

JULY 2021

UOG SUMMER NEWSLETTER

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Facal bhon chathraiche

A note from the Chairperson

Fàilte oirbh gu ar cuairt-litir samhraidh. Abair làithean bòidheach a tha air cuideachadh le obair croite agus obair gàrraidh. Chan eil teagamh nach eil àireamh mhòr luchd turais air a thighinn dhan eilean agus dhan sgìre againn fhìn agus tha e feumail gu bheil goireasan samhail àiteachan-bidhe agus àiteachan-fuirich ann air an coinneamh, toirt cosnadh do mhuinntir an àite.

Ma tha duine sam bith agaibh an sàs ann am buidhnean coimhearsnachd 's tha feitheamh ri obair a chur air adhart, bidh fhios agaibh gu bheil sgeama maoin an Urrais fhathast dùinte. Tha sinn beò an dòchas gun tèid an càball ùr an sàs san Lùnastail agus gu leig sin dhuinn tòiseachadh a cruthachadh dealain aon uair eile. Bidh co-dhiù toiseach 2022 ann mus urrainn dhan Urras maoin a thoirt seachad ged a dheidheadh an obair air adhart mar bu chòir.

Bidh sibh air faicinn gu bheil Lisa NicIlleathain, manaidsèar an Urrais, a' fàgail a dreuchd agus tha sanasachd a' dol an-dràst airson neach às ùr a lìonas an dreuchd. Bidh ionndrainn mhòr air Lisa 's i air a bhith còmhla ris an Urras airson grunn bhliadhnachan a-nise, ach tha sinn coimhead air adhart ri fàilte bhlàth a chur air manaidsèar ùr cuideachd.

Welcome to the summer edition of the Urras newsletter.

What lovely weather we have enjoyed this summer and what a benefit this has been to gardeners and crofters alike. Clearly we have seen many tourists recently and the north of Lewis has seen many of those visit. This has been particularly good for the catering, accommodation and other service providers after such a difficult year.

Those of you involved in community groups, who are now keen to plan new works, will know that the Urras Community Investment Fund is still closed. We are very optimistic that the new cable across the Minch will be laid as promised during August and that we, and other community generators, will be able to start earning an income from electricity generation once again. It is, however, unlikely that the Fund will start to approve grants before early 2022.

You will have seen that the Urras manager Lisa Maclean is leaving to take up a new post. Lisa has been central to all that the Urras has achieved over the last few years but we look forward to welcoming the new manager in due course and can promise a great job working in a great community.



An update from the Chief Executive

It has been great to see the Plòigh programme underway this summer and super to have so many partners working together to deliver this special programme for children and young people. There are so many positive aspects to this programme - the collaborative working, the fantastic range of activities, but mostly the number of families, children and young people taking part. A huge thanks has to go to all those who delivered activities and to my own team for their work in co-ordinating the programme. Thanks also to all those who came along and to parents/grandparents/carers for continuing to engage with the programme. The team are already planning the autumn activities for the October break!

The new office building in Galson is progressing well, with the cladding almost complete on the exterior. The weather has been kind, which has helped over recent months, although the rock-hard ground could make any sort of landscaping a challenge, although I'm confident we might have some rain before the time comes to work on that. Occupation of the building is still expected to take place in the autumn.

Another successful drystone walling course was undertaken in July. We had a waiting list following our spring course, so decided we would offer a summer course too and make the most of the dry weather and longer days. Another beautiful wall created, to add to the dozen or so already created through the courses.



Lisa with operations staff in 2019.

I can't write a full column without making reference to my own change in personal circumstances. I'm sorry to say that after almost 11 years at UOG I am moving on, not just from UOG, but also from Lewis. I have accepted a new post based in N.Ireland and my family and I plan to move there at the end of the year. Recruitment is underway for my post and we are hopeful there can be a short handover period if possible, before I take up my new post with Belfast Central Mission on 11th October.

For details of the vacancy please visit the website or contact the office directly.

Please remember our own staff continue to work from home.

Please contact:

**office@uogltd.com or call 01851 850393
(this number diverts to a mobile).**

**You can also visit the website at
www.galsontrust.com**

for further information on UOG activities.

The team at Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn would like to thank Lisa for her leadership over the years and wish her every success in her new role.

URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

VACANCY
GENERAL MANAGER
JOIN OUR TEAM

LET NEW ADVENTURES BEGIN

If you're looking for an exciting managerial role, with a dynamic community organisation in a beautiful location, then join our fantastic team and let new adventures begin.

For more information about us and about this opportunity visit our website.

www.galsontrust.com/job-vacancies

UOG Business Centre - Updates

Construction at South Galson has continued apace over the summer and the building is becoming more recognisable as an office each week.

The contractor, CalMax Construction, experienced a major delay with the external cladding material and had to create an alternative approach to keeping the structure wind and watertight in the early summer as work moved on internally. Fortunately, the weather was quite favourable whilst the cladding was being manufactured and delivered with very little rainwater making its way through the temporary protection. Fitting of the external cladding is now at an advanced stage and should be completed within the school holiday period. Internally, works have moved ahead considerably with all the timber framing completed, services led through the building and decoration now well advanced. The final stages leading up to handover are now looming, primarily involving joinerywork and service installations. Additional works have also been instructed across the site to encompass visitor facilities including toilets, waste disposal facilities and a small number of overnight parking bays. This had originally been envisaged as a later phase but the provision of grant funding from Highlands and Islands Enterprise for tourism infrastructure meant that these elements could be accelerated and incorporated within the current construction contract.

Handover of the facilities to Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn is now scheduled for October. Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn staff continue to work from home until the Scottish Government's preference in favour of homeworking is revised.



2022 UOG Calendar

*Don't forget -  calendar submissions for the 2022 calendar are due by **30th August!** www.galsontrust.com to upload your photos of the Galson Estate*

Health Walks and Buggy & Toddler Walks

Our Health Walks are a safe and sociable way for anyone of any ability to get some exercise and meet people on the Estate. We run a Buggy and Toddler Walk on a Monday, followed by Bookbug, and a Health Walk on a Friday.

Mondays 1:30pm

We meet every **Monday** at Eoropie Play Park for a Family Buggy Walk and a Bookbug session afterwards. Walk begins at **1:30pm**.

There will be no Buggy & Toddler Walk on 2nd and 9th August owing to staff holidays.

Fridays 10.00am

We have an established group of Health Walkers who meet every **Friday** at **10am** in locations throughout the Estate. See adjacent for meeting locations if you'd like to join us.

The meeting points for August and September are:

6th August - Barvas Machair
13th August - Skigersta Peat rd
20th August - Borge Peat Rd
27th August - Port of Ness to Dùn Éistean
3rd September - Ballantrushal loop
10th September - Habost/Swainbost Machairs
17th September - Melbost Borge coastal route towards Shader
24th September - Butt of Lewis

If you have any questions or queries concerning Health Walks, please contact us:



office@uogltd.com
or
01851 850 393



Dùthchas



Dùthchas, our annual festival celebrating the heritage of the Galson Estate, will get underway this year between **4th - 11th September**, in a blend of in-person and online events. Dùthchas celebrates all aspects of heritage, including history & genealogy, music & dance, traditional skills, food & drink, and language & writing. Past years have seen black pudding demonstrations at Cross Stores and genealogy sessions at the Comunn Eachdraidh Nis. 2021's programme is shaping up to be just as fantastic as previous years.

There is still time to get involved should you wish to host a session. Please get in touch by visiting the dedicated website: **www.duthchas.com**

The programme for 2021 will be announced shortly, so keep an eye out on our social media channels for more information.

Photo: at 2019's Dùthchas, when Ian Stephen and Ken Linklater brought an afternoon of stories about the traditional skiff boats, with musical accompaniment.

House Numbering Scheme



With the supplier completing the final order for our free slate house numbers, we had almost 500 applications scheme. The final order will be out for delivery throughout August.

We are grateful for your patience and co-operation whilst we carried out this project. Thank you to all who applied - numbers will make it easier for our first responders and emergency services to locate properties on the Galson Estate, both now and in the future.

We are considering how we manage future applications to the scheme, so please get in touch if you did not get a chance to apply before 16th July 2021. If you applied previously and have not yet received your house number, please contact us via the usual channels:

01851 850 393 or **office@uog ltd.com**

Drystone Walling Courses

Our ever-popular Drystone Walling Course returned in June this year and was quickly booked up, with a waiting list with enough participants for another course to boot! A perfect weekend of weather helped make for an enjoyable course with 8 participants learning the new skill of drystone walling and hopefully going home to build their own in due course. The course was held at Spòrsnis where they now have a beautiful wall to the right-hand side when you're looking at the building - stop by when you're visiting next. Due to the popularity of the course this year an additional course was added in July, which again was held in Spòrsnis to extend the existing wall further. The top photo shows the team in June with the finished wall, and the lower photo the team in July, who extended the original wall.

The next course will be held on the **10th and 11th of September** at Clan MacQuarrie Community Centre, Borge. Booking details for this will be announced on our social media and our website.



Summer Plòigh, & The Hebridean Community Garden Updates

Summer Ploigh 2021 has been our most successful programme so far. We ran a total of 21 sessions for 5-18 year olds, with all sessions being either full or almost full. The partners this summer were Spòrsnis, Guth Airson Iartrasan Nis (GAIN - Eoropie Play Park), Comunn na Gàidhlig, Spòrs Gàidhlig, Scaladale and The Hebridean Community Garden. Between all of the partners, we ran a variety of sessions from, gardening to stand up paddle boarding. We then rounded the whole two weeks off with a fantastic family fun day, organised by Spòrsnis staff.

The sessions were open to kids from across the island and those visiting and as always we had a great mix of kids from all over. However, it was predominantly kids from the Galson Estate that attended.

The Plòigh partnership is going from strength to strength and we will be planning for October holidays once the summer break is over, with plenty more exciting sessions on offer.

Photos: Identifying machair flowers GAIN's 'Flowers and Fairies' sessions and one of our teams at the family fun day.



The Hebridean Community Garden (joint partnership between UOG and the Clan Macquarrie Community Centre), is progressing well, with polycrubs erected and raised beds fitted. In July, Christopher of The Hebridean Community Garden Project hosted gardening sessions for young people as part of Plòigh - see above for more details. For more updates on The Hebridean Community Garden Project and to get involved, please see their new website, or follow them on social media:
www.clanmacq.com/gardening, Instagram: Hebridean Community Garden, Facebook: Hebridean Community Garden

Dreuchd Ùr - New Job

Bidh mi a fàgail mo dhreuchd aig Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn aig deireadh an t-luchar às dèidh bliadhna thar fòrladh màthaireil. Chòrd am bliadhna bho dheireadh rium gu mòr tro àm a bha gu math duilich dhuinn uile leis an t-suidheachadh a tha air a bhith san t-saoghal sna 18 mìosan a chaidh seachad. Ionnsaich mi gu leòr ann an ùine ghoirid ged a bha a chuid as motha de m' obair bhon taigh air sgàth riaghailtean an riaghaltais.

Tha e air còrdadh rium a bhith ag obair sa choimhearsnachd nuair a tha e air a bhith ceadaichte sin a dhèanamh le clubaichean às dèidh na sgoile. Plòigh agus a' dèanamh leasan air-loidhne do dh'òigridh ag ionnsachadh a' ghiotàr. B' e seo na prìomh cothroman a bh' ann Gàidhlig a bhrosnachadh is a bhogadh san òigridh sa bhliadhna a chaidh seachad agus bha e cho

math feadhainn òga fhaicinn a bhith cho misneachail agus comasach sa chànain. A' bharrachd air an seo, tha mi air a bhith an sàs ann an gu leòr eile thar na dusan mìos a leithid pròiseactan FilmG, mar as urrainn dhuinn Gàidhlig a bhrosnachadh sa choimhearsnachd, pasgain fiosrachaidh mun oighreachd, eadar-theangachaidhean airson làraichean-lìn ùr is eile.

'S e cothrom-obrach air leth a tha seo a bhith ag obair ann an sgioba faisg agus cothrom cuideachadh sa choimhearsnachd. Tha fiosrachadh mun obair ri lorg air meadhanan-sòisealta UOG.

Mar sin leibh.

Our Gaelic Development Officer, Alex John Morrison, who joined us for one year as a maternity cover, left us at the end of July to work with the BBC. We wish him every success!



Community Land Scotland Art Project

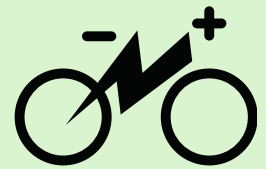


Virginia's artworks, which are sited across the Galson Estate

Produced in collaboration with artist Virginia Hutchison, the project 'Stories of Radical Landownership in North Lewis' brings together narratives surrounding the community land buyout of the Galson Estate in 2007. This project forms part of the Scotland-wide Community Land Scotland and The Stove Network project, 'Artists in Residence', which aims to raise awareness of community landownership, telling the stories of post-purchase community landowners.

Virginia's project weaves together local audio archives and interviews and brings them into contemporary conversations surrounding community land ownership. There are physical artworks sited in the landscape of north Lewis (the bronze-cast peats seen on the left-hand side in the photo), which UOG staff and members of the public visited as part of a walk and talk event in June. You can also listen to the audio recordings at: www.galsontrust.com/clartproject

E-Bikes



For six weeks, we had the loan of three e-bikes (electric bikes), courtesy of Home Energy Scotland and Community Energy Scotland. We hosted an open day at the end of May to give members of the public and staff a try of the e-bikes before loaning them free of charge, and we created route packs to give inspiration as to where to take the bikes out for a spin. We were delighted with the uptake of the e-bikes over the course of the six weeks and almost every bike was rented each week.

We really hope you enjoyed the experience using the e-bikes. If you borrowed an e-bike and have any photos of them in use, we would love to see them: office@uog ltd.com, or send them to us on social media - Instagram: **UrrasOG**, Facebook: **Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn**.

Open Call - Talks

What knowledge can you share about the Galson Estate? Are you a local expert in the flora and fauna of this area? Or are you a weather enthusiast with stories to tell about this part of the world? Are you the go-to person for questions on peat, or is local archaeology your area of expertise?

We're seeking local experts and enthusiasts to deliver one talk as part of a programme over the course of the summer months, whether this year or in the future. Your talk can be in English, Gaelic or bilingual and, if capacity permits, could include a guided walk supported by Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn staff.

We all know the unique aspects that make the Galson Estate special for every one of us - let's share them with one another.

If you would like to express your interest in participating or for more information, please send us an email:

office@uog ltd.com



Photo credits: Simon Amos & Ali Finlayson



URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

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We continue to work in a blended and flexible way, holding some meetings in person, if appropriate, but also continuing to make use of online meetings.

Our staff will continue to work from home until our office construction at Tom na Ba is completed in the autumn.

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