

North Harris Trading Company Limited Annual Report

Board of Directors

Chairman
Tim Langley

Vice Chair
Ronnie Morrison

Directors
Donnie MacKay
Shaun Hayes
Richard Barrett

NHT/NHTC Directors
Iain MacSween
Steve McCombe

Barbara MacKay
Tim Langley

Company Secretary
David Wake

Chairman's Report

Year ending 31st October 2013

After nine years as Chairman, David Cameron stepped down and retired as a director at the end of the year. David was a firm believer in the idea of a community-owned North Harris and was instrumental in the formation of the North Harris Trust for that purpose. Without his 10-year involvement with the Trust we simply would not be where we are today. We all wish him the very best for the future.

In addition to my appointment, we are fortunate to have been able to appoint Richard Barrett (Maraig) and Shaun Hayes (Scalpay) as additional directors. Both bring considerable commercial skill and experience and will be valuable assets to the Board.

From the Development Officer's Report that follows, you will read that real progress has been made this year on various longstanding projects. In particular, there have been welcome developments in relation to the Monan wind project (which will see construction start in 2014) and the Zero-Carbon Business Units (which, with funding now in place, will also see construction start in 2014). Both of those projects will bring significant long-term benefits to the community.

Although progress on hydro-electric projects was, because of factors beyond our control, frustrating slow for a while, there have recently been positive developments and we remain optimistic that at least one of those projects will come to fruition.

Now that the Isle of Scalpay has formally become part of the North Harris estate, we look forward to working with the Scalpay community to identify projects to benefit to the area.

As the trading subsidiary, we have a lower profile than the Trust itself but we are always keen to hear of any ideas which residents of the estate might have about projects which might be of benefit to the community. Please feel free to speak to David Wake, our Energy Development Officer, at the Trust office at any time.

Finally, I thank David Wake and the Company directors for their time and energy during the year. We also very much appreciate the support of the North Harris Trust Board and their staff.

Development Officer's Report

Year ending 31st October 2013

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. Ten years on, having invested much time and money over the years, it looks as though a small windfarm at Monan will become reality. This year, SSE confirmed a new date of 2015 for grid connection at the site. NHTC has been working with a New Zealand-based turbine manufacturer for some time. They have a machine that will operate in the turbulent conditions in Harris and are keen to showcase it in North Harris. The Monan Wind Company has since been established as a joint venture company between The North Harris Trading Company Limited and Windflow Hammer Limited to progress the project.

The other project that has been underway for a number of years is the hydro-electric scheme at Bunavoneader. Following the demise of the Co-op Bank, we have been exploring other options for funding the scheme. The project has taken a step forward with the confirmation of a firm grid connection date of August 2014. NHTC are also in talks with a potential commercial partner who is keen to develop the scheme.

Whilst there are constraints for new schemes on the electricity grid in the Western Isles, NHTC continues to investigate opportunities for smaller schemes that will bypass this barrier. One such opportunity arose with the closure of the Maraig Water Treatment Works. The river there has a good flow of water and Directors thought it warranted closer inspection. In May O.H.C.E.F funding was secured for a Hydro-electricity Feasibility Study along with three other community schemes in Lewis. The study confirmed that there is enough water to support a 350kW turbine. A 50kW scheme has since been designed to fit the grid constraint, with the ability to expand at a later stage.

In addition to renewable energy schemes, NHTC has progressed two building projects. Firstly the Zero-carbon Business Units development on the Tarbert/Urgha boundary has taken a major step forward by securing all the required funding. The final stage of Big Lottery application was submitted in February. This followed a Community Consultation exercise that involved mailing all the households in North Harris and running workshops at Sir E Scott School. The award of £502,000 was eventually made in August. This was quickly followed by an award of £154,000 from HIE and £35,000 from CnES. This brought huge relief to Directors and Staff, as at one point, the project was at risk of folding as HIE had determined that its award would be classed as State Aid – restricting Lottery and HIE funding to £180,000. We currently await the granting of the Building Warrant.

In May NHTC secured funding from the Investing in Ideas Fund for a Feasibility Study into the creation of the Huisinis Gateway. This project will redevelop the existing toilet block to include new parking and a large display/meeting space with new toilet and changing facilities. We now seek funding to progress to planning.

NHTC continues to operate the North Harris Community Recycling Site at Urgha. CnES has maintained its grant for the facility, however the range of services offered from the site continues to expand to counter the steady increase in overheads. Further improvements continue to be made in the site. This year mains water and a

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septic tank were installed to support a new toilet facility. This follows the installation of a portacabin earlier in the year to provide office/mess facilities. Towards the end of the year, funding through Community Jobs Scotland was secured for a second member of staff. The 6 month, fully-funded placement was filled and is proving to be of great benefit.

For the first time since it was established, the North Harris Trust has offered paid-for stalking. A number of paying guests have been taken out successfully with some, booking return visits next season. NHTC has since secured a licence to trade in game and is now making venison available to the local community.