

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

October 31st 2014

North Harris community launches commercial units to attract businesses to stem the outflow of its youth

The North Harris Trust is now seeking applications from prospective tenants of the first new purpose-built business space in Harris in over a decade. The trust is at an advanced stage in constructing three self-contained units on land in East Tarbert with the aim to create new jobs to help reverse the migration of working age people from the community.

Since July, work has been underway on previously unused croft land to the east of Tarbert to construct three detached units. In 2013, the North Harris Trust secured over £500,000 in funding from the Big Lottery, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, the Western Isle Council, to build facilities with the specific aim of attracting new jobs and training opportunities to the island. The high cost of construction in Harris and the perceived lack of demand have meant that no commercial developer has ever considered this sort of development. As a community development trust, the North Harris Trust has managed to convince the funders that if the units are built and made available on flexible lease terms at economic rents, then businesses will come bringing with them new employment opportunities.

Contractors started preparing the ground for the three new architect-designed properties in July and since then over 1600 tons of rock has been excavated to create new access and level plots for the buildings. The Iomairt an Obain development consists of three 66 square metre larch-clad units, which have been designed to be energy efficient with plenty of natural light and their own solar panels for generating electricity. Each unit has a workshop area, office and toilet and is designed for business and light industrial use. They are scheduled to be completed at the end of January 2015.

Richard Barrett, Vice Chair of North Harris Trading Company said "This project has been 5 years in the making and at last we are starting to see something on the ground. We are talking to a number of interested parties, but we need to make sure they can deliver on the funder's requirements. We must find three businesses that will deliver new employment and training opportunities to the North Harris community."

Any new or existing businesses that can fulfil those requirements and is currently seeking commercial space should contact the North Harris Trust on 01859 502222

Notes to editors:

The North Harris Trust was established in 2003 to manage the 26,000 hectare North Harris Estate on behalf of the local community. It is run by a team of locally-elected volunteer directors and is involved in a variety of community development activities. The Trust aims to increase employment opportunities and address local housing needs.

North Harris Trading Company is a wholly-owned subsidiary of The North Harris Trust – a registered charity.

Contact:

David Wake 01859 502222 david.wake@north-harris.org

The North Harris Trust, Tigh an Urrais, Tarbert, Isle of Harris HS3 3DB

www.north-harris.org/business-space/