



# **THE NORTH HARRIS TRUST**

## **SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT**

**November 2018 – October 2019**

**AGM FEBRUARY 2020**



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Annual Report of the North Harris Trust Ltd, Tigh an Urrais, Tarbert, Isle of Harris, HS3 3DB  
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Scottish Charity No SC033413 A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, No 235889

## **Chairman's Comments**

### **Introduction**

The North Harris Trust continues to progress many projects throughout the North Harris community. Some of these projects are taken forward independently of other organisations and others are taken forward in collaboration with other groups, such as crofting townships, Scottish Natural Heritage or Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. The continued hard work of staff and directors means that the Trust is a stable organisation with a steady income and with the capacity to make a significant contribution to the North Harris community.

There were a number of changes among the Directors throughout the year. Kenny Mackay and Cathie Bell Morrison both retired as directors after serving the Trust for many years. They had both served as directors since the formation of the Trust. Prior to that, Kenny had served on the Steering Group which negotiated the purchase of the estate in 2003. Their valued input over these years is much appreciated. Kenny was replaced as a director by his daughter Kirsty and Cathie Bell was replaced by Kate Lewis. Phil Butterfield also joined the Board as a director representing Scalpay.

I will refer briefly to a few projects and developments which have taken place over the past year. Staff reports give more comprehensive information.

### **Community Consultation Meetings**

The Trust feels very strongly that it must retain strong links with the community it represents. This is done in a number of ways: newsletters, press releases, through the directors who represent different areas of the estate and through direct communication with members of the public. An important aspect of liaison with the local community is the series of community consultation meetings which are held annually in four different locations throughout North Harris. These meetings give members the opportunity to hear what work the Trust is undertaking, to comment on the Trust's work and to bring forward suggestions as to what the Trust could do in the future. These meetings are advertised publicly. While these meetings are generally well attended, greater participation would be appreciated. So, we would encourage more people to come along and give their views.

### **Affordable Housing**

The difficulties associated with the provision of affordable housing in the community continue to cause concern for the Trust. The economy of Harris continues to grow in a number of areas, with a consequent increase in jobs. This leads to an increase in demand for more affordable accommodation. If the population decline in North Harris is to be reversed and if the local economy is to continue to grow, the availability of affordable housing is essential. The Trust is in regular discussions with HHP and CNES regarding opportunities for further provision of affordable housing and some potential areas for housing have been identified. In addition to working closely with HHP on potential sites, the Trust also continues to investigate the option of building houses itself. However, the cost of building houses in North Harris is extremely high and it is quite difficult to secure external funding.

### **Tourism Developments**

The increase in the number of visitors to the Highland and Islands in recent years has had considerable publicity throughout the past year. Harris continues to enjoy a great deal of positive publicity, with a consequent increase in the number of visitors to the island each year. This is particularly true during the summer months. A major cause for concern is the delay in the building of the long-awaited new ferry. Although the improvements to the ferry terminal are progressing, there is a huge amount of uncertainty regarding the completion of the new vessel.

Locally, the 'Hushinish Gateway' building and associated camper van facilities continue to attract much positive comment. The building acts as a 'hub' for the local community and a number of events have been held in it.

### **John Muir Trust**

Once again, NHT hosted groups of John Muir Trust volunteers to Harris. There were three groups this year, undertaking voluntary work such as fence maintenance, beach cleaning, path maintenance and ditching. This annual input from JMT volunteers is very much appreciated. It is hoped that the Trust's relationship with JMT will be strengthened in the years ahead. The announcement by JMT that they propose to appoint a Ranger who will be based in Lewis and Harris is very much welcomed by the Trust.

### **Scottish Water**

The long-awaited project to provide a mains water pipe from Govig to Hushinish is now well underway. Work has been progressing well on the site throughout 2019. At present Berdersaig has no mains water supply and the supply to Govig and Hushinish is inadequate for most of the year. This project will ensure a sufficient supply of water for Govig, Berdersaig and Hushinish, with capacity for further development of housing or business interests in these villages.

### **Support from partner agencies**

The Trust continues to enjoy a lot of support from a number of organisations and agencies which make a considerable contribution to the work of the Trust. These include Highlands and Island Enterprise, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Scottish Government, Scottish Natural Heritage, Muaitheabhal Community Windfarm Trust, John Muir Trust, Paths for All and the Western Isles Development Trust. A lot of the Trust's work depends on support funding from various agencies. At times, it appears that it is increasingly difficult to attract external funding.

We continue to have a strong working relationship with Amhuinnsuidhe Castle Estate, particularly on matters related to land management.

We also maintain strong links with other community based land owning groups in the Western Isles. A number of meetings of the community landowning groups were held throughout the year and these were very fruitful.

# Manager's Report

## Planning

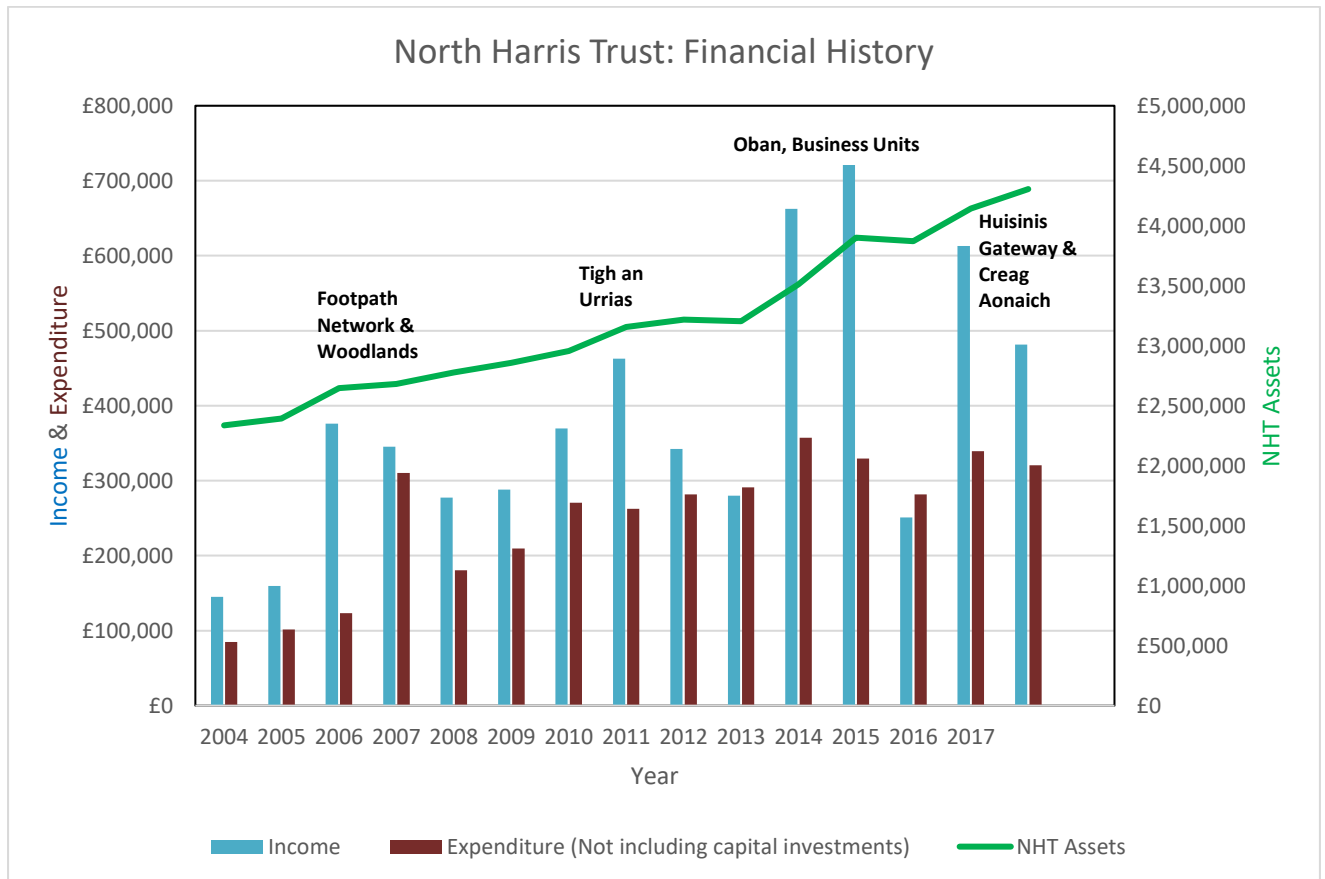
In pursuance of the North Harris Trust's aims and shaped by feedback received during our annual Community Consultations, project work continues to be focused on the following areas:

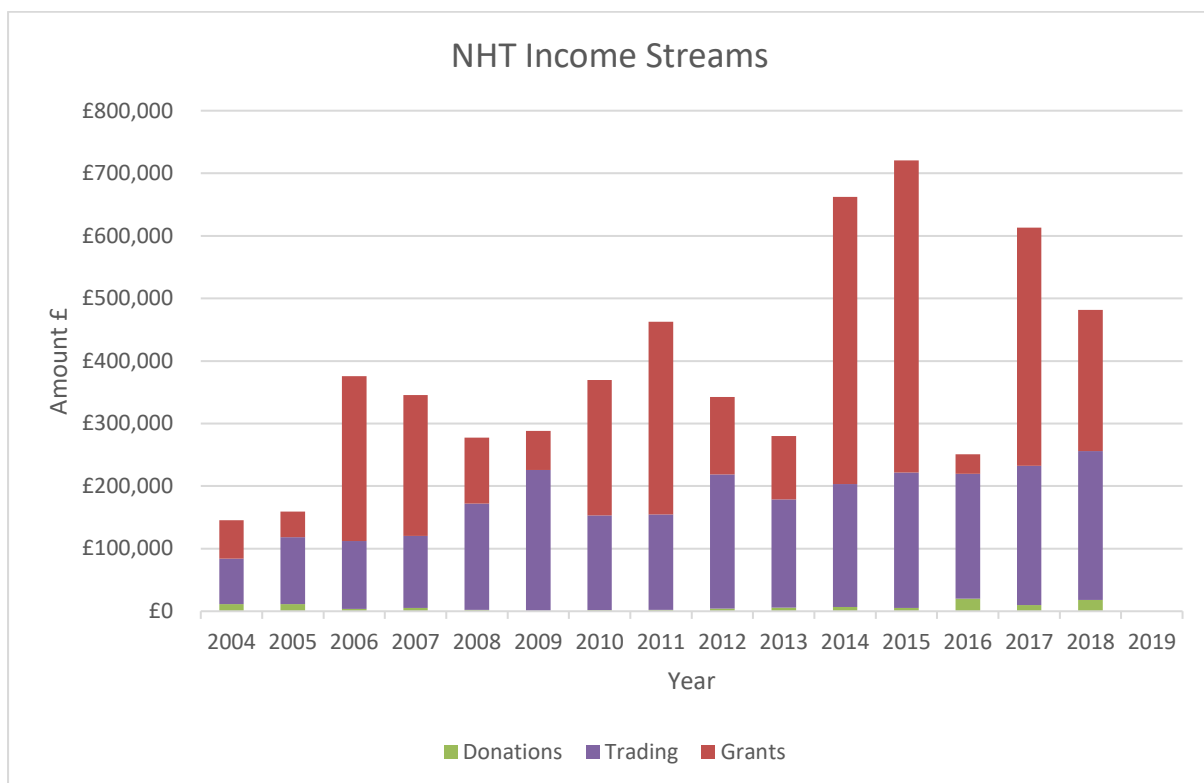
- Housing
- Creation of Business Space for others
- Establishment of a Maintenance Team
- Creation of Parking areas, Footpaths & Mountain Bike Trails
- Ardvourlie Woodlands Development ( New Hide & Interpretation)
- Community Woodlands Expansion
- Gunnera Control
- Maraig Slipway

For more detail refer to other staff reports

## Finance History

A report on the audited accounts for the 2018-19 financial year will be presented at the AGM. The following graphs summarise the financial performance of the Trust since its establishment in 2003.





NHT has consistently run at a trading surplus generating more income than is required to cover staff and administration costs. With experienced development staff in place, the Trust has been successful in acquiring grant funding, multiplying the impact of this trading surplus. Recent major building projects, The Huisinis Gateway (£240,000) and Creag Aonaich (£250,000) were approximately 90% grant aided. Providing the funding to match these grants reduced NHT reserves resulting in a temporary lull in investment. The reserves are now recovering. In March 2019, the NHT Board decided sell properties at Quayside, Amhuinnsuidhe. The capital released will be used to support future housing development projects.

#### Staff

The Trust continues to operate with the following compliment of 6 staff:

Gordon Cumming- Manager (Permanent, Full time)

Diana Maclennan- Office & Land Administrator (Permanent, Full time)

David Wake- Senior Development Officer (Permanent, Part Time)

Karen Macrae- Development Officer (Permanent, Full time)

Michael Hunter- Ranger (FTA, Full Time)

Steven Morrison- Charge Hand (FTA, Full Time)

The Trust also contracts cleaning staff for the offices and Huisinis Gateway, plus additional cover for the Community Re-cycling Centre when necessary.

In March 2019 the Ranger, Daryll Brown resigned and the post was filled by Michael Hunter. This post continues to be 50% funded by Scottish Natural Heritage (currently secured until October 2021).

### **Leases & Land Transactions**

The North Harris Trust operates 50 leases covering residential and business properties, agricultural land, wayleaves and masts. During this financial year, there were no additional leases.

There are also the tenancies associated with 169 crofts and 29 Common Grazings. This year NHT administered 10 de-crofting applications, releasing land for house sites, boundary anomalies and access solutions.

To allow for installation of the new Govig to Huisinis water supply, land was sold to Scottish Water for the treatment works and a deed of servitude was issued for the pipeline.

As preparation for the sale of the Quayside, Amhuinnsuidhe properties, NHT successfully petitioned for the removal of the Standard Securities held by Highlands and Island Enterprise and The National Lottery over the Trust lands. The Standard Security held over the Quayside Properties by the Bank of Scotland was transferred to Tigh an Urrais, to allow continuation of loan and overdraft facilities.

### **Policy Updates**

NHT's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice were adopted Nov 2018.

The Health & Safety Policy and associated risk assessments are prepared and reviewed by a third party. The last review in September 2019 found no issues with NHT's, H&S performance.

Gordon Cumming

Manager



# Ranger Report

## **Guided walks**

The 2019 programme had 235 participants which is down on 2018. Participation varied significantly by walk type, event regularity and most importantly the weather! Some lessons have been learned for the 2020 programme which has already been published.

## **Schools and Youth Work**

There has been significant Ranger involvement with Sir E Scott School/Sgoil an Tairbeart this year through Enterprise Day, Activities Week and an Elective in Sustainable Land Management. Further Ranger activities with SES are ongoing with more planned for the coming academic year. Visiting groups such as George Watson's School, Comunn na Gàidhlig camps and Glasgow University Environmental Science students took part in Ranger activities such as path maintenance, invasive species eradication, seed collection, tree planting and wildlife walks.

## **Mountain Festival**

Participation in 2019 Mountain Festival activities was limited and we lacked an event that marked the weekend. Rebranded as Fèis nam Beann for May 2020, we hope to rejuvenate this annual event by giving it a Gàidhlig twist.

## **Scalpaigh Heritage Walk**

The installation of marker posts, finger posts and gates over the past season has made the route around Scalpaigh safer and more enjoyable for both visitors and locals.

## **Huisnis-Crabhadail-Leòsaid Path Survey**

A survey of the hill path was undertaken by the John Muir Trust. A path route was identified, upgrades and repairs recommended and costed. Funding options are now being considered for this work.

## **Interpretation**

There has been Ranger input into several interpretation panels that will be installed throughout North Harris in the coming months.

## **JMT volunteer groups**

Three volunteer work parties from the John Muir Trust came to Harris during 2019. They took part in tree planting, beach cleaning, path work and general maintenance throughout Harris. These JMT volunteer groups play a valuable part in the upkeep of our infrastructure and we greatly appreciate their contribution to our island.

## **Collaboration with West Harris Trust**

Through JMT work parties and other events, the Ranger service has begun to offer activities in West Harris with the support of WHT, it is envisaged that this will continue into 2020.

## **Paths**

The new path under construction around Lacasdail Lochs has involved a few volunteer days although there has been little participation. There has also been consideration of the wider path network and the maintenance required to upkeep our existing infrastructure.

## **Tree Planting**

Five hundred trees were planted in Ardvourlie Woodland with the help of JMT volunteers and around 1000 tree mounds were prepared in Gleann Miabhaig. Although planting around Lacasdail Lochs did not go ahead as the area is unsuitable for Forestry Commission grant aid, other funding options are being pursued to finance woodland expansion in this area.

Michael Hunter

## Senior Development Officer's Report

The North Harris Trading Company (NHTC) is the wholly-owned subsidiary of the North Harris Trust (NHT). It was established in 2003 to deliver new income streams to the Trust to allow it to expand its community development activities.

The Bunavoneader hydro-electric scheme passed its third anniversary and delivered a good performance in line with performance. Since year-end it has been confirmed that the existing majority shareholder is selling up. NHTC is looking at options to buy the scheme and take it back into community ownership. NHTC continues to provide monthly checks on the scheme and has a minority equity stake in ownership.

The Monan Windfarm has changed hands once again. Constantine Wind Energy are now the majority shareholder in Monan Wind Company Ltd. It's Operation and Maintenance company Natural Generation now supports the turbines. Performance has suffered as the new support team upskill. NHTC continues to hold a minority stake in ownership.

Huisinis Gateway has been through its second tourist season seeing visitor numbers rise to 41,000. Improvements have been made with the installation of new hand-dryers and additional bins. The Gift Aid envelope system (that we use at the campsite) was introduced at the Gateway, along with "suggested donations" for camping. This has contributed to the 54% increase in takings throughout the year.

Working with HIE, we commissioned a study into the demand for more business space. Results showed that there was significant demand for small craft workshops. The study went on to investigate the feasibility of building on the old Gun Club site at Urgha. The final proposal saw the North Harris Community Recycling Site relocating on to the Gun Club allowing it more space to expand. New workshops were proposed on the existing recycling site, to make the most of the outlook to the sea and the easy road access. The total project is valued at £1.3M, which we are currently seeking funding for.

NHTC continues to operate the North Harris Community Recycling Site. We were successful in obtaining a further round of Community Jobs Scotland funding for staff, but were unable to fill the post. This has prevented us continuing the estate management tasks and maintenance that was so well received last year. We did however invest in a second container and have supported local crofters by selling animal feeds and fencing materials. The Chemical Disposal Point for campers was automated this year allowing 24x7 access. This addresses the complaints received about it not being available for visitors on Sundays and Mondays.

Hebridean Housing Partnership started construction on the Old Police Station site in Tarbert. With little progress in securing further social housing in North Harris through HHP, we took it upon ourselves to investigate a potential development site proposed in a township meeting. Funding was secured through the Rural Housing Fund for assistance with a feasibility study on a site at Ardvourlie. Fifty-seven responses were received from a Housing Needs Survey, thus proving demand. After exploring a number of different options for the site, it was deemed unviable as per-unit costs were over £250K -way beyond grant and mortgage reach. We are now seeking infill sites and working with CnES' Empty Homes Officer.

We have continued to look for a sustainable way of developing the Maraig Slipway. With the relocation of LHYCA outdoor activities to Tarbert Marina, we have lost a big part of any justification for developing changing/toilet facilities there. We have however been approached by someone looking for a boat repair site. A public meeting was held on site in September to discuss options. We are still investigating this option.

David Wake

## Project Development Officer's Report

### Caraidean

Two issues of the Trust's newsletter were produced during the year, one in December 18 and the other in June 19. These bi-annual updates of the work of the North Harris Trust are sent to all Trust Members and Friends.

### North Harris Foreshore - Crown Estate

The NHT Board decided in early 2016 to pursue ownership of the foreshore. Subsequently the apparent owner, Crown Estate Scotland, has agreed to transfer most of the foreshore into NHT's ownership, excluding certain mapped areas. NHT sought legal advice on whether to contest these excluded areas and awaits a response.

### Helicopter Deer Count

A helicopter deer count of the Estate was carried out over 2 days in February 2019. Helicopter counts are generally accepted to be more accurate than ground/foot counts. The helicopter count returned much lower deer numbers than anticipated as detailed below. Taking this into account cull number for winter 19/20 was much reduced and focused on welfare.

Count Type	North Har	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Unclass	Total	Density	Recruit
	1993	231	-	-	466	697	2.9	
Heli	2000	396	-	-	678	1,074	4.5	
Heli	2006	246	-	-	583	828	3.5	
Ground	2008	359	-	-	1,018	1,377	5.8	
Ground	2010	298	685	203	19	1,205	5.0	30%
Heli	2012	325	573	174	7	1,079	4.5	30%
Heli	2013	207	432	177	-	816	3.4	41%
Ground	2016	358	539	107	239	1,297	5.4	20%
	2016	388	742	167		1,297	5.4	23%
Ground	2018	328	674	94	166	1,262	5.3	14%
	2018	345	803	114		1,262	5.3	14%
Heli	2019	243	344	108	-	695	2.9	31%

### Ardvourlie Woodland Observatory & MTB Trails

The concept of creating a woodland observatory in Ardvourlie originated from a community consultation meeting held in Scaladale in late 2017. This highlighted the fantastic resource the community has in the 100ha broadleaf plantation that was created as part of the Millennium Forest programme. Funding for the £50,000 project was secured in Spring 2019 with the construction contract awarded to O'Mac Construction in the Summer. Work commenced on site in August 2019 and was completed in October. The building, which is located 1 km from the main road sits in an elevated position and offers commanding 270 degree views up Glen Vigidale and down to Loch Seaforth. Its location half way around the woodland footpath makes it an ideal spot to stop and rest and learn more about the surrounding environment. We are very grateful to Outer Hebrides LEADER, CNES, Muaitheabhal Community Windfarm Trust, The John Muir Trust & Highlands and Islands Enterprise for their funding assistance without which, this project would not have been possible. Thanks, are also due to the Ardvourlie crofters for their help and cooperation with this project.

NHT & The Scaladale Centre jointly funded feasibility and design work for the creation of mountain bike trails in and around the Ardvourlie Woodlands. The resulting maps and costed plans will be used to approach potential funders.

### Deer Hinds 18-19 & Stags 2019

In 18-19 hind season (before the helicopter count) 70 hinds were taken from specified locations through the Estate to maintain deer numbers at the 1100 mark and try to distribute grazing pressure more evenly. In summer 2019 35 stags were culled from the herd between ACE and the Harris Stalking Club.

### **Gunnera Eradication Report**

In early 2019 NHT were approached by Scottish Natural Heritage to carry out feasibility work looking at the prospect of a Western Isles wide eradication project. This work took several months and involved a request for contact from the public and various other stakeholders across the Western Isles as to the extent of the spread of the plant. Good feedback was received which allowed the reported locations of the plant to be mapped and the scale of the problem to be quantified for the first time. A 5-year costed project was presented to SNH and work continues to find a suitable organisation to seek funding and to take this project forward.

NHT continued to co-ordinate the Harris-wide campaign to control the non-native invasive plant. Most of the eradication work is carried out using herbicides applied by NHT staff, contractors from OH-MEET- (The Comhairle's employment training scheme) and local volunteers. Scottish Nature Heritage continue to fund 50% of this work.

### **Office Equipment Refurb**

DMR IT were employed by NHT in November 2018 to review the IT equipment and software within the office and at the Urgha Recycling Depot. Subsequently the system was updated to ensure all Staff are working with the appropriate IT equipment and software and a shared back up drive was introduced for the safe keeping of files.

### **Website Leaflet**

With the closure of the Visit Scotland Office in Tarbert in 2019 it was decided to digitise the NHT promotion leaflets which were being printed annually and distributed through the tourist information office. This not only saves dramatically on printing costs but by being available on via the NHT websites allows visitors to find out more about what the Trust does and offers before their visit.

### **Motorhome Chemical Disposal Point Urgha**

Funding was secured through the CNES Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to install a coin operated mechanism to the Chemical Disposal Point located the Urgha Depot. This new 24 hour facility has been welcomed by the many motor home visitors who visit North Harris each year. There is another 24h CDP located by the Hushinish Gateway. In response to the increasing popularity of Motorhome holidays to the Western Isles a page was added to the NHT website to help potential visitors what they can expect in terms of facilities and infrastructure.

### **Scalpay Play Park**

The Trust continues to work with the Scalpay Community Association and local crofters to resolve land issues in relation to the Scalpay Play Park to allow for its refurbishment.

Karen MacRae

**THE NORTH HARRIS TRUST**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES  
(INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2019**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	<b>31.10.19 Total funds £</b>	31.10.18 Total funds £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM</b>					
Donations and legacies	2	<b>31,361</b>	<b>4,499</b>	<b>35,860</b>	18,258
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
Charitable activities	5	<b>72,264</b>	<b>61,287</b>	<b>133,551</b>	271,190
Other trading activities	3	<b>2,293</b>	-	<b>2,293</b>	6,889
Investment income	4	<b>196,330</b>	-	<b>196,330</b>	185,128
<b>Total</b>		<b>302,248</b>	<b>65,786</b>	<b>368,034</b>	481,465
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>					
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
Charitable activities	6	<b>237,183</b>	<b>104,613</b>	<b>341,796</b>	320,554
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</b>		<b>65,065</b>	<b>(38,827)</b>	<b>26,238</b>	160,911
Transfers between funds	21	<b>(40,551)</b>	<b>40,551</b>	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>24,514</b>	<b>1,724</b>	<b>26,238</b>	160,911
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>					
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		<b>111,698</b>	<b>4,193,652</b>	<b>4,305,350</b>	4,144,439
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<b><u>136,212</u></b>	<b><u>4,195,376</u></b>	<b><u>4,331,588</u></b>	<b><u>4,305,350</u></b>

The notes form part of these financial statements

**THE NORTH HARRIS TRUST**

**BALANCE SHEET  
31 OCTOBER 2019**

	Notes	<b>31.10.19</b> £	31.10.18 £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Tangible assets	13	<b>4,260,247</b>	4,269,530
Investments	14	<b>60,000</b>	60,000
		<b>4,320,247</b>	4,329,530
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Debtors	15	<b>19,003</b>	9,346
Cash at bank and in hand		<b>23,181</b>	11,832
		<b>42,184</b>	21,178
<b>CREDITORS</b>			
Amounts falling due within one year	16	<b>(30,843)</b>	(45,358)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>11,341</b>	(24,180)
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>4,331,588</b>	4,305,350
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>4,331,588</b>	4,305,350
<b>FUNDS</b>	21		
Unrestricted funds		<b>136,212</b>	111,698
Restricted funds		<b>4,195,376</b>	4,193,652
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>		<b>4,331,588</b>	4,305,350

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on ..... and were signed on its behalf by:

.....  
C J Mackay - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

## North Harris Trust Directors

### **Calum J MacKay**

#### **Chairman**

Retired Depute Head Teacher of Sir E Scott School, Crofter  
Represents Ardhasaig and Bunavoneadar area

### **Tim Langley**

#### **Vice Chair**

Solicitor  
Represents Tarbert area

### **Barbara MacKay**

Secondary School French teacher  
Represents Tarbert area.

### **Donald J Morrison**

Bus Driver, Crofter  
Represents Urgha area

### **Ian A MacSween**

Retired Teacher, Crofter  
Represents Scaladale, Ardvourlie, Bowglas area

### **Robert MacKinnon**

Postman  
Represents Tarbert area

### **Donnie MacLeod**

Marine Engineer  
Represents Scalpay area

### **Finlay Ewen MacLeod**

Fisherman  
Represents Kyles area

### **Phil Bertin**

Distiller  
Represents Tarbert area

### **Philip Butterfield**

Retired  
Represents Scalpay area

### **Kirsty Mary MacKay**

Project Officer  
Represents Rhenigidale, Marig, Eileananabuich area

### **Kate Lewis**

Represents Hushinish – Meavaig area

### **Catherine I Morrison**

Retired Citizens Advice Bureau Manager - retired on 25/02/2019  
Represents Hushinish – Meavaig area

### **Kenneth MacKay**

Crofter. - retired on 25/02/2019  
Represents Rhenigidale – Marig area

## Staff Update: February 2020

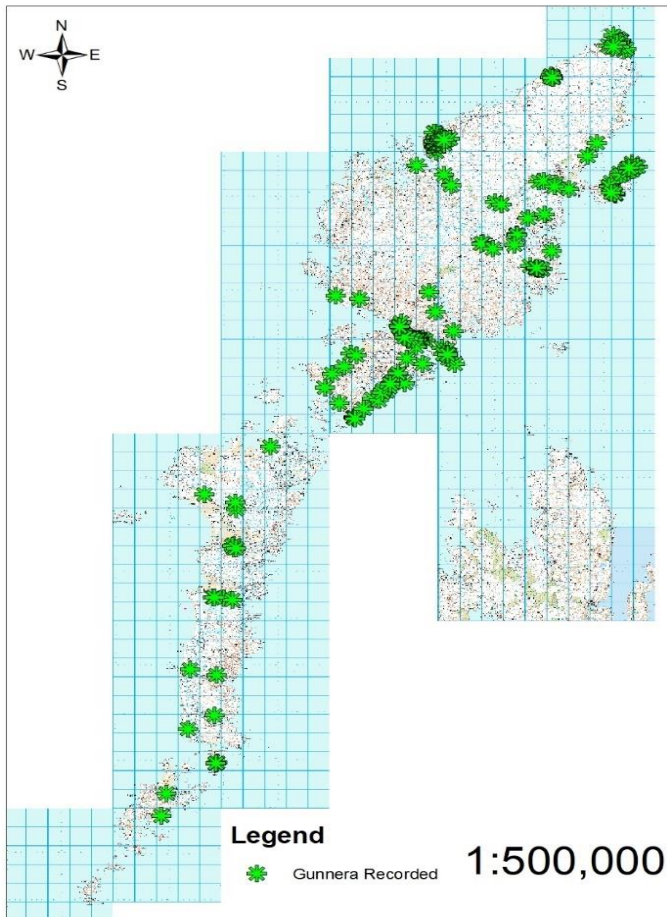
<b>Member of Staff</b>	<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Date of Appointment</b>	<b>Length of Contract</b>	<b>Salary Paid By</b>
Gordon Cumming	Manager	2017	Permanent	NHT
Diana MacLennan	Office and Land Administrator	2007	Permanent	NHT
Karen MacRae	Development Officer	2013	Permanent	NHT
David Wake	Senior Development Officer	2009	Part time (renewable)	NHT
Michael Hunter	Ranger	2019	24 Months (renewable)	SNH/NHT
Steven Morrison	Chargehand	2010	12 Months (renewable)	NHT (reimbursed by CNES)

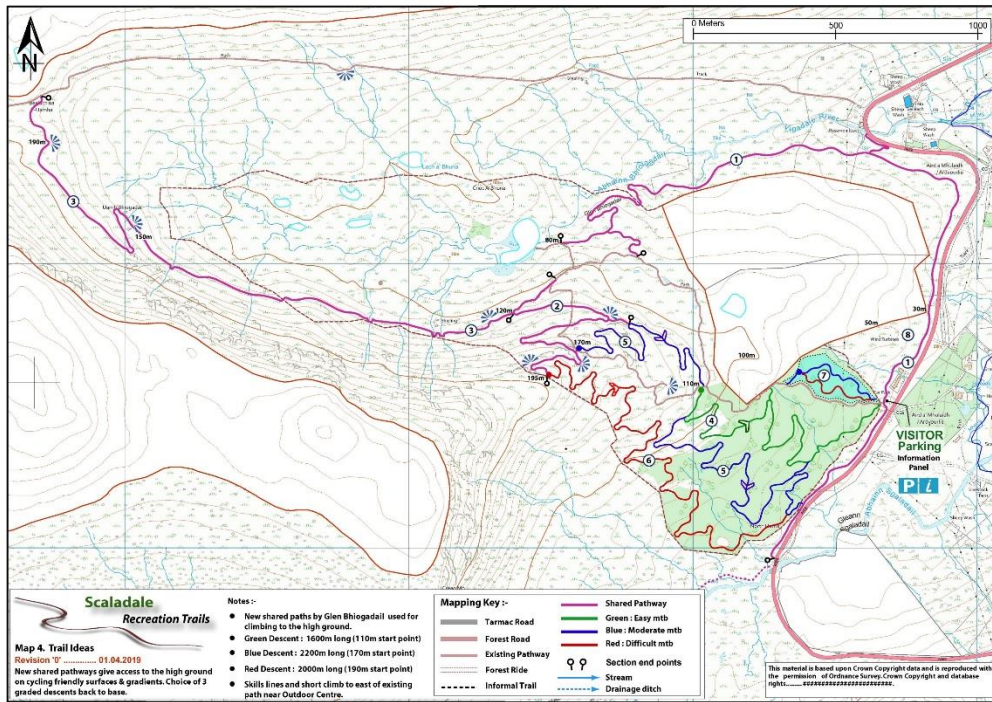




Ardvourlie Woodland Observatory

## Gunnera in the Western Isles





Scaladale Mountain Bike Trails



Footpath Repairs



Helicopter Deer Count

# Scottish Water Treatment Plant Landing at Hushinish Beach





North Harris Trust



[www.iohmf.co.uk](http://www.iohmf.co.uk)

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