

PAIRC NEWSLETTER

PAIRCTRUST.CO.UK



December 2024



The Pairc Estate – December 2024

We are gearing up for Christmas – with the Christmas Craft Fair and the Christmas light switch-on complete, we are hoping that you're all in the spirit too!

December is a busy month and there are still Christmas events from around Lochs to fill your calendars. We also have some words from our Chair, and an important announcement from Muaitheabhal Community Wind Farm Trust.

Last, but not least, we would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year – here's to an excellent 2025!

Top News

Message from the Chair

Deer Vehicle Collisions on the Estate – Information Needed

MCWFT – CnES – Stornoway Trust Wind Farm Joint Venture Announcement

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01/14



Message from the Chair – Angus McDowall

This has been a busy year for the Trust and our increased workload has seen us take on two new members of staff: Ralph Tonge, and Luke Crosland-Thomson, who join us as Projects Manager and Communication & Administration Assistant, respectively, working alongside and supporting our Estate Manager Emma Mackenzie. The Pairc Trust Directors are indebted to our office team for all their hard work and organisational skills, thank you.

We have also seen several new Directors join the Board: Donald Nicolson (Lemreway), Jenny McLaughlin (Garyvard), and Chris Coles (Gravir) joined at our last AGM, and Zsolt Szalay (Gravir) was recently co-opted to the Board. The skills and time of all of our staff and Directors have been invaluable in advancing projects in the Pairc estate.

Disappointingly one of our long-standing Directors, Joe Wilson, has decided to retire. Joe was involved in many aspects of PT business and always helped stimulated debate on many subjects. As most of us know Joe was a joiner until his retirement several years ago, it was with this practical expertise he provided the board with great assistance in our building projects that have been taken forward and that are progressing. On a regular basis when issues would arise in the office Emma would ask Joe for help, he would arrive promptly to assist. On a positive note, Joe has agreed to continue to give building advice to the trust going forward. The

Pairc Trust Board and employees wish Joe all the best for the future and a long and happy retirement.

2024 has seen our project with TIG to convert the Tigh Ceilidh, Gravir, into additional housing progress to where an application to the Rural Housing Fund is due in March 2025. We have also continued with our Connecting Communities project to eliminate 'not-spots' on the Estate, and we have further connectivity developments lined up with the aid of the Scottish Futures Trust in 2025. We're also working with local producers and makers as facilitators of a new 'Made in Pairc' initiative, which will be taken forward in the New Year - keep your eyes peeled for announcements. The trust's proposed Pumped Hydro Storage development on Malascair is now progressing. The development was in limbo for some time, but now that SSE have confirmed that the interconnector cable to the island is being constructed the project is now being moved forward, we expect to be able to update the community about the proposed Pumped Hydro Storage in the coming months.

I am delighted to see that several groups and organisations, including the Trust, are making great use of the hall in the Resource Centre. I encourage others to contact the office to book the hall for their events. These events allow all in the community to meet up and get to know each other better, generally over a cup of tea at the end of the events. The Trust is actively looking into enlarging the hall for larger community type events, again we hope to come to the community in the coming months with our thoughts and proposals.

We have continued to forge relationships with other community landownership organisations, meeting with Galson Estate as part of a knowledge-share, organising a Community Land Festival event, and working with Community Land Scotland to set up a digital archive of community ownership in Pairc. I was delighted to be invited to speak at the Scottish Crofting Federation's 2024 Gathering in Stornoway last month.

We look forward to a successful 2025, and I'd like to take this chance to wish all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year on behalf of all of us at the Pairc Trust!

Angus McDowall, Chair

Crofting Corner

The Trust would kindly request that any collisions with deer on Estate land are reported to us, even if the collision is just a bump and the deer makes it away.

If you are involved in a collision with a deer, please email info@pairctrust.co.uk with the date, time and location of the collision. We will submit an annual report of collisions to the police.

NatureScot are running a 'Deer Vehicle Collision' (DVC) project across Scotland in an attempt to analyse hotspots for these incidents, however their current data sources only gather information from trunk roads and therefore much of the Western Isles is missed out in their analysis.

Any funding from the Scottish Government and/or NatureScot to help improve signage, deer control measures, visibility etc. will likely be set based on the outcome of the DVC project analysis, so the more information we can present to NatureScot, the better our chances of securing funding for improvements to help reduce the number of incidents on our roads.



SCF Gathering – “Crofting & Community Landownership: Past, Present & Future”

Angus McDowall, our Chair, gave a speech at the Scottish Crofting Federation’s “**Crofting & Community Land Ownership: Past, Present & Future**” event last month, with other community landowner representatives giving stories of their experiences. The event was an excellent opportunity to celebrate the achievements of community ownership, and plan for the future.



Alongside the Pairc Trust were the Stornoway Trust, Galson & Carloway Estate Trusts, the North Harris Trust, and speakers from Community Land Scotland and Community Land Outer Hebrides, and the message of their stories rang true with ours.

The SCF summarised the following takeaways from the day as follows:

(i) It's a long, tough journey to get there, but well worth it - community landownership of crofting estates brings benefits to both crofting communities and community landowners.

(ii) Crofting community needs and crofting estate ambitions largely overlap, in terms of access to land

shared benefit of assets, population retention and community resilience.

(iii) The single hardest issue to tackle is access to affordable housing for young people wishing to stay in the local area. But it is key to the sustainability of crofting, of community estates, of communities.

(iv) Crofters and community landowners need to continue to work closely together to meet new challenges and take advantage of new opportunities.

(v) A recognition of what can be achieved when the community is involved and how positive engagement through adequate consultation can bring everyone along on the journey.

Renewable Energy Community Ownership Joint Venture Press Release



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

Wednesday 11th December 2024

Representatives of the Stornoway Trust, Muaitheabhal Community Wind Farm Trust and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar met on Friday 6th December to begin work to explore how offers of up to 20% community ownership in both the Stornoway Wind Farm and the Uisenis Wind Farm can best be brought into community control.

The group agreed a series of tasks for the next period including further engagement with wind farm developers; undertaking detailed work into legal and financial ownership models; engaging with Government bodies and financial institutions and developing an approach to community consultation.

Speaking after the meeting, Mr Norman MacIver, Chair of the Stornoway Trust and the new working group said; *"From the outset of discussions around renewable energy it has been a key goal of the Stornoway Trust that the community is able to share in the benefits of any major wind farm through an ownership stake in that wind farm. 20% ownership in the Stornoway Wind Farm was negotiated by the Trust as part of its lease agreement with Lewis Wind Power. This represents an industry-leading level of community ownership negotiated into a commercial wind energy project. Although the offer has been on the table for a long number of years, progress has been stalled due to uncertainties around the grid. With new grid infrastructure and the likelihood of the wind farms being built, the time is now right to explore the best approach for bringing the 20% formally into community ownership. Bringing the key partners together around*

the table and setting ourselves a workplan for the next period is therefore an important milestone and a critical step in securing significant new benefits for the community”.

Chair of Muaitheabhal Community Wind Farm Trust, Mr Iain MacIver said: “That a 20% community ownership offer has also been achieved in the Uisenis Wind Farm is hugely positive. Between the two projects that will place around 85MW, depending on final build-out, into community ownership which will represent one of the largest community owned wind farms anywhere in the world. It is also positive that the two Trusts, along with the Comhairle, have agreed to work together. Bringing them together under the umbrella of one joint organisation will make the development process more efficient and will allow a more effective final operating model to be put in place. There will be much work to be done over the next period to explore the differing ownership options and I look forward to that work and delivering on this opportunity for the community.”

Cllr. Paul Steele, representing Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, said: “The potential of the community owning up to 20% of the Stornoway and the Uisenis wind farms offers huge opportunity for new community-based economic development over the next decades. This level of ownership has the potential to bring significant new revenues to the islands and we will be consulting with the community, in due course, regarding the investment approach to these revenues. I am, however, acutely aware that the potential cannot be realised until post-2030 and the delivery of grid and the construction of the wind farms. The Comhairle will continue to engage strategically with Government and regulatory bodies to assist the overall approach to community ownership and I very much look forward to seeing good progress on this important development over the next period.”

It was confirmed at the meeting that Calum Iain MacIver, former Depute Chief Executive of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, would be appointed for a 12-month period to help project manage the development process over the next period.

For further information contact Calum Iain MacIver:

- calumiainl@outlook.com
- 07591 997 584

Christmas Events

The Pairc Trust were delighted to see the Christmas Craft Fair and our Christmas light switch-on so well attended. The Craft Fair was a fantastic showcasing of local talent on the run-up to Christmas, and our Christmas event was an enjoyable afternoon with Christmas crafts, carols, presents from Santa and the lights switch on!

We would like to thank all who attended to make it a success, the Stornoway Trust for their kind donation of a Christmas tree, Hayden, Lily and Ross for the erection of the tree, Murray for his singing and music, our staff and directors for helping decorate the venues, CnES for providing ward funding towards the event, Ravenspoint for providing refreshments, and finally Father Christmas himself for taking the time to attend!



Community Highlights

Congratulations to Stewart Davidson on receiving his 15 years long service award from MOWI Scotland.

Stewart manages MOWI's Loch Shell site and regularly meets with the Trust as part of MOWI's commitment to our Community Benefit Fund. It's great to see his hard work recognised!

MOWI

Long service award

Stewart Davidson

Loch Shell

15 years service

CONGRATULATIONS



Credit: MOWI Scotland

#Longserviceaward #Congratulations #IamMowi

- The **Kinloch Historical Society's** AGM has been rescheduled for Tuesday 17th December @ 7pm at the Kinloch Community Hub.
- The Stornoway Singers will be carolling at the **North Lochs Community Centre** on Tuesday 17th December @ 7pm. Tickets cost £5 at the door, and refreshments will be available at the Creagan Cafe.
- **Pairc Free Church** are holding Christmas Carols and readings at the Pairc Free Church Hall, Gravir, on Friday 20th December @ 7:15pm, followed by refreshments. Donations at the door in aid of Eilean Siar Foodbank.
- We are working with the **Scottish Futures Trust** to trial a new method of improving **4G signals** across the Estate. We will be conducting a signal survey in early January to track down remaining local 'not-spots' and will then arrange the installation of new equipment to boost the signal in these areas, in partnership with **Wavemobile**. Further updates will be announced, but please contact **Ralph Tonge** with any questions via ralph.tonge@pairctrust.co.uk

Croft Woodlands

Join Laura McEwan from the Woodland Trust at the Resource Centre on 30th January at 7pm for a presentation on the Western Isles Croft Woodlands Project.

The project started in 2016 as a partnership between the Point & Sandwick Trust and Woodland Trust Scotland to support croft woodland creation. This year, the project hit a milestone of 211,000 native trees planted across the Western Isles.

WESTERN ISLES CROFT WOODLANDS PROJECT

**7.00 PM 30TH JANUARY
THE RESOURCE CENTRE**

Find out more about how you could benefit from planting trees on your Croft.
Presentation and Q&A
Light Refreshments.

WOODLAND TRUST



- Well done to Lochs FC U8 & U10 teams for their performances at their final festivals for 2024, hosted by Back FC last week. Special congratulations to the U10s, who came through the festival undefeated!
- The U12 team was also training, and two Lochs FC teams competed in the U16's tournament in Stornoway - over 50 Lochies were in action over the course of the day, which is great to see!

Christmas Craft Fair

Callie, P6

For this Christmas craft fair we made many things, Harris Tweed cushions that we put a lot of hard work into, cards and many other things. Pairc School has nine pupils we all made a card each. The teacher went to Stornoway to print them. We learned many skills, the little ones learned how to use a cold glue gun. The older ones learned how to make Harris Tweed cushions.

However, it was important that we went to the Christmas fair since it gives each pupil a chance to see what other people have done and how they did it and communicate with others, to learn how to sell, use money and see what it is like to do so. While the money we raised will be used for equipment and other things like resources for the school. Although we have not sold all our things from the craft fair, we are planning to sell them at our Christmas concert.

The little ones made pinecone Christmas trees with a star on top. Some of the little ones attended the craft fair to help. We sold table mats and coasters. Also, for sale were the earrings from last year, the whole school made them. We also sold tickets for our raffle, which will be drawn on the night of the concert. The

whole school was surprised at how much money we'd made. But we haven't sold all of our things yet, so there could be money still to come. This whole school is very proud of what we have done.



The Christmas Craft Fair

On Friday 29th November Pairc school went to the craft fair!

We drew some Christmas pictures and then we printed it out and made them into cards that we sold.

With Hannah, Tracy and Mrs Nicolson we were making pillows, table mats and coasters with some Harris Tweed we got for free while Mrs Finnigan was helping the little ones with these pinecones that they painted that acted as a Christmas tree and stuck onto a piece of wood.

However, the little ones went to Ravenspoint first in the morning since there were too many of us and the older ones went in the afternoon. Although we were nervous we were really excited.



Sgoil na Pairc Christmas Play

Leya, P6

On November 27th we started preparing for our school play called 'There's no Dragon in this Story.'

We all got our parts and most of us now know all our lines. Since we went to a pantomime in Stornoway we learnt some new skills. We saw that you have to shout, if in a big area, so that people can hear you. We rehearsed all our songs every day. We have gotten our costumes ready and even tried them on. We will be doing a dress rehearsal soon.

Our play is on Wednesday the 11th of December 2024. We all do our actions and speak loudly as we are doing it in a hall. I think everyone has had a lot of fun practising and singing. Although I'm nervous I'm still excited. I think everyone feels nerves and excitement too.

Our play is about a dragon who is fed up getting defeated by the knight, so he sets off to find his own story. He sees so many stories, but the main



character says, 'There's no dragon in this story' and he goes away upset. However, he finds Jack and tells Jack 'There's a giant behind you!' although Jack doesn't believe him. The dragon asks once again 'Can I be in your story?' Jack says 'No' and a giant pops up behind him and sneezes and the sun goes out. The dragon brings the sun back and is a hero.

Stornoway Pantomime

Leisha, P5

We went to see Dick Whittington the Stornoway Pantomime on Friday 6th December. When we got to the pantomime we got seated at our seats by a worker and we had to wait for so long for it to start since they had to get it set up. I saw someone on the stage before it started while we were waiting

as a lot of other people were still coming in. However they were not acting.

The curtains were getting lifted up and then on the steps there was a fairy she was talking about the bad rats since we didn't know about them yet.

I was so scared when the rats came in. Although, I was scared it was super funny when Dick Whittington got framed for stealing the King's gold which got him kicked out.

When the pantomime finished I told Mrs. Finnegan that I loved it. However, I didn't like it when the fairy godmother used her powers to make the rats disappear as I kind of liked the rats.

When it was finished we went to 'Eleven' to eat and I got a mini chicken wrap with some chips and salad and some ketchup. After that, for dessert, I got ice cream with three scoops, vanilla and chocolate and last but not least strawberry.

Skye, P4

On Friday we went to town to see a pantomime and it was called Dick Whittington, it was amazing! I could not believe my eyes it was so good.

I saw some mice and they were naughty and there were five mice.

The Fairy Godmother appeared on the steps and said, 'Go Away!'

We went because it was a Christmas present from the teachers and Parent Council. I thought it was the best Christmas present ever.

Sarah, the Dame, chucked sweets at us I got a Milky bar. It was so much fun I loved it.

One of the mice pulled a face at me and I thought it was so funny, then the cat pulled a shocked face, it was also funny.

When we got to the NI we headed to the assembly hall where all the other schools were. All the P7 from all the different schools were there like: Stornorway Primary, Laxdale, Tong, Back, Sgoil na Taobh Siar, Uig, Lionel, Shawbost, Sir. E. Scott and Leverhulme School. While we were waiting for the other schools to get seated the teachers that came with them told them where to sit. After everyone was seated a man called Eric told us that we would be put into four groups. The groups were blue, orange, green and red. We all got name tags with the group colours to know which group we were in, the greens stayed inside first while red, blue and orange went into the sports centre. When we got into the sports centre we did a mix of physical activities and team building games run by the Sport & health team but the activities inside the assembly hall were by the NI. It started at 10am and ended at 12:30pm.

It was great fun to get to know new people so I have friends when I go to the NI.

P7 Transition Event at the Nicolson Institute

Grace, P7

On Wednesday 4th December my Mother drove me from my house to join Sgoil nan Loch pupils, from where we were heading to the NI (Nicolson Institute). To get to the NI we took a bus, which wasn't a long drive, since Sgoil nan Loch is across from the KeyStore which is close to town.



Christmas Closure

The Pairc Trust staff and board members will be taking a break over the festive period. Our office will be closed from **Friday 20th December** and will re open on **Monday 6th January**.

For any enquiries, please email info@pairctrust.co.uk and we will get back to you once we're open in the New Year.

The Directors and Staff at The Pairc Trust would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!

