




Brora Community Newsletter

May 2024

Prepared by **Brora Development Trust**

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Image: Chris Griffiths

Brora Development Trust has had a busy few months. We have been working with the Scottish Community Tourism network (SCOTO) on an exciting community led tourism initiative for Brora, which will be for the benefit of the whole community. The youth initiative continues to thrive and grow: the number of members has increased to 30; and the team of Sessional Youth workers has increased to four. We will be running a series of activities over the school summer holidays and will also be supporting the youth work team through professional training. The Healthy School holidays initiative continued over Easter with a new model of

support being planned for the summer school holidays. The contamination assessment of Fascally Park is well underway with final results expected later on this summer.

As part of our commitment to being a fair employer, Brora Development Trust have received accreditation as a Living Wage Employer.



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 ongoing at Fascally Park and will continue over the next few months. The land owner, The Highland Council have given permission for the assessment to take place and funding has been secured from the Highland Coastal Community Fund. Results of the assessment will be made available publicly. The assessment is part of the Trust's investigation into the potential use of the site for community benefit.



Image: View over Fascally Park, by John Cash

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.

Local neighbourhood contacts who have volunteered to help in an emergency would be in touch with information or an offer of help. In addition, there is emergency equipment maintained at the Scout and Guide Hall which is a central emergency hub.

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.

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.

HEALTHY SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

The Trust's initiative to provide food support over school holidays, to households in Brora with children and young people in education, continued over the recent Easter school holidays.

Each parent or carer of children and young people living in Brora in Early Years, primary and secondary education were offered a grocery voucher which could be redeemed at the Premier shop in Brora. The Trust worked with, Brora Primary School, Nursery, Stepping Stones and Golspie High School to distribute 215 vouchers worth £23 each.

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.

This summer, meal starter kits will be made available to parents and carers of young people in education living in Brora, at various events taking place locally over the summer school holidays.

SUPPORT FOR BRORA FOOD SHARE UNITS

For the last year Brora Development Trust has worked 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 three partners jointly set up and ran the Annex at the Community Centre. The funding for this partnership initiative has now come to an end.

Brora Development Trust will however continue to support the partner organisations to seek funding to operate the respective food share units independently: Engaging Activity will continue to run the food share shed at Brora Village Hub all year round and Brora Community Centre will run the Annex unit, over winter months and during school term time.

Brora Food Share Shed is open daily from 8am to 8pm.

BRORA YOUTH INITIATIVE

Over the school Easter holidays, members of Brora Youth Group, took part in two events outside of the usual venue, organised by Brora Development Trust: a trip to Rollerbowl in Inverness; and a social event at Brora Rangers Social Club.



Image: Morgan Dent

Events like these give young people themselves the opportunity to take part in activities they may not have the chance to experience: Molly Gibbard, said of the trip “I have had an amazing time, thanks Megan and the team!”



Image: (L to R) Sessional Youth Worker Rachel Paterson with regular members Alethea Pappas and Max Ainsworth



Image: Demi Fraser and Ocean Miller

The trip to Rollerbowl was the first big outing enjoyed by the youth group from Brora, generously funded by Gordonbush Community Fund.

David Shearer, SSE Renewables Community Investment Manager said, "The need for improvements to services and provisions for young people in Brora was a priority improvement identified through community consultation. The grant award from the Gordonbush Community Fund has enabled a programme of additional youth event activities to be delivered throughout the year and it is great to see Brora's young people benefiting and thriving as a result of this initiative."

Chair of Brora Development Trust, Tony Gill said he's delighted that the Trust can help make events like this possible and is very grateful to the donors for their support.

The youth group meets twice a week at Brora Community Centre and has been running since early January. The initiative is supported by paid Lead Youth Worker and Sessional Youth Workers, with funding from The National Lottery Community Fund and Westminster Foundation.

Sessions run on Wednesday and Friday evenings at Brora Community Centre.

DISCOVER BRORA

On 30th April Brora Development Trust ran the second of two workshops on community tourism as part of the Press Pause initiative.

The workshop, which took place at the Royal Marine Hotel, was attended by 9 local people representing local businesses and community interest groups, with a passion in tourism, to discuss recommendations in a report prepared by independent facilitator Carron Tobin, from the Scottish Community Tourism network (SCOTO) regarding tourism in Brora: www.scoto.co.uk



This report was based on discussions at a workshop in February at Cocoa Skye, where 14 local people came together to consider what is working, what is not working and what could be done better or differently in terms of tourism in Brora. The report lays out those findings with recommendations.

The '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.

These two workshops and report will help Brora Development Trust to facilitate a community plan for tourism. The plan will include short term and long-term deliverables.

The workshop has been funded by North Highlands Initiative and Brora Development Trust.



Image: The Discover Brora website

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 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 click on 'add my business listing' on the Discover Brora website [[Discover Brora: Your Business Listing \(google.com\)](#)] To add an event to the Events page, email info@discoverbrora.com.

COMMUNITY CORNER

An Otter's Couch Crafter

An Otter's Couch crafter and creator of *Isla's Jewellery Box*, Isla Campbell, has recently taken up a new position with Clyne Heritage Society (CHS) as Community Heritage Officer at Brora Heritage Centre. Even in her new role though, Isla will continue to follow her passion for crafting.



Image: Isla Campbell

Isla was involved in initial set up of The Otter's Couch which is run by Brora Development Trust, along with other volunteers and is just one of over 40 artists and crafters selling produce today in enterprise shop.

Isla joined the CHS team in April and is working alongside the Community Engagement Officer, Aileen Ogilvie. Isla previously worked as an allied health professional in the rehabilitation department of the Cambusavie Unit in Golspie.

Isla has been crafting for 20 years and began with beaded jewellery, which she continues to make today. Isla also enjoys incorporating resin into her designs and over the last 6 months, has been taking a silversmithing

course to learn and develop new techniques to use in her creations. Look out for a new range coming soon!

Isla used to take part in a lot local fairs and events with her jewellery stall with the biggest event being Belladrum Tartan Heart Festival. However, with the opening of The Otters Couch five years ago, Isla says there is less of a need for her to travel far to sell her produce. Isla says she is kept very busy making jewellery, handbags, crochet and other crafts which she sells in The Otter's Couch and at Belladrum.

Isla says, "Being involved with The Otter's Couch has helped my wee business flourish and develop from a hobby into a proper business. Being part of the volunteer group who helped get it up and running has been great fun."



Image: The Otter's Couch mural, painting by local artist Wendy Sutherland. Designed by Rachel Skene.

A Very Big Thank You to The Thrift Shop!

The Thrift Shop on Gower Street, Brora was set up around 20 years ago and over the years has generously donated to dozens of local community groups and organisations.



The Thrift Shop, Gower Street, Brora

All profit from the shop is ploughed back into the local community. This year alone, a staggering 22 local groups received kind donations of £1,000 each and a further 14 groups received £400.

Brora Development Trust and in particular, the Brora youth initiative, is one of many very appreciative community groups to have benefitted from generous donations from The Thrift Shop. Last year, the donation received by the organisation was used to buy equipment to help get the new youth group up and running. This year, funding will go towards youth group activities for Brora's young people.

The shop is staffed by hard working and dedicated volunteers and is open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm.

THANK YOU!

The work of Brora Development Trust would not 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, North Highlands Climate Hub and Scottish Community Tourism (SCOTO) network.



Brora Development Trust is a Scottish Incorporated Charitable Organisation (SC043968)
Membership forms are available on our website www.discoverbrora.com