

Brora Development Trust



Newsletter

April 2023

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The first quarter of 2023 has been very busy for Brora Development Trust, it's dedicated voluntary Trustees, volunteers and employees. Successful applications for funding have enabled key projects, namely a Visitor Information Point for Brora, a village website and pedestrian signposts for the village centre, to begin and the focus has been on these regeneration initiatives. Working groups have been operating to guide the work of the Trust and our thanks go out to the local people who have given up their time to be part of this work. Simultaneously, work has taken place to enable a partnership with Brora Community Centre and Engaging with Activity at Brora Village Hub, to the set up and operate of The Annex, a food share shed, hosted at Brora Community Centre. This facility provides greater access to food support for people living in Brora. A small amount of funding was also made available for energy payment support for households, at a time when the cost of living has been exorbitant. The Trust is delighted to announce the expansion of its team too and warmly welcomes Odhran McLeod on board, bringing fresh energy and enthusiasm to the Trust as it continues to support the people of Brora.

We hope you enjoy reading this April newsletter!

Kind Regards,

Tony Gill, Chair of Brora Development Trust

NEWS

New Goals for Muirfield

More than 50 children and volunteer coaches turned out at Muirfield football field on a chilly Saturday in March, to enjoy a sociable morning of football and games. Volunteers from Brora Wanderers Football Club, Brora Rangers Mini Kickers and Skittle Ball group, led two hours of activities which ended in a kids versus coaches game with the kids giving the grown-ups a run for their money!

One local resident, Maureen Mackay said "It was so nice to hear the excitement coming from the park. We have lived here since the late 70s and it was just like old times".



The event was organised by Brora Development Trust, who secured funding for the new goal posts for the field. The new goals replaced a single dilapidated goal post and will serve to hopefully encourage local children to be more active and take part in sports and outdoor activities.

The event would not have been possible without the support and effort of people in Brora, from people helping to make sure the lines were painted on the field, to local residents making sure the nets were set properly, the sandwiches and bacon rolls from Linda's Café, helpers making the packed lunch bags, the energetic and skilled coaches and of course the children and families who turned out on the day.



Funding for the goals came from The European Social Fund and Scottish Government, administered by The Highland Council Food Plus scheme. Brora Development Trust liaised closely with The Highland Council, Amenity Services department to have the redundant goals replaced.

Food Share Shed Annex for Brora

A collaborative community project between key groups in Brora, to expand existing food relief support has led to the establishment of The Annex, at Brora Community Centre. The project is being delivered in partnership by Brora Development Trust, Engaging with Activity (at Brora Hub) and Brora Community Centre. Brora Food Share Shed Annex at Brora Community Centre is open Monday to Friday and open to everyone. The Community Centre also provides a free Wi-Fi Hot Spot and refreshments. The food share shed is operated by Engaging with Activity, who run the current shed at the Hub.

Visitor Information Point & Brora Website

The establishment of a new visitor information point in the Otter's Couch is well underway. A Visitor Information Officer, Odhran McLeod, has been appointed by Brora Development Trust. His post is funded by the Community Regeneration Fund.



Prior to his appointment, Odhran worked for three seasons as an Information Officer at the Heritage Centre in Brora and prior to that, Cocoa Skye. Odhran is passionate about his home village and is keen to be part of it's future development. Odhran says "I am thrilled to be part of the Brora Development Trust team and to have taken up the role of Visitor Information Officer. Brora is a village full of character and to be able to help visitors discover all the local area has to offer is a great pleasure.

My previous experience with Brora Heritage Centre will undoubtedly help me in this role. I have been in this role over a month and have already built a great relationship with my colleagues and have no doubt we will accomplish great things together".

As part of his professional development, Odhran's has spent time with the Visit Scotland team at their ICentre in Inverness and will also spend time with an independent information centre in Drumnadrochit, set up by a development trust.

The Visitor Information Point is in the process of being set up in the Trust's arts and crafts social enterprise, Otter's Couch. The Otter's Couch is run as not for profit initiative by the Trust and provides earning opportunities for over 40 local artists and crafters.

The Information Point will be a source of information for visitors who are looking for information about Brora and the area and will enable the Trust to provide local businesses with promotional and marketing opportunities.

The Trust invited local businesses with an interest in tourism, to be part of a working group on tourism to guide this and future tourism related initiatives the Trust is involved with. Anyone living in Brora and district who is interested in participating in this group can contact Brora Development

Trust for details of how to get involved. The working group are currently working on setting up a website for Brora.

Alongside the Visitor Information Point, the Brora website will provide information to visitors about where to stay, eat, visit and what to do in the area. The overall aim is to support local businesses, local people and the economy, by encouraging visitors to spend more time in and around Brora and recommend the village as a destination of choice to friends and family. The website will offer free listings to not only tourism focused businesses but all local businesses.

Pedestrian Fingerposts

Another way which Brora Development Trust is working to encourage economic regeneration is by installing directional pedestrian signposts in the village centre. These will be similar in style to those in other villages in the area, including Golspie.

The signs will serve to guide visitors to key points and services in Brora and encourage pedestrians to move through and around the village and spend more time in the village. The planning of the signposts has been guided by a working group of volunteers, who have taken time to discuss and plan where the signs would be best placed, to consider what will be on the signs, colour and style.

'Open road permit' applications have been submitted to The Highland Council, for permission to erect a sign at the Harbour Road junction with Rosslyn Street and another in Gower Street. Permission from a private landowner for a third sign has been requested, for Station Square.

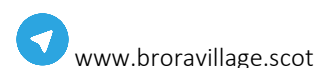
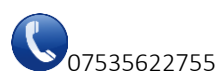
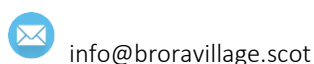
The Visitor Information Point and improvements to signage are both ways in which the Trust can actively help support local businesses and the local economy. These two applications to the Community Regeneration Fund, which is administered by Highland Council, were recently approved by Sutherland County Committee. The Visitor Information Point is also supported by Development Trusts Association for Scotland who provided welcome match funding.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Brora Development Trust annual general meeting took place in March. Office Bearers are Tony Gill, Chair, Anne Sutherland, Secretary and Ellen Lindsay, Treasurer.

MEMBERS

Brora Development Trust now has over 200 members whose support is highly valued. If you would like join Brora Development Trust please contact Sarah Morrison, Development Officer to request a membership form.



100+ CLUB

The 100+ Club is a significant source of fundraising for Brora Development Trust and runs from April to March at a cost of just £12 a year. A winning number is drawn at the Trust's monthly Board meeting. There is one prize of £20 each month with a grand draw in December, with £100, £50 and £30 prizes. If you would like to take part and have a chance to win, please get in touch to request an application form.

COMMUNITY CORNER

Education Aid



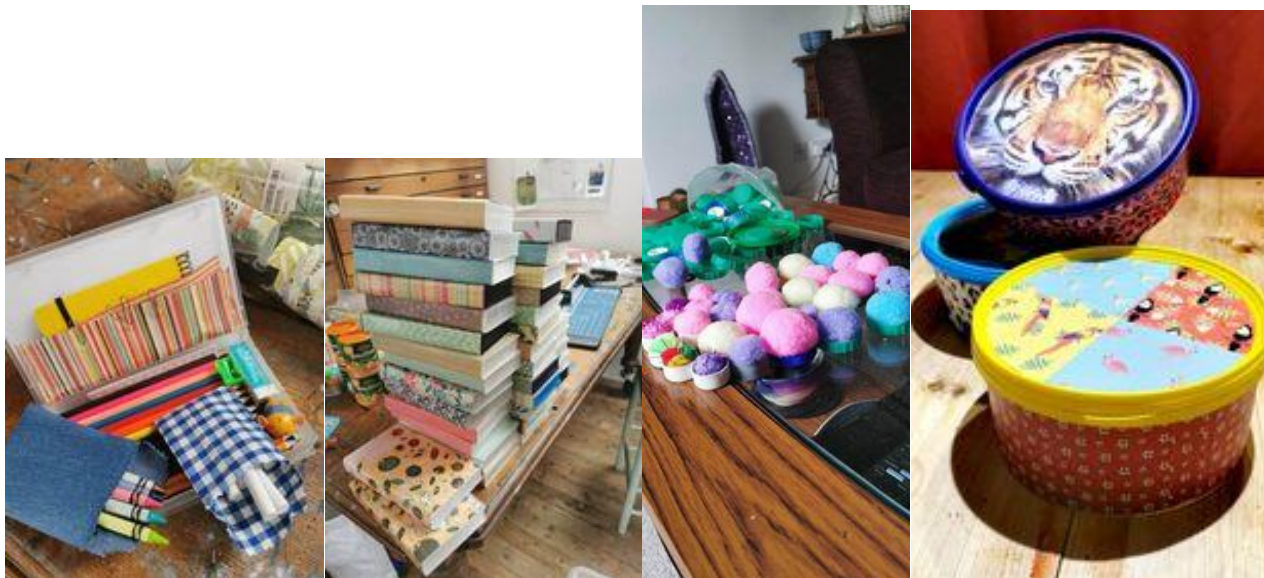
EDUCATION AID

Education Aid is a local group of dedicated and hard-working volunteers in Brora who hand make a range of products, mostly from recycled materials, which are sent as Christmas gifts to Ukraine and Eastern Europe as part of the Blythswood Shoe Box Appeal.



The group's co-ordinator, local artist Wendy Sutherland, says: "We have two sewers that make reusable sanitary towels and another that makes draw string bags for the sets and waterproof on the go purses for changes at school. The idea is a teenage girl doesn't have to miss school because she has her period. We make pencil cases out of VHS cases too". This is how the name, Education Aid, came into being apparently. There are also two knitters in the group who make hats and mittens. "It's a team

effort for sure", says Wendy. "Every bag or box always have winter woollies, clothes, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, stationary, toys for the children, reusable sanitary towel sets for the teenage girls and other useful items, such as towels or hair products and essential house hold items, like candles".



Wendy says: “a lot of upcycling goes on”. Toys boxes out of sweetie tubs, pencil cases out of VHS cases, sewing kits made from coffee tins, pin cushions made from milk bottle tops and black boards out of old frames.



Education Aid collaborates closely with other groups in Brora: Brora Village Hub acts as the drop of point for donations; the Thrift Shop in Brora, which each year generously donates to local groups and charities, donated to Education Aid last year; and Brora Primary School passed on their Mary's Meal donations to the group, when Mary's Meals were unable to arrange an uplift of donations.

“We managed to donate 284 bags and boxes last year. 104 of these were for teenage girls. That's over 700 sanitary towels sewn by two sewers in that one year”, said Wendy. So far this year, the volunteer group have made enough to fill 130 boxes. Wendy is very grateful for the hard work and dedication of all the volunteers.

To read more about Education Aid and to find out how you can get involved:



<https://www.facebook.com/Education-Aid-102109689439956/>

For more information about Blythswood Shoe Box Appeal:

<https://blythswood.org/shooboxappeal/>

Engaging with Activity at Brora Village Hub



Over £3000 has been raised by Inness Mackay who ran the 2023 London Marathon on April 23rd for his “Mum and her mates”. The funds will go to support the essential work of Engaging with Activity at Brora Village Hub.

Innes says: “My Mum was diagnosed with dementia at the start of 2022. Mum continues to live a good and independent life in part because of the team at the Brora Hub, twice a week they collect mum and do a range of different activities, day visits and every day Mum visits the Hub they always ensure she is dropped home after a cooked meal. Mum is lucky to be supported by a loving family and the Hub gives us a great sense of ease that she is looked out for on the days she visits. Simply, I’m doing this for my Mum and her mates”.

Innes’s Just Giving page says: “Engaging with activity (EWA) is a community interest company formed in 2012 to pilot a model of improving and supporting health and wellbeing in the community of East Sutherland through initiation of a community Hub. EWA provides a range of inclusive activities for various groups of people including those with dementia, learning challenges, older people, and those coping with long term condition”.

“The small contribution we make as users isn’t enough to continue the wonderful activities, equipment and adventures the Hub undertakes so I am running the 2023 London Marathon on April 23rd. I understand this cause maybe won’t resonate with everyone as much as some of the national charity’s but it does mean that every penny you kindly pledge will go directly into improving the lives and services the Brora Hub provides.”.

Innes is planning to present a cheque at the Hub at an event on 11th May, where a very warm welcome can be expected for Innes.

Highland Wildlife Rescue



The new Highland Wildlife Rescue centre in Brora is currently seeking funding to build a Red Squirrel enclosure. Centre Manager Jane Wilson has described the organisation's commitment to giving injured and orphaned native Highland wildlife patients, a second chance at living their wild lives here in the Highlands, where they belong. Jane says that with Red Squirrel re-introduction and number increase projects ongoing throughout the region, "the centre is committed to providing the best care for each patient". To help the centre provide the outdoor space needed for rescued the Red Squirrels, a Just Giving page has been set up. Any donations would be hugely appreciated:

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/highland-wildlife-rescue-squirrels>

Brora Community Calendar

Details of what's on in Brora can be found in the Community Calendar, prepared by Brora Development Trust with contributions from local groups and individuals. Deadline for contributions is the 25th day of each month. The calendar can be viewed on the Trust's Facebook and Twitter pages and has been printed and posted at the Library, Otter's Couch, Village notice board, Brora Bowling and Tennis Club, Cunninghams and Brora Village Hub and the Thrift shop. If anyone would like a printed copy, please get in touch. The community calendar will be hosted on the new Brora website page once it's live.

Brora Development Trust is a registered Scottish charity (SC043968)