



URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN
GALSON ESTATE TRUST



SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2023

Photo Credit to Colin Morrison

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A FOREWORD FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON

Fàilte oirbh chun chuairt-litir seo. A thuilleadh air corra latha greannach saoilidh mi gun aontaich a h-uile duine gur e samhradh math a bh' againn. Bha an t-Ògmhios teth agus tioram, dà rud air nach bi sinn a' gearain ro thrìc anns na h-eileanan. Lean an tiormachd sin fad an t-samhraidh agus ged a bha obair aig croitearan a' cumail burn ri stoc, abair gun tug am blàths fàs air leasan agus bha teas anns na taighean plastaig a bha cus aig amannan. Chan eil teagamh nach do dh'fhalbh luchd turais le deagh chuimhneachain air an eilean.

Tha an litir seo loma-làn le fiosrachadh mu na th'air a bhith dol. `S cha bheag sin eadar obair ullachaidh air plana fearainn, rannsachadh leasachadh taigheadais, rianachd fearann chroitreachd, program Plòigh còmhla ri com-pàirtichean eile, agus iomadh seòrsa rud eile. Na biodh leisg oirbh fios a chur thugainn no tadhal a-staigh aig an Urras ma tha sibh son an tuilleadh fiosrachaidh fhaighinn mu nì sam bith.

Mas e is gu bheil ùidh aig duine agaibh pàirt a ghabhail san obair seo mar bhall den Bhòrd nach beachdaich sibh air ur h-ainm a chur air adhart aig àm na coinneamh bhliadhnail.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter. It's been a lovely summer and June was particularly warm and dry. Two things we rarely complain about in the islands. The dry weather continued and its been challenging for many crofters to make sure stock had access to plenty water. At the same time the continuing warmth contributed to some wonderful gardens, both vegetables and flowers. Polytunnels and crubs reached extraordinary temperatures and daytime work was often impossible. The many tourists visiting the area for the first time must be going home with some lovely memories of their island holidays.

The newsletter is packed with information and will give you a flavour of the many activities Urras staff are involved in ranging from land management to crofting administration, the summer programme for young people run with partners and much more. Please do not hesitate to call in at the office or contact the Urras if you would like more information about anything.

If any readers would like to play a greater part in the work of the Urras please consider a nomination to the Board at the forth coming AGM. Information on all of this will be sent to members.

Agnes Rennie
August 2023



Plòigh

Plòigh

MHÒR!



Plòigh

Plòigh

MHÒR!

16TH - 20TH
OCTOBER

DETAILS COMING SOON!

WWW.PLOIGH.CO.UK



LAND MANAGEMENT UPDATE

We're pleased to share some important updates about our efforts to care for our land and preserve its natural balance. Our focus remains on maintaining the beauty and vitality of Galson Estate.

Taking on Invasive Species

A proactive approach this summer, we've stepped up our efforts to manage invasive species, particularly gunnera plants. Gunnera is spreading rapidly across Galson Estate and the entire Western Isles. Thanks to funding from Community Land Outer Hebrides, our team members and volunteers are now qualified to address this issue by using pesticides. We've devised a five-year plan to tackle this challenge, and you'll notice our staff and volunteers working to manage gunnera growth through August and September.

Working Hand in Hand with Nature Scot's Goose Management

Our partnership with Nature Scot's goose management scheme continues. This initiative aims to minimise losses in agriculture while supporting international nature conservation goals. Carloway Estate, in charge of the scheme, has authorised controlled goose hunting on the estate. By managing geese effectively, we aim to maintain a sustainable greylag goose population without causing significant harm to our grass crops. A thorough review of this scheme is planned before the 2024 shooting season.

Prioritising Responsible Deer Management

Ensuring sustainable deer management is a top priority for us. We collaborate closely with the Lewis and Harris Deer Management Group, aligning with Nature Scot's recommendations for North Lewis. Galson Estate spans three sporting lease areas and collaborates closely with leaseholders to ensure responsible deer population management. Our goal is to maintain a healthy deer population at a level that preserves habitats, while also considering public health and crofting interests.

Keeping a Watchful Eye on Our Environment

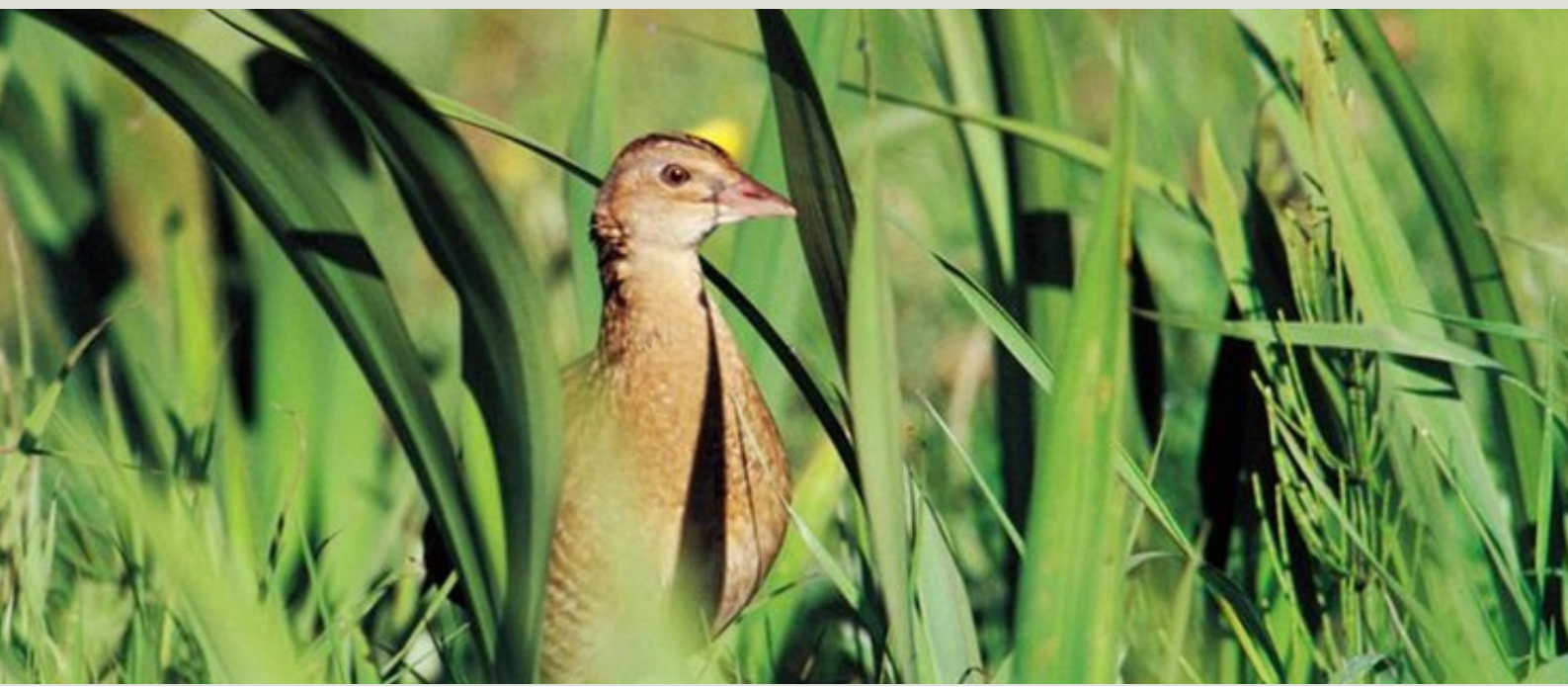
Regular surveys and monitoring efforts are key to understanding and protecting our ecosystem. For instance, RSPB conducts yearly surveys for corncrakes across the Estate and undertakes wader and wildfowl surveys at Loch Stiapabhat. Additionally, we monitor specific species of interest as part of broader national surveys, helping us safeguard our unique environment.

Addressing the Impact of Increased Visitors

With more visitors in recent years, we're mindful of the growing impact on our land, particularly along the coastline where tourist attractions are concentrated. We're exploring sustainable tourism infrastructure solutions to manage and safeguard these areas. We'll keep you updated as these plans take shape.

Strong Partnerships for Responsible Land Management

Collaborations with organisations like Nature Scot, RSPB, Peatland Action, and John Muir Trust play a vital role in our land management efforts. We're committed to working alongside local townships and communities to make informed decisions about land use. We aim to use protocols that enhance transparency, accountability, and governance of our land.





BUILDING A THRIVING COMMUNITY: HOUSING INITIATIVES AND FUTURE PLANS

In order to succeed in our vision of a *“A thriving and well-connected community with excellent local services and amenities, harnessing its natural assets to sustain a unique cultural and social environment.”* We need to ensure that there is adequate and efficient housing available to allow local people to remain in their community and to welcome more to relocate to the area.

Recognising the challenges posed by the rising housing market, and understanding that owning a home has become increasingly unattainable for many of our fellow residents, we, as community landowners, have embarked on a strategic endeavour. Our objective is to present a range of affordable housing solutions tailored to our local populace.

As community landowners we are working on a plan to deliver a variety of affordable housing options to the local community. A development for the Upper Barvas township is underway bringing together partners from HHP, TIG and CnES to work together with the community on delivering a phased project which aim to offer various housing options. These encompass affordable rentals, shared equity opportunities, open-market choices, and self-build plots. Moreover, we aspire to incorporate a forward-looking element within the site: the potential inclusion of extra care facilities. This feature would serve our senior community members, enabling them to receive the necessary care and support they require, closer to home.

Alongside this substantial endeavor, we are diligently planning a comprehensive housing needs assessment for the broader estate area. This assessment will shed light on the housing requirements for smaller-scale developments, as well as the availability of serviced self-build plots. In all our initiatives, our commitment to energy efficiency is unwavering. We are dedicated to ensuring that any housing project we embark upon adheres to the highest standards of energy conservation.

Furthermore, we are actively exploring avenues to enhance the existing housing infrastructure. Our focus extends beyond just new developments – we want to empower our community members to optimise the energy efficiency of their current homes, thus guaranteeing comfortable, warm, and secure living conditions for all.

As these exciting ventures gain momentum, we wholeheartedly invite the input of our community members. Your perspectives are instrumental in shaping these ambitious plans and transforming our shared vision into reality. By working together, we can forge a community that not only thrives but also stands as a testament to what can be achieved when we unite toward a common goal.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND



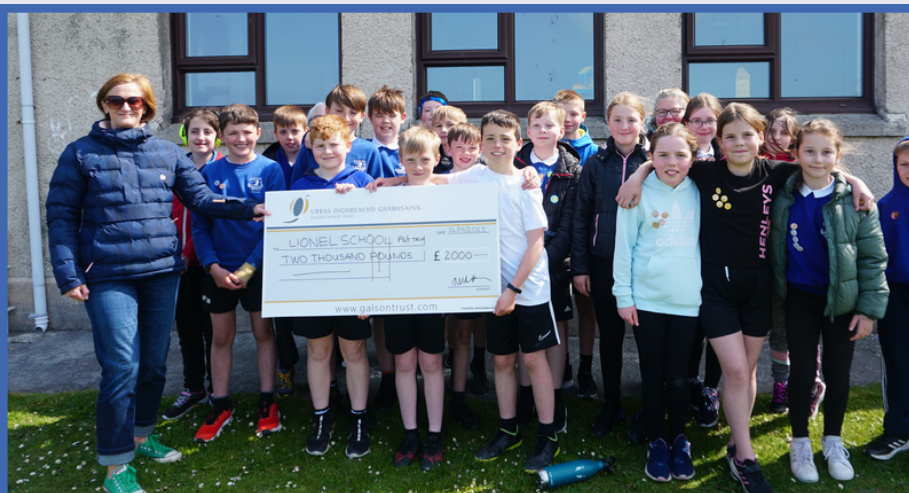
The Community Investment Fund was created to invest funds generated from the renewables project back into the Galson Estate Trust community. But it's not just about money - the program also provides valuable advice, training, guidance, and aftercare to support the development and success of various projects.

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (UOG) aims 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.

If you have an idea for a project that aligns with these goals, we encourage you to submit an application!

The Community Investment Fund is here to support your initiatives and make a positive impact on our community.

To apply or for more information, please contact us at: cif@uogltd.com

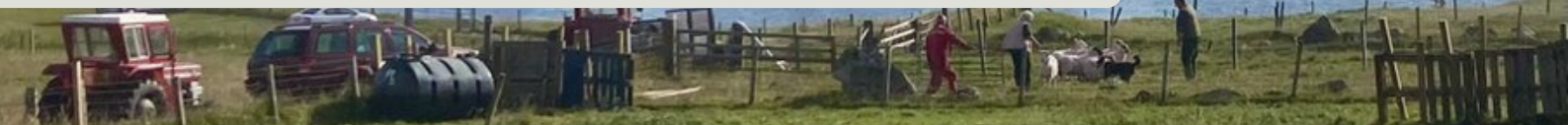


Awards Granted from September 2022 - May 2023

Amount	Recipient	Purpose
£2,000	Ness F.C.	Highland Amateur Cup: Semi Final
£1,000	Acair	The Nicolson Institute: 1873-2023: A 150 Year Celebration
£2,000	Church of Scotland	Ness Youth Group
£6,284	Galson Cemetery	Galson Cemetery Storage Facility
£4,000	Comunn Eachdraidh Nis	An Tilleadh Exhibition
£10,000	Hebrides Mountain Rescue	Contribution to the build of the new MRT base
£7,800	Carthannas Nis	Development of Office Space
£10,000	Lewis & Harris Youth Pipe Band	Drumming Tutor Provision & Uniform Completion
£2,000	Galson Grazings	South Galson Dipper House Regeneration
£5,000	Sporsnis	Free Chair Aerobics and Gym Use for Senior Citizens
£2,000	Carthan Nis	New Washing Machine
£1,398	Taigh Dhonnchaidh	New Signage
£2,000	MacAulay College	Remote Service Provision
£2,000	Ness F.C.	Pitch & Ground Repairs
£3,342	GAIN	Coffee - Fresh Air & Fun Project
£2,000	Lionel School	P6/P7 Residential Trip
£2,000	Sgoil An Taobh Siar	P6/P7 Residential Trip
£2,000	North Lewis War Memorials	Condition Surveys
£1,638	Comunn Eachdraidh Nis	Memorial Refurbishment
£2,000	Ness F.C. Social Club	Ness Gala Day 2023
£8,000	Western Isles Island Games Association	Natwest Island Games XIX Guernsey 2023
£13,775	Falmadair Trust	Sgoth Jubilee - Tilleachdainn/Jubilee Returning

The full CIF Annual Report will be published in the coming weeks. Keep an eye on our social media platforms and our website.

COST OF LIVING SUPPORT DELIVERY - A SNAPSHOT



Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (UOG) initiatives helping the Galson Estate through the cost of living crisis.

£63129 of UOG funds have been spent on the following projects since 1st December 2023:

951

£60 local shop vouchers delivered to households



209

Heated throws for the elderly of the community



40

Sets of cold weather outdoor clothing supplied and delivered to nurseries



469

Subsidised lunches to over 60's delivered by Comunn Eachdraidh Nis in January



364

Subsidised adults activities through the 'Sunnd' initiative



1702

Subsidised children's activities



3260

Subsidised uses of the laundrette



The Hebridean Community Garden Summer 2023

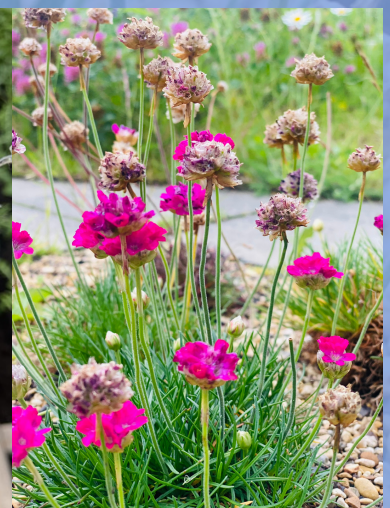
Christopher Smail - Project Manager



Summer 2023 is an exciting time for The Hebridean Community Garden, with lots of new developments and projects coming to life. The mini heat wave that draped Lewis in waves of golden sunshine and shimmering light back in June created the optimum conditions for our vegetables, herbs and plants to thrive. It has been a steady wave of sowing, watering and planting out since then for all of us here at the community garden - and the hard work has paid off.

Our honesty box has been refilled throughout the summer months with delicious organic produce for the community - bags of rocket, lettuce and spinach alongside harvests of onion and turnip are regularly snapped up. Keeping up with demand has been a fun and challenging opportunity. A selection of perennial and annual pots, everything grown in our polycrubs from seed, has also been available to purchase at Cross Stores.

We have run a variety of workshops and events at the garden to cater to a range of needs within the community. Our Plòigh sessions during the Easter and Summer holidays were fully booked and allowed us to share our knowledge of growing vegetables and identifying wildflowers with the next generation of gardeners. This summer we also ran a series of workshops on subjects relevant to island growers and connected to wider trends in horticulture today - creating a wildlife garden, selecting wind tolerant plants and using trees in a planting scheme.



The physical garden in the grounds of Clan MacQuarrie Community Centre continues to grow - to match our ambitions. We will shortly complete our latest stage in the garden's infrastructure plan, adding a wheelchair ramp to the outdoor classroom, a new compost bay area, series of wheelchair accessible raised beds, potting bench and drystone walls. All of this will allow us to greatly expand the services that we provide to the community.

One of the highlights of our project is the sensory garden, which over the summer months becomes a kaleidoscope of colour with the wildflower meadow bursting into life. Watching the bees, butterflies, moths and other invertebrates dance across the native flowers is a joy to see. With the help of the John Muir Trust transition programme, we added three new herbs beds to the space. These are now showing ripples of greenery, with thyme, mint, nasturtium and lemon balm cascading down the sides.

www.hebrideancommunitygarden.co.uk



UOG Staff Updates



Jen Adil - Smith

Jen joined the team as Administrator in March 2023. Her role is to support the administrative team, and to ensure the efficient day-to-day running of the Urras office.



Maryann MacAulay

Maryann joined the team as Media & Communications Officer in April 2023. Maryann's role is to manage our internal and external communications and is our link to the media.



Sandy Morrison

Sandy is a Film and Media Student studying at Stirling University. He has spent the summer working with us on a summer placement as part of the Greis Gníomhachais Programme.

CAREERS WITH US

We would love to hear from you if you are interested in opportunities for apprenticeships, placements, work experience and volunteering.

**DEVELOPING YOUNG
WORKFORCE**



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 our wonderful
Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn!**

**Become a member at www.galsontrust.com, visit us at our
office in South Galson or call us on 01851 850393**





TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

*We want to hear from you.
Give us your ideas and your feedback -
have your say!*



URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

November 2023

Please follow our social media platforms & website for further details which will be announced in due course

Become a Member TODAY!



COMMUNITY LAND WEEK 2023

QUIZ NIGHT



WITH TOM MACIVER AND MAGGIE MACKAY

FRI 27TH OCT @ 7.30PM

UOG BUSINESS CENTRE



MEMBERS OF URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN ONLY

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A MEMBER GET IN TOUCH.

In honour of Community Land Week we are celebrating 100 years since the first community buyout! Come along and join us for a quiz about the area and put your local knowledge to the test. Teams of 4 max.

Enjoy cheese and wine provided by the Good Food Boutique accompanied by live music.
Transport will be available!

Booking details will be published in due course!



URRAS OIGHREACHD GHABHSAINN
GALSON ESTATE TRUST

Keep in touch with our latest news, updates & events by following us on Facebook, Instagram & Twitter. You can also read our regular updates in *Fios*.

CONTACT US



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