related?

Membership Perks:

- **Voting Power:** Have your say and vote at the AGM
- **Your Voice Matters:** Opportunities to voice your opinions
- **Get Involved:** Take part in various local working groups
- **Stay Informed:** Get registered for our E-Newsletters

Becoming a member is easy and costs just £1 for a lifetime membership!

If you're 16 or older and fall into any of the following categories, you're eligible:

- Live within the Galson Estate Trust area
- Reside on the Isle of Lewis and registered with the Crofters Commission as a tenant of a croft within the Galson Estate area
- Live elsewhere but registered with the Crofters Commission as a tenant of a croft within the Galson Estate Trust area and actively work on that croft

**Join us today and help shape the future of
Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn!**

**Become a member at www.galsontrust.com,
visit us at our office in South Galson or call us
on 01851 850411**

Habost Amenity Site



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

SUMMER OPENING HOURS
1 APRIL 2024 - 27 OCTOBER 2024

MONDAY

11.00AM TO 1.00PM
4.00PM TO 6.00PM

TUESDAY

CLOSED

WEDNESDAY

11.00AM TO 1.00PM
4.00PM TO 6.00PM

THURSDAY

11.00AM TO 1.00PM
4.00PM TO 6.00PM

FRIDAY

11.00AM TO 1.00PM
4.00PM TO 6.00PM

SATURDAY

10.00 AM TO 1.00PM
2.00PM TO 5.00PM

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 850411

OUT OF HOURS

Zero Waste Western Isles (CNES): 01851 709900

SEPA: 01851 706477

SEPA 24 hour pollution report line: 0800 80 70 60

UOG: 07469 189 449

Site Licence Number: WML / N / 0220269

Keep in touch with our latest news, updates & events by following us on Facebook, Instagram & LinkedIn. You can also read our regular updates in *Fios*. Please note our new telephone number.

CONTACT US



01851 850 411



office@uogltd.com



Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn, Tom na Bà,
Gabhsann bho Dheas Eilean Leòdhais, HS2 0SH

www.galsontrust.com