

Northmavine Community Development Company

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Issue 9

Northmavine.com

NCDC Update by Maree Hay

Perhaps its due to the boannie summer we've had, but time seems to have flown by once again. It's over a year now since Pam and I started work at Greenbrae and we've had a really enjoyable, busy year.

Northmavine is now into the final year of Initiative at the Edge (IaE) and our core agency funding. At the moment our partners fund a project worker salary and office running costs, but this arrangement will cease in March 2009. Our directors are very aware that the NCDC needs to generate income to keep the community company running and help fund projects in the long term. Over the past year we've undertaken a number of projects to help us on the road to sustainability.

NCDC successfully tendered for consultancy work, and along with Alex Purbrick, we spent the first two months of this financial year compiling a report for the Community Planning Board. The report looked to identify rural areas of Shetland that could be eligible for a Scottish Government scheme that may replace IaE and although we had to wade through masses of statistics and information, it was an enjoyable process that generated some funds for the NCDC.

For the past year we have also provided the Clerk services to the Northmavine Community Council. Pam undertakes the majority of this work, and as well as generating a small income for the NCDC, it has provided us with a closer working relationship with the community council.

In the past few months I have also started writing the North Mainland Notes column in the Shetland Times. Drew Ratter made this column his own for almost a quarter of a century but, due to work commitments, a lot of his time is now spent outside Shetland and he felt the column could benefit from a change of writer. North Mainland Notes is now compiled through my work with the NCDC and the income from this piece of work also helps generate additional funds.

Whilst none of these projects are generating huge amounts of income for the NCDC, every little helps and contracts such as these help reduce the amount of grant funding we will be looking for at the end of March 2009. It also shows agencies that we are attempting to move towards sustainability and that we have built up useful skills and relationships during our period of IaE designation.

With regard to the future, as we have said in previous newsletters, from information gathered from the community we are now concentrating our efforts on three main topics - Housing, Social Enterprise and Renewables. To retain and increase our population, people need a home in the area so this is a priority for us and we are looking at a number of ways to help increase the number of homes in the area, based on our community housing survey and the Northmavine development plan.

To help stem the flow of out-migration and encourage people to move into rural areas such as Northmavine, it is also important to try to give people the opportunity to set up businesses or work remotely. This will help negate the need to travel long distances incurring expensive fuel costs. The creation of small incubation units as business workshops could be part of this solution. Broadband could also play a large part in the creation/viability of tele working, so sufficient broadband speeds and reliability of the network are essential to the success of internet based businesses or remote working. Along with the Vidlin community, we are working closely with BT to help improve reliability and service.

Finally, in a bid to reduce our carbon footprint, provide more efficient energy generation in our community and help our local economy, our third focus project is renewables. As a community we already have a number of community and private Wind 2 Heat projects in place that help improve the overall comfort of buildings and, when the community ROC's issues are resolved, generate some income.

Please remember the NCDC is **your** community company and we welcome your input and ideas, so please get in touch with the office if you feel there is something we should be considering or if you'd like to become a member.

Afore Da Doors

ROA funding helped us develop the "Afore Da Doors" project. This project was designed to capture a snapshot of Northmavine residents in 2007 and many people signed up to have their photos taken "afore da door" by Lorna Sandison. The photos are now posted on the website and anyone who would like to purchase copies of their photo should contact Lorna. We hope this project will develop and the on-line photo archive will increase as time goes on. Anyone in Northmavine can e-mail photos to us if they'd like to be included in the "Afore Da Doors" project.

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The website is still proving to be a popular, useful tool for both locals and visitors. It celebrated its second birthday on 28th August and has received over forty thousand hits. Over the past few months, with the help of ROA funding, Fiona Cope has been looking at ways in which the website can become more sustainable and usable. Fiona has implemented a number of her recommendations with the addition of an on-line survey, a donations facility and an Amazon associates link.

The website relies heavily on donations from folk to remain updated. Although running costs are minimal, we need to keep up our subscriptions and pay a contract worker to update the site and check links. Donations can now be made either through the site via a paypal button or folk can send donations by cheque. Fiona has also set up an associate account with Amazon. This means that the Northmavine website will receive a small percentage of any Amazon purchases folk make through www.northmavine.com. So if you plan on buying anything, please log on to www.northmavine.com and use the Amazon link.

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This will not increase the purchase price for your goods and the website will benefit from a percentage of the sale.

We are also updating the business directory at the moment. Local businesses can be listed free, but this only includes basic details. Alternatively, businesses can have a fuller listing with a photograph and a logo on the homepage if they decide to sponsor the website.

If you're running a business in Northmavine and we haven't included you in our free listings or if you'd like to sponsor the site, please get in touch. Although we try to include as many local businesses as we can think of, there may be some that we aren't aware of so get in touch if you'd like to be included.

Cheerio Fiona, Hello Michael

Fiona Cope from Hillswick has come to the end of her maintenance contract with the Northmavine website. Fiona originally designed and developed the website after initial input from the community and the website group, and has maintained the website for the past two years. Fiona is now developing her own website, www.designedinshetland.co.uk a website that sells local products and crafts from Shetland. Fiona also hopes to open a craft shop from her home in Hillswick next summer, so with lots of her own projects in the pipeline she decided to step down from the Northmavine website project. The directors of the NCDC would like to say a huge thanks to Fiona for all the work she has put into the website over the past 3 years.

A website only remains interesting if it changes and develops over time and Fiona has been responsible for a large percentage of the new items and stories on the site. We wish her well in her new ventures and look forward to the opening of her craft shop, "Oily Muggie", in 2009.

As of 1st September the website will be maintained by Michael Nisbet. Michael, who originates from Yell, comes from an IT background and will keep the website updated in his spare time. The directors would like to welcome Michael and wish him well with www.northmavine.com

Chelsea Plants at North Roe

The Nort Trow Gairden, near the Church of Scotland in North Roe, has seen a lot of activity over the summer from local volunteers. In June the garden group was lucky enough to secure the plants from the award-winning Shetland Croft House Garden at the Chelsea Flower Show and work began to create a home for them. A team of local stonemasons recreated the croft house façade seen at Chelsea and have made an excellent job of the stonework. The Chelsea plants were brought-on to bloom in May meaning that many were past their best when they arrived back in Shetland. Hopefully after a winter in their new home, they will be ready to bloom for visitors next year. In July, folk from the Lochend and North Roe community took part in a sponsored walk to raise funds for Motor Neurone Disease and the croft house façade project. Over 20 walkers took part and raised around £3000 between them. This is a brilliant achievement and thanks is extended to everyone who took part and gave donations.

Garden volunteers have spent the summer digging, weeding, moving earth and planning changes to the garden. Volunteers have also noticed a large increase in the number of visitors to the garden and better signage would ensure more visitors. As hairst approaches there are still many jobs to be done and the group will continue to make improvements. A number of new

volunteers have joined the group in recent months, and further offers of help from the Lochend and North Roe community are always welcome. A "to do" list has been put up in the garden shed, meaning that anyone in the community with a little spare time can go along the garden, check the list and carry out any of the jobs they feel they would like to do.



The garden even attracted the attention of the TV cameras!

Housing in Northmavine

In our last newsletter we discussed the outcome of the Northmavine Housing Survey. A total of 25 new households could be created in Northmavine through a range of housing requirements including social housing, crofts, self-build, purchase on the open market and private rent.

Since our last newsletter we have looked at many of the comments made by people in the survey and we have begun to tackle these issues. A popular comment was that folk were unsure which grants were available to self-builders or for house renovations so we intend holding an open workshop in Northmavine later in the year with Hjaltland Housing and the Crofters Commission. Folk will be invited to attend to find out what types of grants are currently available. We will also gather together all the current information about grants for self-build and refurbishment and create a document which will be available in print form and on the Northmavine website.

Although it's really encouraging to see a number of planning applications from folk wishing to build houses in Northmavine, there are still people who would like to build but do not know how to access a site. To help



with this we would like to set up a land register of people who would be willing to sell house sites in Northmavine. The landowner would still be very much in control of whom they sold sites to, but a register would help to point people in the right direction when looking for suitable land. The register would be available both in print form and on-line through the Northmavine website. We would like to begin the register soon, so if you are interested in making land available for self-build sites please contact the NCDC office with your details.

Hillswick Workspace

With the current cost of fuel many folk living in rural areas, and commuting long distances to work, have to spend increasing amounts of their wages on travel to work. One solution to this problem would be to become your own boss and set up a business in Northmavine. Part of the Northmavine development plan concentrates on business and industry and one of the priorities of the community-led plan was to encourage business into the area. This could include the establishment of affordable business units to help encourage business activity. After considering various locations in Northmavine, it was decided that Hillswick would be a suitable area for business incubation units and, in the past, agencies have indicated their willingness to support a capital project if tenants with a viable business plan could be found. The NCDC is still keen to get this project off the ground, so if you have a business idea, but are in need of premises, please get in touch with Maree at the office to discuss the prospect further.

LEADER Programme

The Shetland LEADER Programme is now open for interested potential projects from community groups and micro-businesses (employing less than 10 people). The LEADER Programme is part of the Rural Development Programme and will run until 2013. Shetland has been allocated £630,000 of funding and focuses on the two themes of Revitalising Communities and Progressive Rural Economy. The Programme, set up to encourage innovative rural development, is being administered through the Shetland Islands Council's Economic Development Unit and they have appointed Jon Dunn and Sheila Keith as Programme Co-ordinators.

A Local Action Group (LAG) make decisions locally on whether to approve projects and the NCDC has a place on the LAG. Projects will have to demonstrate how they can assist one or more of the target groups of women, young children, micro/small businesses and self employed, and social enterprises; as well as showing compliance with other conditions. The LAG seeks to fund high quality projects of an innovative nature.

More information can be found on the Shetland LEADER Programme website at www.shetlandleader.org Details can also be obtained by contacting the Project Co-ordinators at the SIC's Economic Development Unit, 6 North Ness Business Park, Lerwick, Tel: 744940 or email: leader@shetland.gov.uk or from Maree at the NCDC office.

Renewables in Northmavine

As a follow up to community consultation and a renewables survey previously carried out in Northmavine where the community highlighted an interest in renewable energy potential, the NCDC is considering how renewables could help the community economically and environmentally.

What are the potential renewable energy projects in Northmavine? Is there scope for grid connected projects? Would Wind 2 Heat or similar projects where the energy is used directly in the community to heat housing/ public buildings be a prospect?

These are all questions we would like to consider more closely. We intend setting up a small working group to help explore potential opportunities. If you are interested in becoming part of the group, please contact Maree at the NCDC office.

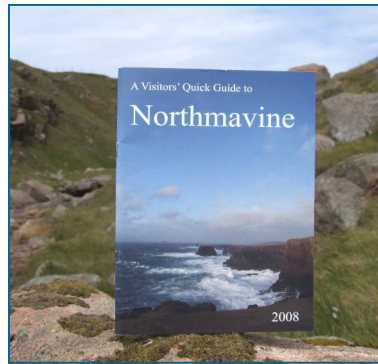
Eshaness Housing

We were disappointed to hear that the planned unplugged housing for Eshaness has been put on the back burner. The Housing Association Grant allocated to associations such as Hjaltland has been drastically cut; meaning that house building outside Lerwick and the high-demand areas has been put on hold. The NCDC has actively tried to source alternative funding that we, as a community, could access to assist Hjaltland with construction costs, but the search has proved less than fruitful. In the meantime HHA has also been considering other sources of funding, including a partnership approach with the SIC. A report came before the services committee at the end of August and the initial signs are positive that the SIC may be willing to help HHA with funding in the short term.



Quick Guide to Northmavine

The Northmavine Tourism Group, a sub-group of the NCDC, has worked hard in the off-season during last winter to produce a visitors' guide to Northmavine. As part of the recommendations to promote the area, outlined in the 2007 Northmavine Tourism Action Plan, the group has developed "A visitors' quick guide to Northmavine".



This is an A5, 36 page guide outlining 72 sites or places in Northmavine. The booklet contains 6 sections, including each of the five areas: Sullom, Hillswick, Eshaness, Ollaberry and North Roe, along with Ronas Hill. Each section has outline maps, information and photographs on 12 sites or places within each specific area. A list of contact details for local businesses and facilities is included at the back of the booklet. From visitor feedback, the Tourism group knew these would be useful for folk and the group has also produced a free insert with details of bus timetables, business/facility opening hours and what's on in Northmavine.

The group worked well to pull together the text and pictures for this guide and special thanks should be extended to Davy Cooper for much of the text and the design work. The result is a super little pocket guide with superb photos and lots of interesting information. "A visitors' quick guide to Northmavine" is priced at £4.50 and is on sale at Brae Garage, Ollaberry Shop, Braewick Café and the Tourist Information Office in Lerwick. Copies are also available from the NCDC office at Greenbrae, South Collafirth, Ollaberry and from www.northmavine.com

Northmavine Playvan

Following on from a very successful year, the SIC Playvan will begin its monthly visits to Northmavine halls after the October holidays. The van will once again be brimming with books and toys for pre-school bairns and will provide a chance for parents and bairns to meet up in the area.



Hillswick Youth Club

Following a successful meeting in July to establish a youth club committee, the Hillswick youth club should soon be up and running again. The SIC has agreed to provide funding to enable a youth club in Hillswick to operate with two part-time workers and, as we write, a recruitment drive has started to employ two part-time youth workers. Two sessions will be held for juniors and seniors respectively and this will run on Thursdays during term times. The youth club committee hope to see the club in operation after the end of the October holidays but this will depend on staffing timescales and recruitment, so if you're interested in either of the two posts contact Tom Anderson for an informal discussion on (01595) 744477 or SIC Staffing section on (01595) 744032 or 744044.



Equipment Bank

The Greenbrae office has a computer for public use with internet access. A printer, a laminator, a binding machine, video camera and a set of display boards all available to the public at a small charge. To book, please contact the office.

Forthcoming events

September

26/09 Filskit Disco - St Magnus Bay Hotel 10pm

October

01/10 Card Night - Ollaberry Hall
12/10 Sunday Teas - Ollaberry Hall 3pm - 6pm
15/10 500 Drive - Hillswick Hall 7:30pm
25/10 Fish & Chip Night - Ollaberry Hall 5pm
31/10 Filskit Disco - St Magnus Bay Hotel 10pm
31/10 Bairns Halloween Party - Ollaberry Hall

November

01/11 May & Mackie - St Magnus Bay Hotel 10pm
01/11 Annual Sale o Wark - Sullom Hall 2pm
05/11 Card Night - Ollaberry Hall
08/11 Bring & Buy Sale - Ollaberry Hall 7pm
15/11 Filskit Disco - St Magnus Bay Hotel 10pm
15/11 Dance Night - Ollaberry Hall
19/11 500 Drive - Hillswick Hall 7:30pm
22/11 Fish & Chip Night - Ollaberry Hall 5pm

December

03/12 Card Night - Ollaberry Hall
06/12 Fish & Chip Night - Ollaberry Hall 5pm
17/12 500 Drive - Hillswick Hall 7:30pm
19/12 Bairns Christmas Party - Ollaberry Hall
20/12 May & Mackie - St Magnus Bay Hotel 10pm
27/12 Christmas Dance - St Magnus Bay Hotel

See www.northmavine.com and local posters for further details

Contact Details

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