

North Harris Trading Company Limited

Annual Report

November 2018 – October 2019

Board of Directors

Chairman
Gordon Ness

Vice Chair
Tim Langley

Directors
Steve McCombe

NHT/NHTC Directors
Iain MacSween

Barbara MacKay

Company Secretary
Gordon Cumming

Chairman's Report

Year ending 31st October 2019

2019 continued to consolidate and improve on some existing schemes whilst looking for new revenue generating projects.

The Huisinis Gateway saw year on year increased visitors and the increase in site capacity has been more than utilised, resulting in increased donations which in turn supports the additional work of maintenance and upkeep of the buildings and site.

The recycling site at Urgha, whose operations have been expanded to include a commercial waste facility and the sale of mixed products for agricultural feed and some building/fencing supplies continues to be successful. A review of the site and the land usage is underway with various agencies with a view to utilising the wider site available.

The Monan and Bun Abhainn Eadarra renewable energy schemes continue to generate income for the estate, and the business units at Iomairt an Obain remain fully occupied.

As previously stated in past AGM's, Housing has been identified as a priority. The company and NHT continue to seek and review suitable site(s) with other agencies. One such project at Ardvourlie, led by NHTC has failed to be commercially viable at this time.

As always, I am very grateful to the board of directors for continuing to give their time to the company. Gordon Ness took over the Chair earlier this year and I thank Tim Langley for his stewardship of the board over past years. I also thank the Trust board and staff for their support, and in particular David Wake for his consistent enthusiasm and professionalism.

Development Officer's Report

Year ending 31st October 2019

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.

North Harris Trading Company

Company Number: SC275446

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.