



Brora Community Newsletter

May 2025

Prepared by **Brora Development Trust**



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NEWS

Bringing Back Local Radio!

Since the public meeting in December to gauge community interest and support for a community radio station to serve Brora, Golspie and Helmsdale, great strides have been made.

Radio Sutherland will be launching later this summer, to serve the communities of Brora, Golspie and Helmsdale. A recording and broadcast studio is being set up at Brora Village Hub in partnership with Engaging With Activity, a Community Interest Company, which provides essential integrated adult social care for our communities.

Radio Sutherland will stream online, on smart speakers, and on the Radio Sutherland mobile app.

A community radio station was identified by the people living in our local communities as something that was wanted. Brora Development Trust was approached by local man, Iain Sutherland, who had the idea of setting up a community radio station. The Trust then took that to a public meeting to gauge interest. At that meeting there was clear support for a community radio station, with people

from each of the three communities coming forward to volunteer.

The Trust then went about securing funding to pay for set up costs and the first year operations and this has generously been committed to by Kilbruar Windfarm Community Benefit Trust.

The radio station is being led by Brora Development Trust with the support of partners Go Golspie Development Trust and Helmsdale and District Development Trust.

The radio station is a means whereby the Trust can work alongside local people to address just some of the issues which affect our communities, such as social isolation and access to employment and training opportunities.

Local radio across the UK has all but disappeared leaving many communities without a voice. Brora Development Trust want to join the few other independent and community-led stations and bring back local radio, something that's rooted in the people, stories, and culture of our area.

Plans are underway to set up a youth training programme providing opportunities for young people in our communities to gain valuable work experience, skills and qualifications. This will be done by linking with local primary schools, Golspie High School and colleges as well as our own youth initiative, Brora Youth Room, and other youth clubs in the area.

Radio Sutherland won't be about generic playlists or national headlines; it is about reflecting the heartbeat of our communities, giving people a chance to be heard, to connect, and to feel a real sense of belonging.

Whilst the radio station is being run on a not-for-profit basis, there will be opportunities for advertising and sponsorship, which will help not only to promote local businesses but provide a revenue stream for the radio station, which will be used to cover ongoing costs.

Radio Sutherland is running a listener survey to help ensure that what is covered is relevant to our local audience. Volunteers will be out on the streets on Saturday 10th May with the survey, which will be available to complete at various points in each village, as well as online. Please take a few minutes to complete our Listener Survey and help shape your local station!

<https://s.surveyplanet.com/ckin15af>

Radio Sutherland is also looking for volunteers as radio presenters, studio assistants, and advertising salespeople. Anyone interested please contact Radio Sutherland by emailing studio@radiosutherland.co.uk.

BRORA YOUTH INITIATIVE



Brora Youth Room is the name given by members of the drop-in youth club youth run by Brora Development Trust, in a dedicated room at the Community Centre. The number of young people living in Brora regularly attending the drop-in sessions has increased again to now 40 members,

representing almost half of the number of young people living in Brora attending Golspie High School and Dornoch Academy. It is anticipated that attendance will increase again at the start of the new academic year in August.



Young Leaders Morgan, Keiran, Charlie, Lachlan and Max, with Rhiannon Dunlop from Youth Highland and Youth Worker, Eilidh Carter

An exciting recent development has been the establishment of Brora Youth Development Team. Rhiannon from Youth Highland came along to Brora Youth Room and delivered the second of two Youth Leaders sessions she has delivered with young people who come to our drop-in youth club. These sessions, along with additional volunteer hours, will contribute towards the achievement of an accredited Dynamic Youth Award.

The young people who took part in these sessions have worked really hard and should feel very proud of themselves. Together, not only have they made plans for activities, events and fundraising for their youth club, they have given themselves a very fitting name, Brora Youth Development Team! The Team will be meeting regularly at youth club sessions and will be supported by our team of Youth Workers to roll out their plans.

Youth Highland supports a network of voluntary organisations, and groups such as Brora Development Trust, to help young people to bring about positive change in their lives and communities using youth work.

Brora Youth Room also has a number of visitors, keen to share skills and knowledge with the young

people. Amanda Wagstaffe from The East Sutherland Bothy took the time to deliver a fantastic bike maintenance session for our Youth Workers at Brora Youth Room, who are now much better equipped to support young bike-riding members. The plan is to deliver a bike maintenance workshop for our members too.



Youth Workers Vanessa Kelman, Tom Bradshaw and Eilidh Carter

The team at Highlife Highland has also spent time at Brora Youth Room since doors were first opening in January 2024. Most recently they have spent time with young people to coach them in boccia and football and organised multi-sports games.



Elissa from Highlife Highland coached some Brora Youth Room members in boccia



Games with Highlife Highland during the Easter School Holidays, at Muirfield Football Field



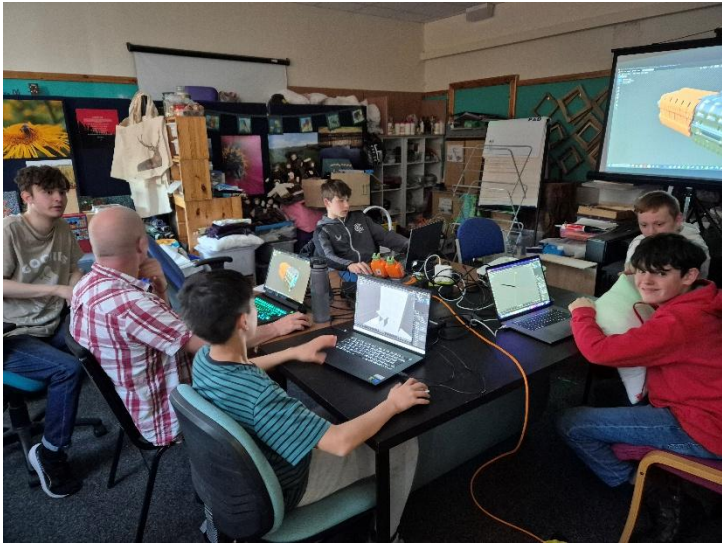
Elissa from Highlife Highland, sharing some football skills at the astro pitch

Animation Club has been running again, back by popular demand. The weekly two-hour session began in the last week of March and there will be 10 sessions in this block. Animation Club is run in partnership with local group, Brora Gallery Social Enterprise and delivered by a professional digital Animator.



Young Animators working on a stop-frame animation

Aileen Ogilvy from Brora Heritage came along to the first session and shared ideas and unusual quirky historical stories about Brora's rich history. These were then developed into ideas for a short, fun interactive timeline stop frame animation for the new Heritage Centre which will open later this year. Participants have been working since then to design and make animation sets and will have the opportunity to learn how to do voiceovers and to film, using green screening techniques as well as learning how to use storyboards and to film more detailed sequences. Fraser, who is a professional Animator, has also been supporting sessions and sharing skills and guiding participants how to make computer-based animation using the Blender programme.



Young Animators learning how to create computer-based animations along with professional Animator, Fraser

Animation Club has been generously funded by Anne Duchess of Westminster Foundation, administered by Voluntary Groups Sutherland, and The Highland Council Discretionary Fund.

Other highlights for Brora Youth Room over the last few months include a trip to Rokzkool Academy in Inverness. What a fantastic experience this was for everyone who took part. Rokzkool is a music and arts charity, with a studio in the Eastgate Centre in Inverness.



Some participants in the trip to Rokzkool Academy in Inverness, along with Youth Workers and member of Rokzkool

Fifteen young people had the opportunity to experiment with instruments and play along with the Rokzkool team. Thanks too to Go Golspie Development Trust for the use of their community bus and Graham especially, who volunteered to drive. The trip was made possible with funding from The Highland Council Ward Discretionary Fund.

In February, Brora Youth Room hosted a consultation exercise conducted by London Development Trust, an organisation which supports youth clubs, including the one run by Brora Development Trust.

The consultation was part of a research project called 'Collecting Youth Voices', to gain a better understanding of the role of spaces, services and structures in communities and what that means to young people. The consultation was conducted across the UK as part of a nationwide research project visiting Scotland, England and Wales. Brora Youth Room hosted the Highland event.

The consultation attracted 34 young people, aged 11 to 18, from four youth clubs based in Sutherland and Easter Ross: from Alness, Tain, Golspie and Brora, supported by respective Youth Workers.

The research will be used to develop a tool to communicate to policymakers and stakeholders about what is needed to enable communities to thrive socially and culturally; and to determine how to better accommodate youth voices in decisions around social and cultural infrastructure.



London Development Trust Researchers with some of the young people who took part

There were opportunities to socialise and some fun activities as they used a specifically designed card deck, developed by London Development Trust, to encourage participants to reflect on what is important to them in their area, what kind of spaces or services they would like to see more of; and what in their area helps them to connect with others and progress towards their goals. The research will also highlight the disparity between urban and rural communities and evidence the importance of work carried out by third-sector youth groups.

Drop-in sessions run on Wednesdays from 6.30pm to 8.30pm and on Fridays from 5.30pm to 7.30pm during school term time, at Brora Community Centre.

HEALTHY SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

The Trust's initiative to provide food support to parents and carers of children and young people over school holidays continued for the Christmas 2024 and Easter 2025 period.

Meal starter packs were made available in the last week of each school term with a 75% uptake.

Funding was kindly provided by The Volant Charitable Trust Small Grants Programme, administered by Foundation Scotland.

THE OTTER'S COUCH



Brora Development Trust's arts and crafts social enterprise shop has continued to thrive, with new pieces of work on for sale, from local creators. The shop is open Monday to Saturday from 10am until 4.30pm.

A visitor information point can also be found in the shop, providing information to visitors on where to eat, sleep and what to do locally.



Pendants from Isla's Jewelry Box

DISCOVER BRORA

Brora Development Trust have been working with local volunteers to develop a village map for visitors to Brora. The map will guide visitors around the village, to points of interest, place to eat, sleep, shop and things to do.

During a session of community workshops last year, with people from businesses and community groups in Brora interested in community-led tourism, the Millennium Mural was identified as a local asset which was in need of care and attention. Workshop participants decided to form a group and call itself Brora Together.

The Millennium Mural is a piece of art which was created as a community project to mark the Millennium. A number of people were involved in its creation, including Shirley Maclean and school children from Brora Primary school. The Mural was originally displayed on the old bakery wall, before being moved to be displayed between Harry Gow and the Red Dragon, where it has been since.

Shirley Maclean very kindly volunteered to help with this piece of work since she had been involved in the creation of the Mural originally.

Brora Development Trust, as part of the Brora Together group, have been working with Shirley since then.

The plan is to photograph in detail the precious Millennium Mural and to remove it from its current location and preserve, if possible, the original. A digital print of the original will be made so it can be enjoyed for the long term.

Local artist and volunteer Shirley has very kindly dedicated a great deal of time to create a very special new mural, which is fresh, modern and captures the essence of Brora.



Brora Through the Seasons, created by Shirley Maclean

Brora Development Trust have received some funding from North Highlands Initiative, which can be used to print and mount this mural in the location of the original Millennium Mural.

The mural will be available to view on the community notice board, in the library and in the Otter's Couch from tomorrow. Comment boxes will also be available.

Brora Development Trust continue to work with the Scottish Community Tourism network and having completed SCOTO's Press Pause programme, Brora Development Trust is further developing The Otter's Couch Brora to maximise revenue-generating opportunities and help fund activities and projects that benefit Brora.

To see the Discover Brora website, go to: <https://discoverbrora.com>

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday 11th February at Brora Scout and Guide Hall.

Trustees for 2025-2026 are: Tony Gill, Chair; Anne Sutherland, Secretary; Ellen Lindsay, Treasurer; Deirdre Mackay; Dom Turner; David MacDonald; and Colin Dobson-Fox.



COMMUNITY CORNER

Brora Heritage and Brora Rangers Football Club: Brora Football Heroes

Contributed by Aileen Ogilvy from Brora Heritage

Brora Football Heroes is a project celebrating the unique football heritage of Brora and the wider Clyne Parish. The project is funded by The Scottish Football Museum at Hampden through the Heritage Lottery Fund. The aim of the project is to celebrate football in our community and highlight Brora's contribution to Scotland's Football heritage by working with our local clubs and the community to uncover and document the stories we have to tell. The project will also help us tell Brora's football stories in our new Museum.



Brora Rangers Football Club

Football has been a very big part of the community for a long time. The histories of Brora Rangers and Brora Wanderers are intertwined with the area's

industrial heritage, with players also working in the coal mine, brickworks and woollen mills. Down in Lower Brora by the sea the Fishing community had their own football pitch called "Little Hampden". The development of Brora Rangers Youth Initiative and Ladies Team continue to keep football at the heart of our community. There are lots of stories to be gathered and told.

Clyne Heritage Society (CHS) is fortunate enough to have access to a large number of football photographs and newspaper articles but we would like to grow this collection with the help of the local community by collecting oral histories from players, former players, key people involved in the teams, supporters and members of the local community. We held a drop-in session at Brora Rangers FC Social Club on Monday 10th March where people dropped in to see a display of photos and memorabilia as well as bringing along their own collections. We plan to host 3 more of these sessions over the coming months. The next session will be on Monday 26th May at 2pm.



Young film makers from Golspie High School

The CHS team are also working with a group of pupils at Golspie High School to produce a short documentary film about Brora's Football Heroes. These young film makers have been working hard researching, carrying out interviews with former players and capturing footage at Dudgeon Park. They will spend two days working with filmmaker Alasdair Satchel learning filmmaking skills and hope to have a film to share this summer!

If you would like to contribute to the project contact community@broraheritage.com or 01408 622024

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 benefits from membership of and support from, a number of professional organisations: Development Trusts Association, Youth Scotland, Youth Highland, North Highlands Climate Hub and Scottish Community Tourism (SCOTO) network.

