

# The Horshader Herald

The Horshader Community Development Trust Newsletter  
January 2019

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Happy New Year from all at Horshader Community Development!



Hello and belated Happy New Year to you all! I hope you had an enjoyable festive season and 2019 is going well so far – daylight is creeping in at both ends of the day – we'll soon be out of winter. All the best for 2019 from everyone at Horshader Community Development.

Welcome to another issue of our newsletter. This issue will include an update on our turbine, a retrospective of photos from the most successful year of Shawbost School Gardening Club yet, photos from another successful year of Clann An Latha An De Community Spins, an update on the re-instatement of the Docca Ruadh/Drochaid An Loch road and some other local bits that may interest you...or may not.

I hope you enjoy our newsletter. If there is any way you would like to see it improved or if you have something you would like added, please let me know by emailing [alan@horshader.com](mailto:alan@horshader.com), calling 701225 or just stop me when you see me taking Hank for a walk.

Best Regards,  
Alan Murray



*Thank you!*

A big thank you to everyone who came to our party on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December. It was nice to see you all and thanks for packing out the Old School.

We hope you enjoyed the refreshments and that the children enjoyed meeting Santa and receiving their gifts. Great to see so many children having fun!

Special thanks to Clann An Latha An De who worked hard all afternoon to make the food, The Old School Committee who allowed us to put on this event, Shawbost Gardening Group who let us put up our tree and lights in the garden they work very hard on and, of course, Santa himself, who took the time to visit Shawbost during the busiest time in his schedule! We were also thankful the countdown and lighting of the tree went so well.

We received a lot of positive feedback about the lights brightening up the centre of the village. Would you like to see them again next year? It would be our pleasure to do the same...or maybe bigger and brighter!



As we are sure you are aware, this past New Year marked the Iolaire centenary commemorations. By all accounts, the commemoration events went very well and were a fitting tribute to those who lost their lives on the Iolaire, the families and friends affected in the Western Isles community as well as those further afield.

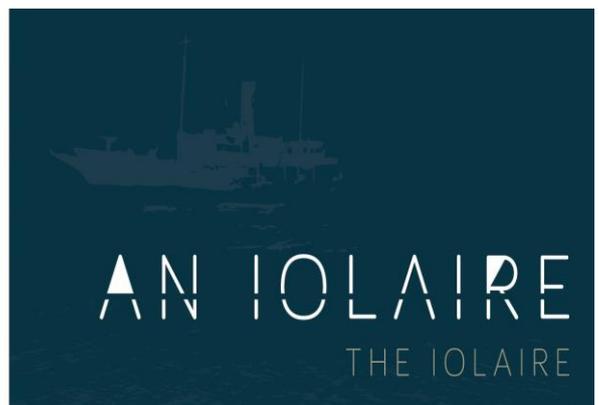
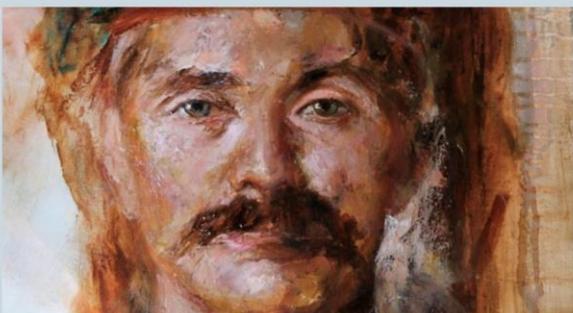
There are many examples of those affected by the tragedy within the Horshader area and we were happy to contribute £10,000 of funding to An Lanntair's centenary work.

We have attached to the end of this newsletter, a letter of thanks we received from An Lanntair's Chairman, David Green. Please also see a photo of the finished centenary sculpture below.

Please note: Margaret Ferguson's 'Iolaire 100' exhibition is open at An Lanntair until March 2<sup>nd</sup> and Lews Castle College's 'An Iolaire' is open until March 31<sup>st</sup>: 1pm until 4pm (Mon-Weds, Fri-Sat).



IOLAIRE 100





First the bad news: you may remember from our last newsletter that our turbine has been curtailed to 1/3 of its normal generation since the beginning of May 2018. All these months later, we are still at 1/3. Scottish and Southern Energy Networks (SSEN), up till now, has failed to act upon our requests to expedite progress and repair or replace the faulty STATCOM that is causing the problem. As you know, the turbine is the source of the Trust's revenue and although we are expecting to be compensated fully via our 'Business Interruption' insurance policy (we have already received settlement of our first claim), it is important that we avoid enduring any more continued losses than are necessary.

To highlight the importance of this issue and how slow SSEN have been to fix the problem, we sent a letter of complaint to SSEN, copying in Alasdair Allan MSP and Community Energy Scotland, whose Stornoway office have been providing help to us. Alasdair Allan MSP kindly met with us recently and offered his assistance in ensuring that SSEN treat our situation with more urgency than they have shown up till now. Alasdair has since sent a letter to SSEN in our support.

The good news is that SSEN have now given us a timeline back to recovery. The new replacement STATCOM has passed all testing at the Network Apparatus Trialling Centre in Cumbernauld and is due to be shipped to the Isle of Lewis very soon. SSEN are hoping to have the new equipment in place and up and running by mid-March, but hopefully sooner. We should be returned to 100% generation at that time.

I believe matters related to the turbine are now moving in a better direction and I will update you with any developments in the next newsletter. I can assure you we are doing as much as we can to sort this out and get back to continuous healthy power generation.



Loch Na Muilne

## Shawbost School Gardening Club – Photos From 2018



As you may be aware, during the growing year our Gardener, David Murdo, holds classes several times a week with the children from Shawbost School. 2018 proved to be the most successful year yet for the club, with the Head Teacher of Shawbost School, Shona Gunn, announcing the club as one of Shawbost School's official partnerships.

The knowledge that David Murdo imparts on his students is valuable, ensuring that the next generation, the future Horshader community, will grow up understanding not only where produce comes from, but also how to grow it themselves.

During a typical growing year, David Murdo will show the pupils how to plant, maintain and eventually harvest their produce using easy to understand, practical instructions. David Murdo's knowledge has been built up by years of hands-on experience, a strong grasp of what works locally in this climate and is complimented by the close connection he has with nature.

We hope that the pupils of Shawbost School Gardening Club, like ourselves, continue to enjoy the partnership, but we'll let you decide by checking out some of the photos taken over the course of 2018. Many of the photos are posted to our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/HorshaderCommunityDevelopment/](http://www.facebook.com/HorshaderCommunityDevelopment/)), but full galleries can be viewed on our website at [www.horshader.com/photo-albums](http://www.horshader.com/photo-albums).





## A Callout for Fish Boxes!

Do you happen to have any spare fish boxes laying around that you are not using? If so, and you can spare them, they would be put to great use as planting boxes for Shawbost School Gardening Club.

So far, from years and years of combing the Shader coastline, David Murdo has managed to collect enough fish boxes so that almost every single pupil in the Gardening Club has one for planting.

These boxes bring a lot of colour to our Polycrubs and if they are deep enough, they enable children to grow a range of produce in them. It is also a good example of recycling and putting plastic from the ocean to better use.

If you have any spare fish boxes, please get in touch and we can take the van round to collect them.



## Trees for Sale!



We currently have about 800 Hebridean native Alder and Birch trees for sale from £1-2 each. If you require hardy trees fully adapted to the wet and windy conditions we have here, these trees would be ideal.

David Murdo can provide you with any advice you require to plant and nurture these trees. We can also plant them for you for a very reasonable fee.

Please get in touch if you need further information or would like to buy some.

Photo © Woodlands Trust

## Help Finding Missing Pets



From time to time pets go missing in our area. My own dog Hank went missing for 24 hours after being on a walk at the South Shawbost cliffs near dusk. He was thankfully found via word of mouth and online ads.

If anybody in the area has a dog, cat, or other pet that goes missing and has become a concern, please get in touch with us. Ideally, email us a photo and some text and we'll do an electronic poster for you and post it on our Facebook page. If you have a Facebook post already, we'll share it for you. We have quite a big reach, some of our posts have had several thousand readers and we'd be happy to help you find your lost furry friend.

Hank: Lost, found, unapologetic.

## Drochaid An Loch / An Docca Ruadh Reinstatement

The Drochaid An Loch / An Docca Ruadh Reinstatement project has been successfully completed by the South Shawbost Grazings Committee, with funding provided by Horshader. Well done to the Grazings Committee and the contractors who carried out the good work in getting this historic path between the Gearra Mór and The Shore Road/Seanbhaille, opened for use once again.

The reinstated road allows for easy movement of livestock for crofters, a shortcut to the shore and cliffs for residents and tourists, a quiet path free from traffic for dog walkers and an overall scenic route past Loch A' Bhaille. Look out for the resident otter, friendly ducks in the loch and eels in the stream!



Left to Right (entrance next to Lefty's, ascent from the loch, the bridge, entrance from The Shore Road)

## The Norse Mill Car Park Re-surfacing

The Norse Mill Society, with funding from Horshader, have completed their re-surfacing of The Norse Mill car park. Well done to the society and those who carried out the works.

The car park was previously gravel and pitted, with a tendency to become waterlogged after periods of heavy rain.

The newly tarred car park provides a seamless drive in from the main road and enhances the accessibility to The Norse Mill, Cladach and Loch Raonibhat.



## Clann An Latha An De Community Spins

2018 saw the reintroduction of Clann An Latha An De's Community Spins. They pick the destination and Horshader arranges and funds the transport and excursion. Our Minibus Driver/Handyman Don MacDonald is their faithful driver, with our Assistant Gardener John Craig providing backup when needed.

This year the Clann enjoyed visits to Talla Na Mara in Harris, Point lighthouse and the Iolaire memorial followed by lunch at the Members Dining Room at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Port of Ness with a stop at Borge House. The Clann also had fun on their annual mainland trip to Inverness and on to Aberdeenshire, with £4000 of funding provided by Horshader.

Horshader Community Development are always happy to provide Community Spins and other assistance to the Clann. I wonder where they'll go for their mainland trip this summer? We look forward to arranging many more spins for them in 2019 and beyond.

Here are some photos from their 2018 travels:



Clockwise (Talla Na Mara, Port of Ness, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar)



Our Assistant Gardener, John Craig, has put together this helpful list of tips for those whose green fingers are not put off by the cold of winter.

### Part 1

If you have clay soil now is the time to dig the beds, if the ground is wet or after a frost wait until the soil is easy to turn.

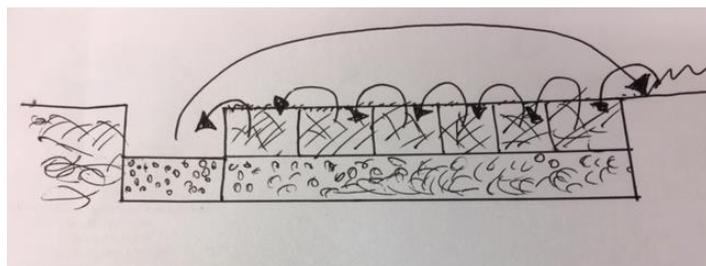
If your beds are not compacted there is no need to double dig, but if they have not been double dug for a number of years, I would advise you to do them this winter.

Digging now allows the frost to break up the soil over the winter, improving the structure and you can add nutrients like seaweed to the trench you turn over.

Double digging can be strenuous work so be careful when turning the soil.

Remove all weeds from the top of the soil.

I recommend moving the soil from the top of the bed where you would start by wheelbarrow, to the end of the bed where you will finish.



Double digging

After removing the soil add some seaweed and sand, manure or old peat from last years growing trays or compost into the trench then turn the next layer over the top of your filling and into the first trench. Continue until the end of your soil patch. Spread any spare soil over beds and rake in.

As sandy soil is more free-draining it can be turned in spring, but you may want to double dig, and add some more nutrients into the soil. Don't use manure on brassica patches as it may cause club root if not fully decomposed by planting time. Never use fresh manure.

You can also use the above method for raised beds.

### Part 2

If you have a green house, Polycrub or polytunnel, now is the time to clean it out.

Using a good disinfectant, Jeyes Fluid is still available for home use only.

Remove all plants and materials from the greenhouse.



Red kale, cabbage and peas

Use a soft brush and the cleaning solution to clean all the structures inside, removing any green algae. then hose down with clean water.

The outside can be cleaned with a weak solution to remove any algae, dirt and salt accrued over the growing season.

All your pots and trays should be cleaned in a good disinfectant for planting up in the new season. Start by using and emptying any old compost into a compost pile, remove all weeds or dead foliage and plants.

Fill a water container large Plastic Bucket or bin with a solution of disinfectant and water then dip each tray and pot into the solution, you can brush any stuck material with a banister brush. It's also a good idea to dip your hand tools in this solution also. Stack pots and trays to dry before filling with compost for new growing season. Please refer to manufacturer instructions for use and disposal of chemical solutions.

### Part 3

Tidy up round the garden and check all your fencing and growing areas that may need repaired. Plan your planting for the coming growing season and check your PH soil structure.

Plant bare roots, bulbs for outside use, remember to protect them from the elements and wild life and the local herd of stock.

Clean, sharpen and oil your hand tools and equipment



Peas and cabbages growing in December 2018

The growing season has evolved due to the use of a Greenhouse, Polytunnel or Polycrub. You can still grow throughout the season if you have one of the above.

Large Bubble wrap can be used to retain heat in your structure, you can also cover your shrubs and plants that you over winter inside.

List of seeds that you may plant inside now:

- Peas in pots. recommended 3 to 5 depending on pot size.
- Kale. Green and Red varieties.
- Cabbage Green and Red varieties.
- Spinach
- Lettuce
- Cauliflower
- Broccoli

If you require any further assistance or advice, regarding any of the above, please feel free to contact the gardening team at Horshader.

### Staff Update



As we mentioned in our previous newsletter, Jordan Morrison joined Horshader as our Administrative Assistant, initially for a 3-month Summer Student Placement. He completed the 3 months successfully and was then made a permanent member of staff.

As of December 2018, Jordan was then promoted to the post of Admin Officer at Horshader Community Development. Well done Jordan!

Jordan has proved to be a great addition to the team, providing valuable administrative support to the organisation during our busiest periods over the last few months. Some of the tasks he has undertaken so far include: administration and organisation of Winter Fuels 2018, providing a facelift to our website [www.horshader.com](http://www.horshader.com), arranging the supplies and equipment for our Xmas Party, providing invoicing for all our grass cutting and minibus hires and supporting the Development Officer and other staff in all manner of admin related to the Trust. He has also helped us in many duties outside of his remit.

As a student, Jordan was a recipient of a Horshader Student Bursary. It's nice to think the circle is complete, with Horshader having helped to fund Jordan's higher education, only for him to end up working for Horshader once his studies were complete!

Horshader are happy to have provided Jordan with a job close to home, improving employment in the local area and we are thankful for his contribution so far.

## The Scottish Marine Animal Stranding Scheme

In late summer and autumn of last year the Scottish Marine Animal Stranding Scheme were contacted on two separate occasions for strandings in the area.



- The head of a large baleen whale (Fin or minke) came in off the coast of South Shawbost. It was initially floating in a channel, before eventually beaching on the rocks. Photos were taken and emailed to the Stranding Scheme, who then identified the whale and forwarded the photos to the National Museum of Scotland.
- A live baby seal ended up on Shawbost Shore, quite a distance away from the sea, where the sand meets the stones. Although the seal looked very poorly, it snapped when approached. Again, photos were taken and sent to the Scheme. From the photos they were able to determine that the seal was underweight and dehydrated. Although the Scheme sent one of their local personnel around to follow up the next day, by this time the seal had been spotted swimming happily in the outer part of Shawbost Bay!

We would encourage anybody who spots stranded marine creatures of size, alive or dead, to take a photo and send it on to the Scheme. Although they have limited personnel on the island, they are very responsive and helpful. Their contact details are:

**Web:** [www.strandings.org](http://www.strandings.org)

**Tel:** 01825 765546 (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm)

07787 433412 (Out of office hours and Bank Holidays)



Fin whale © IUCN

## News In Brief

Dollanna MacIennan is the recipient of the double-width loom we had available. The loom was delivered to Dollanna at her loom shed in South Shawbost in December. We plan on doing a photo and segment on Dollanna and her loom in the next edition of our newsletter, once she is up and running and fully setup with tweeds! We are excited to see how she gets on.

We have allotments available in our Polycrubs, please get in touch if you would like to rent one at £25 a year.

Our gardeners plan to hold a pre-growing season workshop for allotment holders and those considering renting an allotment.

We will be in touch once we have a time and date for the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM).

## Grants Provided By The Trust Recently

The Norse Mill Society – Surfacing Works at the Norse Mill Car Park;  
Hebrides Alpha Project – Supported Housing;

The Trust also provided bursaries to Leonidas Clifton and Sharon Macleod

## In Conclusion

If you've made it this far, good for you. Thanks for taking the time to read our newsletter and catch you in the next edition!

Best Regards,  
Alan Murray

on behalf of all staff and directors at Horshader Community Development