

# The Horshader Herald

The Horshader Community Development Trust Newsletter  
Spring 2020



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Beannachdan na Caisge dhuibh uile - Happy Easter to all



What a strange time to write a newsletter! So much has been happening at Raebhat House since the turn of the year that we have been looking forward to sharing with you that now seem overshadowed by recent events. Though it was only a few weeks ago, it feels more like monthssince our offices and Community Space were shut indefinitely in line with efforts across the world to slow the spread of covid-19.

A lot of work has been carried out by our team to identify the needs of the community during this crisis, and to plan appropriate schemes that will offer lifeline support to the most vulnerable residents and alleviate pressure for everyone. A number of projects have also been designed to enable social groups, and educational classes, through digital methods of communication. Find out more inside!

The response to our recent letter to members, a fortnight ago, has been heartwarming to say the least. 20 Horshader residents came forward to volunteer their assistance in helping the most vulnerable - which now includes many younger people, and those in isolation. Community support has already begun, with assistance provided for shopping of food and other essentials, and for medical prescriptions. Everyone at HCD is working to improve these efforts and to arrange solutions at local level.

Best Regards,  
Euan MacLeod

## Message from the Chair - Flora Macleod

During these difficult times that we are all facing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the HCD staff and all the willing volunteers who have offered their time.

I hope everyone in our extended community that needs assistance makes full use of the services provided. Please stay safe and follow Government guidelines.

## Digital Switchover HCD

This newsletter is the first that will be sent out by email where possible, with paper copies continuing for those without internet and by special request. The change will save a substantial amount of paper and ink over the course of a year and is in line with our environmental aims. All members who have provided an email address, with an indication that this is their preferred method of communication, will now receive communications digitally. A few extraordinary items will still be sent by post to all members - e.g. Annual Reports, AGM invitations.

If you would like us to update your communication preferences - if you would prefer to receive things in a different format - please let us know. 01851 701 225 or [admin@horshader.com](mailto:admin@horshader.com)

## Covid-19 Activities

On March 24th HCD took the decision to close the offices and Community Space at Raebhat House for an initial 3 weeks, in line with the national lockdown. Public access to the community allotments at Grinnivat Road and Dalmore was also suspended. Staff have largely been able to continue working from home, thank goodness for the internet and access to shared folders, clouds and such. But other important aspects of our work, the day to day engagement with the community, had to stop suddenly which has certainly been difficult, as it's crises like the current one that highlight the value of community led solutions to life's problems.

At short notice, we have been able to deliver key services to our community, working with neighbouring groups to coordinate efforts, and have been working to develop new services that will alleviate the fears and daily pressures of residents. By working together and looking after one another we will build resilience as a community, and may end up better able to deal with future challenges as a result.

Since the first week of lockdown HCD has managed the daily delivery of medication between Arnol and Dalmore. The amount of deliveries has now settled at a manageable level after being pretty hectic at first. Many residents have sent messages of appreciation for the service, which will continue as long as necessary. Delivering the prescriptions is vital in enabling more to stay at home, including some of the most vulnerable.

Community Support leaflets were distributed to each house in our area offering assistance with essential shopping, posting mail, etc, with volunteer contact numbers included. The purpose of the leaflet was to give any residents fearful of the rapid developments at the time a little peace of mind, especially those who have no internet or nearby family. Communication with the volunteers is continuous and we seriously appreciate their efforts. A small number of Food Packs were also distributed to residents following a donation of surplus perishable items from Eilean Siar food bank.

Jordan has been busy conducting a phone survey with all members. The information gathered will allow us to stay in contact with you, and will highlight the biggest issues facing us all.

Currently, we set to pilot our first Food Delivery Scheme on 9th April, and are developing a number of other services. These include: a system to distribute shopping (food and other essentials) to those in isolation and/or unable to travel to shops; support for families with young children; and provision of social and educational activities through digital platforms. Keep an eye out for developments; they'll be posted on social media, and sent by email/post to members.

## Community Growing Facilities - Grinnivat Road and Dalmore

The decision to suspend public access to the community growing sites was taken on Tuesday 17th March. Initially this will last the 3-week national lockdown at the end of which a review will take place before any announcement is made. Allotment holders will be kept up to date with developments.



At the moment we have planned for a number of eventualities, however if it's at all possible we will open the sites to allotment holders, although access may be restricted and on a rota basis. Whatever happens, HCD will follow national and local guidance to reach the best decision with regards to the safety of all users and HCD staff.

## Blasta Lunch Club & Food Delivery Scheme

The lunch club project picked off where it had left off at the end of 2019 as 3 fantastic lunches were held during the first 3 months of the year - all credit to the amazing cooks. A recent focus on French cuisine, inspired by a chance meeting at our weekly Coffee Morning, has led to offerings of Beef Bourignon, Potato Dauphinoise, Pistou Soup, and other exciting fare.

We are extremely disappointed to put future lunch clubs on hold until further notice, but are pleased to announce the trial of a Food Delivery Scheme developed with support from funder Eat Well Age Well, in partnership with 40 North Foods. The pilot run of the scheme will take place in April, with the intention of continuing deliveries of nutritious, high quality ready meals on a monthly basis. The scheme is open to those over 65 living between Arnol and Dalmore.

For now, we hope a couple of photos from previous Blasta Lunch Clubs whet your appetites.



## An Eathar CRC

The club has been busy running local skills sharing sessions. In February, Captain John Smith of Arnol led a knots workshop to teach rowers essential knots for the skiff.

An Eathar also collaborated with Falmadair, North Lewis Heritage Sailing Trust and Ràmhaich an Taobh Siar to run a session on Collisions and how to prevent them, the evening was led by one of our own rowers, Ian Stephen.



San Earrach, nuair a bhios a' chaora caol, bidh am maorach reamhar.

In Spring, when the sheep is lean, the shellfish is fat.



## Jan - March Events

A selection of photos from events held at Raebhat House this year. A massive thanks to the artists, performers, and other contributors who made the events possible.



## Staff Spotlight - Sarah Fraser (Projects Manager)

*Everyone at HCD is delighted to welcome Sarah to the team*

Native to Lewis, I grew up in Point and have family connections in Ness, Stornoway, Ballalan and South Lochs. I studied Interior Design in Glasgow, and have spent all of my working life in customer service and management roles mainly in the Hospitality sector – I hope to bring many of the interpersonal skills I have developed during this time into my new role as Project Manager at HCD.

I am passionate about our environment and sustainability and how our 'Windy Isle' can contribute to the national effort for sustainable development. Being a native of the Hebrides I have a special interest in our positive development and hope that I can contribute a great deal to this during my time with HCD.

My interests and hobbies include; reading, cooking, walking, cycling, paddle boarding and camping. I am passionate about art and design and have a keen creative eye which I hope will add something to the ongoing projects at HCD and the creation of new projects. I have been brought up in a traditional island manner, with my parental family speaking Gaelic as their first language. I have a little Gaelic at the moment, but at school Gaelic was one of my best subjects so one of my goals in the near future is to re-learn and become more competent! Having a croft and sheep and cutting peats, was the norm to me and it is my own personal goal to one day have a small croft of my own hold on Lewis.



I have recently relocated myself and our family collie dog to Melbost, Borge to be closer to work and integrate myself more to this side of the island. I look forward to meeting and speaking with all of our West Side community members in the near future and that through my work at HCD I can be of good service to you all.

Sarah

### Support and Connect

Don has been super busy with the Horshader minibus this year. Along with his regular appointments doing the morning and afternoon school runs, taking local clubs like Clann an Là an Dè to their social meetings, and collecting the Nicolson Institute students on a Friday, there has been loads of additional hires!

And with the dark days of winter now way behind us, it's almost time to start cutting grass again. If you had your grass cut by the Support and Connect project last year, please bear with us as we work out the safest way for this service to continue. Project staff will be in touch as soon as possible with further information.

### Sgoil Shiaboist Partnership

Gaelic song sessions for the sgoil-àraich continued as normal, with a healthy setlist of modern nursery songs (e.g. *Ma tha sibh toilichte an-diugh buail do làmh*) as well as old favourites (e.g. *Brochan Lom*). The current group are definitely the loudest and most lively we've ever come across. We've been enjoying ourselves so much that a special session was planned where parents and grandparents joined us for a few songs. Emotions were running high, it must be said, but it was a great experience for all.

The winter Lego Club for the older classes was held weekly in January and February. As you can see, there are a lot of budding architects and engineers in our community.

Finally, Head Gardener Chris has been assisting the Eco Schools groups that meet each Tuesday to work on environmental projects. Chris helped the groups to ready the raised beds HCD installed at the school last year, before they decided what exactly they wanted to plant - who knew a garden needed such thoughtful planning!



### Community Programme

If you would like to learn more about our virtual community activities - all run using internet based video streaming applications, please get in touch. Plans are being developed for: Horshader Virtual Bookclub; Music Lessons (fiddle, guitar); and a block of virtual Gaelic Classes. Please note - all homework will be actual and not virtual. To register an interest or to learn more, contact 01851 701 225 or [admin@horshader.com](mailto:admin@horshader.com)

## Call for Volunteers Continues

Contact 01851 701 225 or [admin@horshader.com](mailto:admin@horshader.com) to register as a volunteer. So far there has been an incredible response to the call for volunteers, it's clear how willing people are to help their neighbours. We have worked with a small number of volunteers to date, with safety and compliance with distancing guidance being paramount, but it is important to have a large bank of volunteers that can be mobilised at short notice to respond to the needs of the community.

## In Conclusion

Thanks for taking the time to read our newsletter.

Best Regards,  
All staff and Directors at Horshader Community Development