

Nollaig Chrìdheil!

Merry Christmas!

muaitheabhal
COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Pairc and Kinloch

FREE!

Seabird recovery project gets underway on the Shiantas

As the days become shorter and gales become more intense, this is a time of year when few of us dream of spending time on an uninhabited offshore island in the Minch!

However, this winter a team of dedicated conservationists are braving the elements to spend most of their winter on the Shiantas. Their purpose is to remove the black rats in order to protect the internationally important seabird population that will arrive back on their breeding grounds in the spring. This includes tens of thousands of puffins that make up the second largest puffin colony in Scotland.

Black rats, along with brown rats, are not native to the British Isles but have been introduced through human movements, reaching all corners of the globe. On offshore islands they can have catastrophic effects on seabird populations, particularly where birds nest in burrows and rats have easy access to predate eggs and chicks.

RSPB Scotland is leading the project together with SNH and the Nicolsons (the islands owners) with funding from the European LIFE+ fund. In addition to safeguarding the seabirds already breeding on the Shiantas, it is also hoped that following rat removal, Manx shearwaters and storm petrels will establish.

This is not just an attempt to control rat numbers but the objective is to remove all rats from the islands. This is done by establishing a poison baiting grid and requires a very thorough methodical approach, as just one remaining pregnant female could lead to the rat population quickly re-establishing pre-eradication levels. The rat removal needs to happen in the winter when there is no risk of disturbance to seabirds and when the rat population is at its natural low point. However, this means that the logistical challenges of transporting the team to and from the Shiantas and supporting them there are great.

The team is made up of four staff from the RSPB Scotland and Wildlife Management International Ltd (ecological consultants based in New Zealand who specialise in island restoration projects), along with six volunteers. So far the team have overcome all the challenges that the winter has thrown at them and the operation is progressing well. However, it will not be until two years from now when we find out whether the operation has been successful and the Shiantas are rat free.

To find out more about the project and the daily challenges faced by the team, visit:

www.rspb.org.uk/shiantslife.

Contact MCWFT:
Kershader Resource Centre,
Kershader, Isle of Lewis.
HS2 9QA

Tel: 01851 880296



Issue 4
January 2016

Pairc School
Xmas Stories
Special!

The countdown to christmas

Christmas is coming, I hope you all know,
Soon I'll be wishing,
for lots and lots snow.

Everyone is happy and dancing around,
Look out when you're running,
for the ice along the ground.

The smell of pine is in the air and the lights are set,
unluckily the forecast say's,
it's gonna be quite wet.

Snowball fights are raging and everyone is jolly,
every house is decorated,
with a bunch of holly.

Whether sitting by the fire or lying in their bed,
everyone is thinking,
'bout the presents in their head.

by Austin

Muaitheabhal Trust spreading Christmas Cheer

It has been the month of the community buyout in the Muaitheabhal Trust area, with two organisations receiving the good news that they are now able to progress with community ownership plans. Muaitheabhal Trust was in the proud position to be a source of vital financial assistance to these groups, helping to herald a new chapter for our community.

Keose Glebe Steering group, who through Kinloch Community Council, received an initial start-up grant from the Muaitheabhal Trust earlier this year, were delighted to hear that they were successful in their bid to the Scottish Land Fund for £105,000 towards their buyout plans.

Angus Smith, Keose Glebe Steering Group, said: 'we are extremely grateful for the initial start-up funding received from the Muaitheabhal Trust, which undoubtedly gave us a boost at the start of this long process. We are only at the beginning of things, but we have momentum. We firmly believe, that with hard work and dedication, and together with the fantastic support we have received from HIE, CnES, Community Land Scotland, the Muaitheabhal Trust and others - we can make a real difference here.' Muaitheabhal Trust would like to wish them well with their plans and look forward to working with them in the future.



MCWFT funding secures vital services at Ravenspoint

In Pairc, the good news came that the community buy-out had finally been secured, enabling ownership of the Estate to transfer to the community. Muaitheabhal Trust awarded a loan of £27,500 towards the professional fees incurred in the buyout process. Iain M Maciver, Chairman of Muaitheabhal Community Wind Farm Trust, said: 'After a long and difficult journey Pairc Trust has finally achieved its goal. Muaitheabhal Trust now wishes Pairc Trust every success on their journey.'

The funding awards continue, with an award to Ravenspoint of £60,500 towards a two year project to cover immediate revenue funding shortages and also towards their plans for the continued development of the hostel and to improve the general energy efficiency of the building.

Ishbel MacLennan, CCnaP Chairperson, said: 'Maintaining services is essential to the future of our communities and working in partnership is key to achieving that. We are very thankful and encouraged by the support of Muaitheabhal Trust as we continue efforts to secure Ravenspoint's future for our community at this time of exciting change in Pairc.'

And finally, showing that good things can also come in small packages, an award of just over £1000 was given to Alzheimer Scotland (Western Isles Branch) to establish a 'Dementia Café' in Kinloch and Pairc. These gatherings will offer an opportunity for local people with dementia and their carers to meet and receive advice and support from trained staff. It is hoped the cafes will be starting in the New Year.

As the end of the year approaches, Muaitheabhal Trust is supporting 7 jobs in the community, having allocated £101,556 in grants to various groups over the year, as well as providing £33,500 in short term loans over that period. The New Year brings a new budget of £200,000 of available spend on community projects and judging by the amount of activity and potential applications in the pipeline it may not be long before that is allocated. Please get in touch as soon as you can with your plans and ideas and discuss them with Trust staff.

The Trust would like to wish all residents a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Rudolph's Red Nose

Santa's stoking up his sleigh and all the elves are helping him. He's almost ready to go. He just needs to put his reindeers into the saddles. "Tonight is foggy" Santa said to himself "good thing I have Rudolph's nose to shine the way".

Santa is just about to leave and woossssssssh. He was gone.

Santa was in the air with Rudolph's nose lighting the way.

But Santa doesn't know that Rudolph's nose is getting dim. Santa could now see that he could not see through the fog. He had to go back to the workshop.

When he got back he told all the elves that Rudolph's nose went out. The elves all gathered to get an idea of what to do. They told Santa that they should give him some reindeer food. So that is what they did. The reindeer food smelt revolting but tasted delicious to a reindeer. Santa could see Rudolph's nose was getting brighter. "Yes" said Santa but then it was getting dimmer again "noooooo!" said Santa.

One of the elves called Squeak said "maybe we can use Rudolph's fuse wire and light it with a match." Santa thought that was a good idea. He got a match and lit Rudolph's nose fuse. His nose started to glow and the elves all cheered "YAY FOR SQUEAK" So Santa went out again woosh he was gone!!!

by Adam



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Kinloch Charity Shop
Will be closed from Friday
18th December until
Wednesday 6th January.

We would like to thank all
our patrons and
volunteers throughout the
year. Merry Christmas!

A Message from Pairc Trust

As most readers will be aware, Pairc Trust finally took ownership of the Pairc Estate on behalf of the Pairc community on Friday 4th December. This is the culmination of some 13 years of determined effort in the face of many obstacles to achieve a community buyout in line with the wishes of the community as confirmed in successive ballots.

The terms of the agreement with the previous owner for a voluntary transfer of essentially the whole Estate (including the in-bye land and Stimreway) are as endorsed by the community in May 2014. The missives were drawn up on this basis, and have been updated to take account of subsequent developments such as confirmation that Pairc Trust have ownership of the foreshore, clarification of the liability to pay VAT, and SSE's decision to withdraw from the lease with Pairc Renewables Ltd.

While we have made every effort to keep our members informed of major developments through public meetings and newsletters, it has been impossible to keep everyone updated on all the detailed twists and turns in the complex process of translating the agreement endorsed by the community into legally binding arrangements. It was only in early November that we knew how much in total we had to raise to complete the purchase following a determination by the Interim Auditor of the Sheriff Court of Grampian, Highlands and Islands on professional fees. And our total funding package was only finalised on 30th November after a further hectic round of applications and meetings.



The future's looking bright for Pairc

As agreed in 2014, the purchase price for the land and interposed lease (excluding VAT) is £500,000. In addition, Pairc Trust have to meet professional fees and related outlays (including detailed mapping of the Estate) totalling some £125,000, and to make provision for payment of VAT (which can be reclaimed from HMRC in due course) amounting to a further sum in excess of £100,000. The funding to cover these capital costs has come from Pairc Trust's own fund-raising campaign (nearly £300,000), the Scottish Land Fund (£200,000), Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (over £200,000, including a short-term loan to cover VAT cash flow), and Muaitheabhal Community Wind Farm Trust (£27,500). In addition, Scottish Land Fund and HIE are providing revenue support for an initial period. We are extremely grateful to everyone who has contributed to the total funding package, not least all those local people who made a donation to our successful fund-raising campaign.

Now that community ownership has at last been achieved, we need to change gear and look ahead to the opportunities and challenges which lie ahead for our community. I can assure you that Pairc Trust wish to be as open as possible and develop plans for priority projects in full consultation with other local groups and individuals so that together we can make Pairc a more attractive and satisfying place to live in.

We want to work in genuine partnership to create more good quality jobs, improve community facilities, widen the availability of affordable housing, and take advantages of opportunities for locally-owned small scale renewable energy. We will of course also be taking on responsibility for dealing withcrofting administration in the area. We envisage doing this, at least initially, with the help of Anderson Macarthur to provide expertise and continuity – and crofters can be reassured we do not envisage any sudden changes in policy orcroft rents.

At the Trust's AGM planned for early next year, we hope that many more people, particularly younger people and women, will put themselves forward as Directors. In addition, we would welcome offers to take part in developing particular projects from all members and local residents, tapping into the rich variety of interests, skills and talents which we have in the community. We are advertising for two new jobs – a Development Manager and Administrative Officer – which we hope to fill early in the New Year. This is a new beginning for Pairc and we are determined to make the future one of co-operation, openness, and improved opportunities for everyone in our community.

Angus McDowall
Chairman
Paiirc Trust

Now that Pairc Estate is in community ownership, we wish to appoint two members of staff to work with the Directors of Pairc Trust and the community to develop and take forward plans to benefit local residents and crofters:

- * Development Manager – salary £32,000 pa
- * Administrative Officer – salary £15,000 pa

The posts are based at Kershader, South Lochs, and are for an initial period of 2 years, starting as early as possible in 2016.

For Job Description please email info@pairctrust.co.uk

Closing Date for Applications:

Monday 11th January 2016

Santa and the beanstalk

One freezing midnight, all was busy in Santa's grotto. The choppy waves were smashing and bashing and clanging harshly on the hard, rocky ground. Rusty was sleeping peacefully on his bunk bed. Poor old Rusty had to share a bunk bed with the elves. Trixie, Pixie and Dixie were the worst for keeping Rusty awake at night. Doodle and Rizzo were awful for telling jokes. Doodle said "what do monkeys sing at Christmas?" Rusty snorted like as if he had enough for today. "jungle bells jungle bells!" Rusty walked out of the room. Mrs Claus was in her bed sleeping but Trixie was in Trixie mode and also wanted to play.

So first Trixie woke Mrs Claus and she got so frightened that she came spurting words out like... "YOU LITTLE RASCAL!!!" and things like that. Trixie was almost in tears but burst out laughing like mad. Mrs Claus shouted to Santa. "Your little Trixie is a big pain!" Santa replied but instead of yelling his head off he said "...well it is very hard to explain but um..." "he's selling Rusty!" Pixie and Dixie shouted together. "He's not by thunder!!! Are you dear?" said Mrs Claus in alarm, but Santa had to admit and he said yes. "OH so that's what Trixie was trying to say!"

A couple of hours later, while Rusty was getting set to go away to the big world ahead of him. Rusty got out his special crystal and dropped it to the ground. After he left a mighty beanstalk had grown but Pippen, Jo Jo and Elfie climbed up the beanstalk but guess what? They see Rusty! And they are so happy. So off they go with him all the way back to Santa's grotto and all is back to normal.

by Ngairé Mundee

Dè tha dol... What's on...

Deadline for
February edition:

**Thursday
14 January**

Tuesday 12 January

Meeting

Pairc Community Council meeting.

7.30pm.

Taigh Cèilidh House,
Gravir.

Thursday 14 January

Open Day

Sgoil na Pairc.

Look out for further details in
the New Year.

Saturday 16 January

Traditional Meal

Oidhche a' Cùimhneachadh
(salt meat).

With discussion on customs
associated with this event.

4.30 for 5pm.

Balallan Old School.

Tuesday 19 January

Emergency planning Meeting

Please come along to
discuss ideas for setting up
a Community Emergency
Plan for South Lochs.

7.30pm.

Ravenspoint.

Santa's Grotty Grotto

One morning in Santa's old grotty grotto all the reindeer were enjoying their yummy salads. But just when they were going to have another bite of their salads they hear a creek. Then another creek then a huge creek. All nine of the reindeers rushed out in worry just waiting for something to happen then CRASH the whole grotto came crashing down. Santa runs out his office in worry his face dredging in tears when he sees what has happened. Santa's first worry is where are the reindeer going to sleep and then something big came to his mind. He had realised that if he spends money on the grotto he might not be able to get all the presents ready in time and have the money to make them! Mrs Claus is so horrified that her tears started to make a huge puddle!

After a rough night of getting the reindeer somewhere to sleep they all got through the night sharing a bed with the elves...In the morning Santa picked up the phone and called for some help from his lawyer he wanted money for the grotto but Scrooge denies lending him any. Santa was not surprised because Scrooge was a horrible man and never done anything for anyone and all he cared about was himself.

So Mr and Mrs Claus decide to take matters into their own hands and collect some wood from the wood supplier. They even cut down a few trees so they started building. They connected the trees with some chain and blankets. "That should hold" said Santa with a smile until it all came down Santa started crying again.

After another long night sleep Santa has woken up to a banging on his door. Santa rushing through the hall way in his night gown it was Scrooge "I felt quite bad of how I didn't lend you any money so here is 1,000 pounds this should do you good". Santa had a tear dropping from his face "thank you so much". Then Scrooge walked into the distance and disappeared. Santa ran into the bedroom to show Mrs Claus again she was crying but this time with happiness. The first thing Santa did was run to the department store and get supplies.

It was Christmas Eve and Santa was rushing. Himself and Scrooge worked all night last night but with the help of the elves making the presents all was fine. Santa had finished fixing the grotto and was set out to go. Christmas was saved!

Ewan McIntyre.

Mòran Taing... Many thanks...

Balallan Village Hall Committee had a very successful Christmas Fayre in the hall, which gave their funds a much needed boost. The committee would like to thank everyone who came along on a very wet, blustery afternoon to buy from the many sales tables and enjoy a cup of tea.

Santa was, as usual, a big hit with the children!

The Light(!) Lunch held at Gravir church hall to support Muriel MacLeod's trip to Cambodia raised over £600. Thanks to everyone who contributed.

Thank you to everyone that contributed to this year's Blythswood Shoe Box Appeal at Pairc School. We sent 14 shoeboxes away this year which was fantastic!



Pairc Community Council were recently re-constituted, with Paul Bailey as Chair. Members are: P Bailey (Chair), K Mackillop (Vice-Chair), K Bailey (Treasurer), C Mackillop (Secretary), Al Campbell, S Campbell, and D Matheson.

Dr. David Rigby of Langabhat medical Practice attended November's meeting, and updated members on changes since the merger with Gravir Surgery. He gave assurances that Gravir Surgery would remain open, and that the main phase of changes has now been concluded. It is hoped that a public meeting will be held in the new year, but in the meantime, comments can be made via the suggestion box at the surgery or by speaking to a member of the Community Council, who will pass all comments on to the practice.

The next meeting will be on 12 January at 7.30pm, at Taigh Cèilidh, Gravir. The public are welcome to attend.