





# Brora Community Newsletter

## February 2024

Prepared by **Brora Development Trust**

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This is the first newsletter of 2024 and is full of news about the work that Brora Development Trust has been involved with this winter and news from local football team Brora Wanderers in the 'Community Corner'.



*Image: Clyne Parish War Memorial, by Dave Massey*

In December, the Annual General Meeting of Brora Development Trust took place at Brora Golf Club. The following office bearers were re-elected: Tony Gill, Chair, Anne Sutherland, Secretary and Ellen Lindsay as Treasurer.

January saw the much awaited launch of Brora Youth Group, which has been a culmination of a tremendous amount of work, energy and commitment by a passionate group of volunteers, Brora Youth

Partnership, the charity Youth Highland, Brora Development Trust and Brora's young people. As well as providing a warm, safe and positive experience for Brora's young people, we look forward to seeing the youth work project develop. This initiative also sees the welcome creation of four new jobs comprising a Lead Youth Worker supported by three Sessional Youth Workers. With the addition of our Development Officer and Visitor Information Centre Officer, the Trust now supports six jobs in the village.

In February, a well attended, independently facilitated, workshop on tourism in Brora, was organised by the Trust to enable local people to have a greater say in how tourism is managed and delivered locally. With the initial report expected within six weeks, work will continue to progress the opportunities raised in the workshop and will keep you informed of progress.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees I would like to thank all volunteers, members, donors and partners for your ongoing support, without which the work of the Trust would not be possible.

Kind regards,

Tony Gill, *Chair of Brora Development Trust*

# NEWS

## FASCALLY PARK

An environmental assessment is underway this week at Fascally Park, with the permission of landlords, The Highland Council.



*Image: View over Fascally Park, by John Cash*

The assessment is part of the Trust's investigation into the potential use of the site for community benefit in the future. Funding for the assessment comes from The Highland Council's Highland Coastal Community Fund. The assessment will take several months to complete and results will be made available publicly.

## BRORA RESILIENCE PLAN

Brora Development Trust has taken on the task of reviewing and updating the Brora Resilience Plan. This is an emergency preparedness plan which clearly outlines steps to be taken in the event of an emergency which affects a significant proportion of Brora residents. There is a separate Plan held by Doll residents.

The Plan was first compiled in 2015 in collaboration with Brora Community Council and has been regularly reviewed and updated since then. In common with so many activities, COVID created a hiatus in the review process but the task of updating has now resumed with the lead organisation being Brora Development Trust.

When finalised in the near future, the Plan will be lodged with the Care for People Partnership, chaired by NHS Highland, for reference in emergency situations.

A short leaflet "Are you prepared for an Emergency" giving reference contacts and recommendations for preparations, will soon be delivered to Brora households by local neighbourhood volunteers.



*Image: Brora village from above, by Highland Aerial Views*

Be assured, this is not being done in anticipation of an emergency but purely to make sure we are all ready if the need arises.

## HAPPY SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

The Trust's initiative to provide food support to households with children and young people in Early Years, primary and secondary education over school holidays, continues. Each parent/carer of 212 children living in Brora receiving education, in Early Years education setting at Brora Primary School, Stepping Stones, at primary and secondary school, received a £25 grocery voucher for the Christmas school holidays as part of the Trust's Healthy School Holidays initiative, to be redeemed at the Premier shop, Brora.

While many children are entitled to free school meals during term time, there is currently no such provision during school holidays. School holidays can be a difficult time for families, with an increase in household costs (food, childcare and heating for instance) and a reduction in income (not being able to go out work or working less often because children are at home). For this reason, Brora Development Trust committed to supporting families with children in education during school holidays.

The Trust is very grateful for the help of Brora Primary School, Brora Nursery, Golspie High School and Stepping Stones for enabling this initiative to take place and for their work in distributing the vouchers.

Funding for the Healthy School Holidays initiative has come from North Highlands Initiative (£10,000), The Highland Council Community Regeneration Fund (£5,000) and the National Lottery Community Fund (£5,000) and has enabled the Trust to provide grocery vouchers for each of the four school holidays this academic year. The initiative will continue for the Easter school holidays and again for the summer holidays.

## **SUPPORT FOR BRORA FOOD SHARE UNITS**

Brora Development Trust continue to work in partnership with Brora Community Centre and Engaging with Activity at Brora Village Hub to support the operation of the two food share units in Brora.

The Food Share shed at Brora Village Hub was set up originally to divert food from landfill several years ago. As the cost of living increased dramatically so too the demand for household food support. This increase in

demand for support has come at a time when the volume of stock from regular sources has reduced.



*Image: The Annex, Brora Community Centre*

The three community partner organisations recognised not only need for additional stock for the Food Share Shed but also the need to increase accessibility to food support in Brora and as such, the Annex was set up in Brora Community Centre, on the opposite side of the village to the Hub Food Share Shed.



*Image: Food Share Shed, Brora Village Hub*

Funding to purchase additional stock this winter has come from The Highland Council Community Regeneration Fund (£6,600) in and a generous private donation. An application for funding has been made to Kilbraur Windfarm Community Benefit Trust to enable the Trust to continue to support the operation of both facilities.



## BRORA YOUTH INITIATIVE

Brora Youth Group held its first session at Brora Community Centre on 10<sup>th</sup> January, warmly welcoming secondary school aged young people in Brora two evenings a week.



*Image: Brora Youth Group members with Youth Leaders*

Deirdre Mackay, a Trustee of Brora Development Trust says 'Young people are the lifeblood of every community and the Trust has placed our local youngsters at the very heart of our work. They have led the way and we are thrilled to have secured the funding for this important post. We look forward now to a new era of youth work in Brora!'

The Group's programme of activities includes pool and futsal (both generously donated and gratefully received), games and music, along with free food being available.

With an average number of attendees being 20 to 25 at each session, The Trust's Lead Youth Worker, Megan Penny says: "We have worked to make sure that the young people in Brora have had and continue to have every opportunity to be part of the youth group's development".

Brora Development Trust worked last year alongside a steering group of local volunteers, called Brora Youth Partnership and charity Youth Highland, to pave the way for the opening of the Youth Group. Brora Youth Partnership consists of a group of passionate local volunteers keen to make sure the needs of young people in Brora are met. The Partnership group aims to meet twice annually to steer the youth work initiative. If anyone not already involved and would like to know more about the group, please contact Sarah, Development Officer, for more information.



*Image: Morgan, Molly, Emma and Alethea*

Clair Nichols, Chief Executive Officer of Youth Highland says "Youth Highland are delighted to offer support and advice to Brora Development Trust as they take on responsibility for planning and delivering much needed youth work provision in their community. Brora is one of the growing number of community based charitable organisations who are listening to young people and providing opportunities and activities and supporting the delivery of much needed preventative services in rural communities. We believe that community organisations are best placed to enable positive outcomes for families, children and young people. We look forward to supporting continued development and

helping to celebrate the impact that youth work has on improving the local community”



*Image: Brora Youth Group members and Lead Youth Worker (centre) with their hand made banner*

As part of the planning process, consultation exercises took place with young people from Brora, facilitated by Brora Primary School and Golspie High School to find out what young people need and want in terms of out of school support and provisions. Xanthe Mackay a 6th year at Golspie High School says “We really need somewhere warm and friendly to go after school and in the evenings, where we can spend time with our friends and have fun”.

The youth initiative has received funding to enable the youth group to operate as it is for two years. The Trust will however look for additional funds to increase hours of the youth sessions scope of programme. Donors to date include: National Lottery Awards for All Community Fund (£19,936), Westminster Foundation (£10,000), SSE Renewables’ Gordonbush Community Fund (£4,672), The Highland Council Discretionary Fund (£1,200), East Sutherland Badminton Club (£500) and Youth Scotland Rural Action Fund (£400). These funds will be used to employ Youth Workers, to equip

the youth club, run activities for 2024 and 2025 and have food provided at each session.

The young people themselves are also eager to fundraise to buy equipment for the youth group and for outings. Volunteers from the group had a fundraising stall at the Sutherland Schools Country Dancing Competition on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February at Brora Primary School.

Charlene, whose daughter regularly attends said: “It is nice to have a safe place for the kids to go at night. It keeps them busy and out of trouble and allows them to socialise. We are so happy to have this on our doorstep.”

Brora Youth Group meets on Wednesdays 7pm-8.30pm and Fridays 6pm-7.30pm at Brora Community Centre.

## **DISCOVER BRORA**

Brora Development Trust organised a workshop this month for local people with a vested interest in tourism, to jointly consider what is working, what is not working and what could be done better or differently in terms of tourism in Brora.

The workshop was supported by an independent facilitator from the Community Tourism Network for Scotland, SCOTO, with 16 people from local businesses and charitable groups taking part. The workshop, called 'Press Pause', has been piloted by SCOTO in several communities across Scotland, including Lochcarron and Thurso and has helped communities focus on what tourism could mean for their area, to ensure it is a force for good.

The workshop will allow SCOTO to make several tailored recommendations for Brora which will help the community of Brora tackle local priority issues and identify opportunities together.



*Image: The Discover Brora website*

The workshop was facilitated by Carron Tobin who has been working throughout Scotland. Carron provided examples of experiences from elsewhere to help the group explore means to address tourism in make Brora. The workshop has been funded by North Highlands Initiative and Brora Development Trust.

This is just part of the work the Trust has been involved with to support community-led tourism in Brora. The Discover Brora brand has been established, along with a website [www.discoverbrora.com](http://www.discoverbrora.com) and social media campaign, to provide local businesses with a free marketing platform, including an events page for local groups and organisations. If you would like to have your business listed on the site please go to: [Discover Brora: Your Business Listing \(google.com\)](http://Discover Brora: Your Business Listing (google.com)). To add an event to the events page, please email [info@discoverbrora.com](mailto:info@discoverbrora.com). Thank you!



# COMMUNITY CORNER

## Brora Wanderers

*Written and contributed by Stuart Clark*

Brora Wanderers are a growing local football club now preparing to enter a team into this year's summer league starting in April, which will be our second season of competition.

Although our aim is to use the twice weekly training sessions to nurture and build a squad for competitive football, the training sessions are open to anyone who wants to attend.

To provide some background, Brora Wanderers were formed in the 1960's as an amateur football club who played competitively up until 2019 where we struggled to put together either a committee or team.

The lockdown period was the final straw and the club lay dormant having withdrawn from all league and cup obligations. In the early summer of 2021, a group of friends got together to arrange a social 'kick about' on a Wednesday night. This was to try and re-establish some social and physical interaction following the lockdown period. By word of mouth, the friendly, informal sessions quickly turned into a much larger, well attended group which brought about a discussion around relaunching the old club.

A committee and management team were quickly formed and the training sessions took on more of a structure and format which lead to the belief that there were enough attendees to create a competitive squad.



*Image: Regular Wandies player Luke Ainsworth*

We now find ourselves at the stage where we train twice a week (all still welcome) and have a full season under our belts and some friendly games lined up before the league starts again in April.

We have been very lucky and grateful to attract local funding and sponsorship to help cover our costs and welcome all the help we can get in keeping our club moving forward. The squad is largely made up of young Brora lads so please watch out for fixtures and fundraisers and come along and show your support for your local team!

# THANK YOU!

The work of Brora Development Trust would be possible without the support of members, volunteers, partners and donors, for which we are very grateful.

Brora Development Trust's work also benefits from membership of a number of professional organisations: Development Trusts Association, Youth Scotland, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, North Highlands Climate Hub and Scottish Community Tourism Network.



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