



Update for Members and Friends – End of September 2017

We are at the end of a busy summer for the Trust and its Trading Company. The Atlantic Islands Centre has been open for over 2 years now since end May 2015; and if it is generally accepted that it takes five years for a new business enterprise to settle down to run more smoothly, then we are still only half way there. The workload for all concerned, both staff and volunteers is continuous, especially as we have had to work through the peak season again without a manager in place. However we hope this gap in our workforce may soon be filled.

Café: Our chef, Archie Frost, left us in mid-July to take up a post at a hotel in Argyll as Assistant General Manager. We wish him well in his new role. So we were grateful to him in the final weeks he was here for training the venue assistants to cook the menu in the café. On Saturday evenings the Centre has been open for the normal menu as well as the bar on Saturday evenings, and this has proved popular. Once again the Luing Bakers have made a major contribution to the operation with their amazing variety of home baking, which has been appreciated by residents and community alike.



The success of the café has been recognised by the award of the Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence, no mean feat for a small operation and a great credit to the Café staff. This award takes at least 12 months to achieve.

The Loyalty Cards have been delayed but are now being rolled out in order and distributed to Life-Members and to all Members and Adult Friends who have renewed their subscription for the coming year. The card must be swiped at the till on each occasion by the named person to gain the points and then to spend the points. Please remember to renew your membership.

Our Training Officer, Jonathan Robertson, funded through the Voluntary Action Fund, finished his year's contract in June and his cheerful approach to training will be missed! He will appear for a few more occasions to complete some outstanding sessions.

Events at the Atlantic Islands Centre:

Music and theatre events began later than usual, as funding constraints and touring schedules combined to produce delays, but then came at weekly intervals through the summer holidays!



Donald MacNeill – Colonsay



Celtic band – Outside Track

This was not ideal, but we did have a number of highly successful evenings, including return visits from the Mull Theatre, Outside Track, the Ceilidh Trail, & Ben Maggs.

Funding Results: An Art Trail project began in the summer, with funding from the Tesco Bags of Help scheme and Argyll & Bute Council's Supporting Communities Fund. The idea is

Registered Office: Atlantic Islands Centre, Cullipool, Isle of Luing, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4TX

to have two artists, working in different media, interpret the same aspects of the landscape of Luing in their different ways. The art works will be located on Luing so that they can be compared and discussed by visitors and residents. Pauline Justin is producing three paintings, copies of which will be mounted on slate plinths outside (the originals will have to remain indoors), while Dugald MacInnes has already produced three large slate mosaics to be mounted alongside copies of the paintings – for now these mosaics can be viewed in the art exhibition area of the Centre, but we look forward to the outdoor Art Trail sometime next year.

Dugie's exhibition of slate mosaics was joined this summer by an exhibition of paintings of Luing, surrounding islands and seascapes by Alan Stark; the high quality card prints of some of these painting have proved very popular in the retail area in the Centre.



Last year, the Big Lottery offered funding to communities and organisations to celebrate the role of volunteers with special events. The Trust was granted funding and two events were held in September, in the afternoon in Toberonochy Hall and in the evening in the Centre. Food, hot drinks and soft drinks were provided, a band with the curious name of 'Have Mercy Las Vegas' played in both venues at great volume and to much acclaim, and a celebratory mug was provided for the volunteers who make the organisations and community activities of Luing work so well.



Neil – Events Chair



In August the Trust heard that bids for funding to support the appointment of a management team for the Trust and Trading Company had been successful to the extent of allowing a Development Manager to be appointed for the first year, with the expectation that further match funding will be achieved to appoint at least one more team member and extend the length of the funding to at least three years. At this time the post has been advertised.

The Lorn Islands Partnership: This partnership between the community trusts of Easdale, Kerrera, Lismore and Luing has now evolved to become a not-for-profit company. The 'Lorn Islands Trail' leaflet was published early in the summer to encourage day visitors to visit each island in turn, and our first print run of 5000 soon disappeared. A project funded by the Climate Challenge Fund to encourage recycling and carbon-reduction across the partnership began in April, with a major aim of improving glass recycling on the islands, particularly the two smaller ones where removing glass bottles from the islands presents serious problems. Unfortunately the Project Officer, as a result of a detailed piece of research, showed that the proposed solution of glass imploders was not practicable on the small scale of island communities.

The two project officers for the partnership have made invaluable contributions to the support of the Trust, especially while we have no management team, and the board would like to acknowledge their debt to Jane Churchill and Gill Law for the high quality support they have provided.

A.G.M.: This took place on 29 August at the Atlantic Islands Centre with most directors from both of the boards, other members and observers present.

Trust Directors: Eoghan MacLachlan was re-elected until 2020 and joins the continuing team of directors: Pete Hooper (2018), Nigel Dyckhoff (2019), Alastair Fleming (2019).

Nominations Forms were received from John Rennie and Paul Thomas, and they were duly elected as new Trust Directors until 2020.

Membership Secretary: Zoë Fleming was re-elected for one year.

At the first Trust Board meeting: the following officers were confirmed for the year.

Chairman: Pete Hooper

Secretary: Paul Thomas (and understudy to Treasurer)

Treasurer: Alastair Fleming (with notice that this is intended to be his final year in post).

Co-opted onto the Trust Board: Neil McCorrisken with responsibility for Events.

Trading Company Board: The following have been appointed to the board: Alison Robertson, Mandy MacLachlan, Pete Hooper, John Rennie, John Robertson.

Affordable Housing on Luìng: After the A.G.M. formal business, Cameron Anson, of Rural Housing Scotland discussed issues to do with 'Affordable housing' demand on Luìng. He began by describing his role and then the ways in which other communities had carried out housing need surveys and then gone on to secure funds. (e.g. a Government fund currently gives £80,000 for a new build house).

Island costs are higher and the government funding needs matched funds too, which are hard to find. The view of the meeting was to continue to develop this theme, as affordable homes are needed on Luìng.

Development Trusts Association Scotland (D.T.A.S.):

The Trust on Luìng is one of many in Scotland. This September has been the annual conference season for many island organisations and hence the time for travelling and networking with other islanders. The first one attended by Alastair & Zoë Fleming, Jane Churchill and Annie Tunnicliffe was in Cumbernauld for the D.T.A.S. conference. This association has 241 members, including our Isle of Luìng Community Trust. The Chairman is Sandy Brunton from Fionnphort of M.I.C.T. (Mull & Iona Community Trust) and he welcomed everyone, including many of the 25 Trusts of Argyll & the Atlantic Islands, for the 1 ½ day event.

The purpose of this association is to give a voice to the community-led regeneration network in Scotland. This year's title was 'It's All about People!' with talks and discussions for all, seminars for small groups and one-to-one advice surgeries. As usual Zoë's favourite one was a seminar given by a Trust Member; and "this year my vote was 'West Harris Trust - turning round population decline' which was an inspirational story of a crofting community. I'd like to go next summer and enjoy their facilities!"

Scottish Islands Federation (S.I.F.) and European Small Islands Network (E.S.I.N.)



Just four days later A. & Z. Fleming were off in a campervan for a week's travel to the Orkneys and back, taking in a combined pair of conferences, allied with an International Science Festival. The host organisation was S.I.F. with some 10 of the 20 members represented, with Luìng and the Lorn Islands Partnership being two of them. These

ranged from Great Cumbrae, Bute, Mull, Tiree, Barra, and Eigg, to Orkneys and Shetland. The Chairman is Camille Dressler of Eigg in the Small Isles and because she is currently Chairman of the equivalent European group as well, it was also S.I.F.'s turn to host that European group!

E.S.I.N. covers a startling 1,640 small islands across many countries. The 17th annual conference was based at Kirkwall Youth Hostel, with meetings all over town. There were around 27 people representing small island organisations from 8 more countries (Ireland, Denmark, Finland, Åland, Sweden, France, Greece, Estonia). Apparently Italy and Croatia had difficulty raising English-speaking islanders able to attend.



On day one with a guide we all set off in heavy rain and wind for a brisk coach-tour of West Mainland taking in the 'Royal Oak' memorial, the community-run Orkneyinga Saga Centre, the Stones of Stenness, past the Ring of Brodgar to Skara Brae Neolithic village, the Corringall Farm Museum and back to Kirkwall for 2.30 pm, having had lunch on the way.

The Town Hall meeting with local businesses and Northlink ferries was about the importance of the branding of Orkney food and drink, including sampling of beremeal oatcakes from Stockan's and we heard about the development of the new gin company, Kirkjuvagr. A tour of the St Magnus cathedral completed the day's visits. The evening continued at the hostel with a delivery of take-away pizzas and lengthy informal discussions, in a variety of languages.

Fortunately the weather was much better on day two, when 5 of the group flew to tiny North Ronaldsay for an amazing day of exploration and discussions in a community of 50 who run a surprising range of community enterprises. The rest of us went by ferry to nearby Shapinsay, where we were joined by a guest, Mairi Hedderwick, formerly of Coll, on her own fact-finding tour. Shapinsay is a farming community with a population of 300 and a tourist season from May to September.

The Shapinsay Development Trust was set up to bring income to the islanders through wind power. The turbine, 'Whorley' brings in £90,000 annually to be spent on community projects, running a free minibus and electric taxi for islanders and visitors, and a 12 seat 'out of hours' ferry to allow flexibility in travel to and from the Orkney mainland. As the turbine is stationary for many hours because the Orkney grid cables cannot take enough power from all the renewable-energy sources, the Trust is about to start a hydrogen production project. Later the hydrogen will be transported to the mainland ferry-port. 'The quality of community engagement is really remarkable here; and this is an inspiration to all our island communities' agreed those from Greece and Brittany.



The Orkney Councillors' sociable drinks reception that evening at the Orkney Islands Council Chamber, was followed by a delicious Orkney buffet at the iconic Judith Glue's Real Food café and a chance for both groups to exchange information on their day's experiences to North Ronaldsay and Shapinsay.

Sewing Project at Trust Boathouse



Camille at Council Chamber Reception



Orkney Food Buffet



Logo on Shapinsay Bus

On day three during the morning the E.S.I.N. AGM was visited by Brendan Devlin, Special adviser in the Directorate General for Energy of the European Commission. He said 'Small Islands are the agents of change that can be trusted to make the low carbon revolution happen in Europe'. He was due to speak later in the day at the Science Festival.



The Orkneys are well-known for their cutting-edge or 'bleeding-edge' leadership in Renewable Technology. The programme for this day of the Orkney International Science Festival was Renewable Technology, with a midday talk about



the European-funded project to be launched later this month in Orkney which will tackle the grid constraints by turning surplus hydrogen from Shapinsay into energy for local transport, including ten hydrogen-powered vans.

In the afternoon some of the E.S.I.N. members gave an afternoon of talks on the theme of the Smart Islands Initiative to the Science Festival audience. Firstly, the Tides of Ushant about the islands off the

coast of Brittany which now generate much of their electricity from the fast tides. (If you listen to the Radio 4 Shipping Forecast then 'Ushant' will sound familiar to you.)

This was followed by a joint presentation on the islands across Europe which are reaching energy self-sufficiency using water, wind and sun and balancing demand in the smart grids. Some of the challenges and solutions were described from the DAFNI network of sustainable Greek Islands of the Aegean, the Baltic island of Öland, and Mark Hull of Community Energy Scotland, Orkney.



Ushant duo from Brittany & A. Fleming

The real value of these conferences is to give a wider perspective on what communities are capable of achieving given funding opportunities and appropriate infrastructure. It is also a good chance to network with other volunteers working on exciting projects and find out what is really happening out there in the bigger world!

The Atlantic Islands Centre is open every day of the week and with the welcome addition of the Sunday car-ferry service every week it should make the Centre more accessible for weekend visitors to Luing throughout the year.