

# The Horshader Herald

The Horshader Community Development Trust Newsletter

December 2023 - An Dùbhlachd 2023

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## Development Officer's Update

Let's begin this quarter's newsletter with a story of a twelve-year-old boy wanting to punch his dad! That was me, in 1990, when someone in Inverness asked me how I felt about our recent move from Shawbost. (I wasn't happy!) As much as I came to enjoy life in the *Highland capital* (and went back there to work in my first ministry post) I would have stayed a *Siarach* if it were up to me. It was part of my identity. In fact, my pals nicknamed me *Teuchter* – a wild lad from a wild place in the West.



Thinking about my feelings then, wanting to fight to stay, I can't help but see a parallel today. There's a different kind of fight to be had to keep a sense of place and belonging – but it is a fight. I've just come from 14 years in Skye where the pace of change is ferocious – youth moving away, culture eroded faster than Traigh Siabost (pictured), livelihoods transformed, and the landscape radically altered. A sense of place and belonging are hard to sustain; it takes a lot of hard work.

As a Development Officer I joke that my job is about making dreams come true. I want to bring a focus on sustainability to the role. Buzzwords like “sustainability” mean different things to different folk, but I think it means *healthy*. In community life, that really means growth. Healthy life is growing, even thriving life. That can't be achieved without affordable housing; employment opportunities; and, crucially, the *stuff* of community – a *desirable* place to live and call home.

The Horshader Development Plan hits all these notes! So, I've tried to hit the ground running, with a revitalisation project at Grinnavat Road Polycrubs. I'm on a mission to find funding for lots of other projects: bus replacement, Blasta lunch club, water sports and a playground, etc. A thriving future for Ionad na Seann Sgoil is on my radar too. Hopefully some of these dreams can come true.

Gordon Matheson, Development Officer

## Memorial Garden at Grinnavat Road Polycrubs

A small memorial garden has been erected at the Grinnavat Road Polycrubs.

Angus Macleod (Bacabhat) and his daughter Kathleen (Grinnavat Rd.) were heavily involved in the setting up and early running of the Polycrubs.

Pictured are Angus's grandchildren - Seumas, Lily & Angus. The dedication plaque on the bench reads: "*In Memory of Kathleen Macleod and her father Angus Macleod*".



## Grinnavat Road Polycrubs Overhaul

HCD was successful in applying to the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund for funding to make improvements at the Grinnavat Road Polycrubs.

As we go to print, a new toilet is in Stornoway, awaiting delivery and installation. Two pallets of *Mr Muck's Organic Manure Compost* will refresh the soil in the polycrubs. And lastly, we hope to reinstate the window in the toolshed, to make it a bit more inviting to stop for a cuppa and a chat.



## New Staff Members

The team at Horshader Community Development has been boosted with two new staff members joining in last few months.

**Kathy Sue Wade** (pictured) joins as Admin Assistant, and **Gordon Matheson** as Development Officer.

Kathy has been a resident in Fevig for a few years, runs her own craft business. Gordon grew up in Shawbost and previously worked as a Development Officer for Sleat Community Trust in Skye.



## The Old School Centre / Ionad Na Seann Sgoil

In November, HDC was approached by the committee running the Old School Centre (TOSC) and asked to consider taking over running the building. The TOSC Committee are faced with a difficult financial situation and are at risk of having to close the doors to the community permanently. If HCD were to run the building, the main advantage would be having staff time available to support use. This would allow a much wider range of community-run events to take place. There is an opportunity to also enable investment to update the building's power supply and lighting, to make it more efficient.

We are still gathering views on what to do with TOSC, should we take it over. You can share your thoughts via our online survey. Just point your smartphone camera at this QR code, or visit:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9QC7TR6>

Alternatively, paper copies for the survey form are available across the community: at the Old School; the Post Office; the Carloway Community Shop; Grinnebhat in Bragar; and the Filling Station in Barvas.



Our goal at this stage is to draft a comprehensive business plan for running TOSC. In the New Year, we have planned in-person conversations about the future of TOSC. The first of these is set for **Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> January**, (time TBC) at TOSC, where HCD and the TOSC Committee will run a family fun day, while members of the community can chat over some of the options we're considering. Look out for more info in the coming weeks!

All this will take us closer to a final decision before the next round of crucial funding windows open in the Spring. The HCD Trustees want to stress, no final decision has been taken – we are still at a feasibility stage. There will be plenty of opportunities to have your say.



## Shwapbost Success

Shwapbost – the Shawbost Swap Shop – was a successful first for Horshader Community Development. Operating out of the community space at Raebhat House, on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November, Shawpbost was an opportunity for people to trade unwanted items within the community. Loads of people brought in unwanted clothes, but we also had kitchenware, toys, and a huge selection of handbags all available for free to take away.

Although items were offered for free, we had a donation box, collecting for the British Heart Foundation. Horshader topped this up to £500, and this was delivered to BHF this month! (c/o Mairi Murray, pictured with Donna.)

We had planned to return unwanted items to people, but in the end everyone was happy for the unused items to be donated to the Gambia Partnership in Stornoway.



## Competition Time



Gordon snapped this pic on his phone three weeks short of the winter solstice! It's sunset at 3:40 in the afternoon!

### Easy:

No prizes – just bragging rights! – if you can say where this was taken.

### Tough:

More bragging rights too if you can answer this riddle:  
At my heart, dwells the darkest night,  
And upon my coming, birds shall take to flight.  
Listen, listen, and I'll bite at your ears.  
Hither, hither, and I'll freeze your tears.

### Toughest:

Biggest bragging rights of all if you know how many hours and minutes daylight there will be in Shawbost on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December.

We'll provide answers next edition!

**Horshader Offices will be closed for Christmas  
From 22<sup>nd</sup> December, reopening January 3<sup>rd</sup>**

## Regular Events

Regular events have now finished up for the Christmas Holiday. Things will pick up again the second week of January.

The regular slate of events at Raebhat House will continue in the New Year:

- Low Impact Keep Fit – Tuesday Mornings, 9:30am – 10:30am (from 9<sup>th</sup> January).
- Music Sessions – Thursday evenings, 7:30pm – 9:30pm (from 11<sup>th</sup> January).
- Coffee morning (Copan is craic) – Friday mornings, 11:00am – 12:00noon (from 12<sup>th</sup> January).



## New Skills Classes

We also have some short courses planned for the new year!

Before coming to work at the Tree Ark, Laura taught upholstery, and ran a furniture restoration business. She'll be running sessions at the Raebhat community space.

**Upholstery Classes** – Monday Evenings, 7:00pm – 9:00pm  
Starting 15<sup>th</sup> January, for six weeks through to 19<sup>th</sup> February

**Sewing Classes** – Monday Evenings, 7:00pm – 9:00pm  
Starting 4<sup>th</sup> March, for six weeks through to 8<sup>th</sup> April



An ideal project for the course would be a small chair or dining chair. If the chair has springs, all techniques from stripping, webbing, spring tying and covering can be learned.



Each block will cost £50 (£35 Concessionary Members) and materials will cost extra. Call 701225 for more information.

# Book Early!

## Defibrillator / Lucky 2B Here News

The Automated External Defibrillator (AED) at Raebhat House now has a new cabinet.

The older green cabinets weren't very intuitive to use, and last time it was opened, the cabinet at Raebhat had become damaged. The new orange cabinets have a simple turn handle to open.



The new cabinet is located on the side wall at the boatshed, to offer a little more protection from the elements.

We will have a refresher training course for AED Operation in the New Year.

Horshader topped up the donations raised at the Christmas Fayre at the Raebhat Community Space, and we've sent £500 to Lucky2BHere (c/o Lristeen Maclean, pictured with Gordon).



## Hebridean Tree Ark Makes the News

The Hebridean Tree Ark project, based at Raebhat House, featured in recent press reports covering the growth (Groan – Ed.) of tree planting on crofts across the Western Isles. The Tree Ark supplies trees to the Croft Woodlands Western Isles Project.

“The Croft Woodlands Western Isles Project is a partnership between Point and Sandwick Trust, Woodland Trust Scotland, Scottish Forestry, and the Scottish Crofting Federation, and works with crofters to plant native woodland on their crofts. Planting native trees such as rowan, alder and birch on crofts offers many benefits for the future including shelter, wildlife habitat, soil improvements and landscape diversity.”

You can read the full story here:

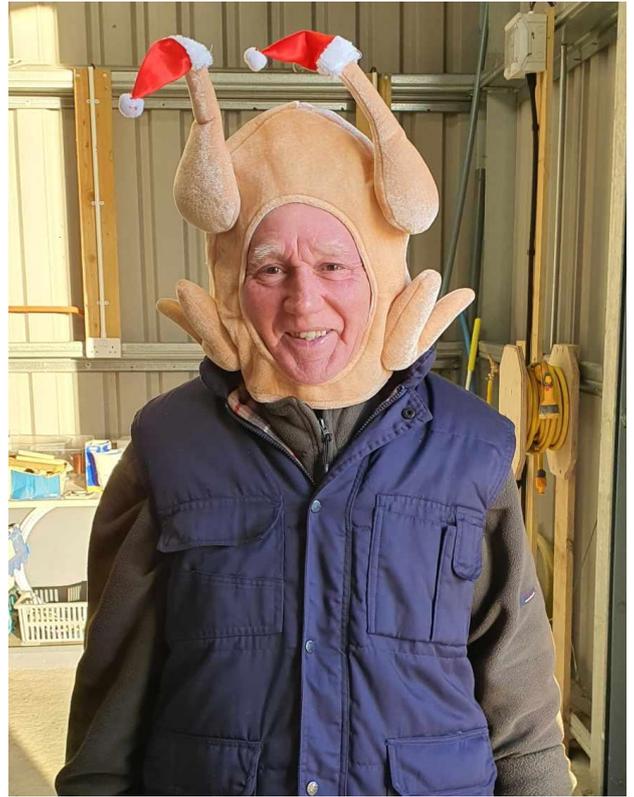
<https://www.thenational.scot/news/23837566.says-trees-wont-grow-outer-hebrides/>

Laura and Lesley have had a busy few weeks, packaging up trees for delivery across the Island.

Laura writes:

We're very proud to be contributing to the North Harris Trust Habitat Regeneration Program. This is our third season of providing trees to this brilliant and ambitious project to plant tens of thousands of trees in North Harris. Well done to Fañch (pictured), Steve and Michael for all the amazing work they've done planting up to 400 trees a day each - WOW!! I think our native birch are going to like their new home in Gleann Lacasdail (when the gale subsides!)





# Nollaig Chrídeil dhuibh uile

