

North Harris Trading Company Limited

Annual Report

November 2019 – October 2020

Board of Directors

Chairman
Gordon Ness

Vice Chair
Tim Langley

Directors
Steve McCombe

NHT/NHTC Directors
Barbara MacKay
Kirsty MacKay (from May 2020)

Company Secretary
Michael Hunter

Chairman's Report

Year ending 31st October 2020

In the face of Covid-19 and the restriction placed on the company due to lockdowns, in 2020, we continued to operate albeit on restricted projects and income generation. We continued to consolidate and improve on some existing community development schemes whilst looking for new revenue generating projects.

The Huisinis Gateway was closed for a major portion of the tourist season and so income via donations was severely reduced compared to 2019.

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 with additional goods on offer and an easier Covid compliant payment service. Covid closed the site for a number on months and restricted delivery of skips from CnES created a need to change hours of availability. A review of the site and the land usage took place but has been halted for the present due to restrictions with various agencies.

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 and once again has raised the awareness of the need for more small business units.

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.

As always, I am very grateful to the board of directors for continuing to give their time to the company. 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 2020

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 has suffered a number of operational issues this year, resulting in a reduction of forecast performance. As NHTC provides first-responder services for the scheme, it has benefited from additional call-out charges. Moving into its fourth year of operation, Earth Capital (EC), the majority shareholder, started the process to sell this and the West Harris scheme at Seilebost. NHTC, working with West Harris Trust engaged a surveyor to value the schemes. A joint bid was made by the two trusts to bring the schemes back into full community ownership. This offer, along with a subsequent revised offer, was rejected. EC have since rejected a further offer from a third party believing the offers significantly undervalue the schemes.

NHTC continues to provide monthly checks on the scheme and has a minority equity stake in River Generation Ltd, the scheme owner.

Microgeneration has continued unabated throughout the pandemic. NHTC owns and operates three solar PV installations and three wind turbines. Loans funding the installation of the two turbines at Huisinis were paid off ahead of time this year.

Huisinis Gateway has been closed since the pandemic took hold in April. The campsite re-opened when restrictions were lifted in late summer. We saw visitor numbers increase in September but overall takings this year were down by 84% on the previous year. Funding was secured from Crown Estates to duct a stream and infill to create a number of additional parking spaces.

Little progress has been made in funding additional business space at Urgha. One of the tenants of Iomairt an Obain ended their lease in the summer. This gave us the opportunity to gauge interest in business space. There were 8 applications for Unit 1 which clearly demonstrates the need for more space in North Harris.

NHTC continues to operate the North Harris Community Recycling Site on behalf of CnES. This year has proven challenging with a lack of serviceable skips and drivers meaning that skips haven't been turning over as quickly as needed. COVID arrived, closing the site in MAY/JUN/JUL. At the end of September, with skip availability still an issue, the site moved to a restricted winter opening schedule, a month earlier than usual.

The Crofting Supplies business continued to grow throughout the year. Electrics were installed in the container and a card payment system was installed just in time for the new safer ways of working. The product range continues to grow. The local availability of animal feeds and fencing materials has been well received by the local community during the year.

We continue to look for a sustainable way of developing the Maraig Slipway. A public meeting was held with individuals proposing to site a boat-repair yard there. This project has since moved to Scalpay.

North Harris Trading Company

Company Number: SC275446

Working with Sir E Scott school, funding was secured from Western Isles Development Trust to install new benches and an information panel in Tarbert. Materials were sourced through the Crofting Supplies business with staff working with pupils on the installation.