

TRD ANNUAL CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2011

Editor – Mhairi MacKinnon

Well everyone .. it's this time of year again. Let's see whats happened in TRD – 1 year on...



It's that time of year again; I am sure time definitely passes quicker as you get older!

Firstly I would like to wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, and I would like to thank my fellow directors for all their hard work throughout the year; I don't believe you all know the time and hard work that goes into keeping the Rural centre and its projects ticking over, any way thank you all again.

Prices have improved as the year has progressed and I am sure that you are all feeling more rewarded for your efforts than in past years despite the continuing rise in fuel, feed and fertiliser costs.

We are pleased to have been awarded funds from the Tiree Trust which will allow us to put a case together to apply for grants to further improve the centre for the good of all the crofters and general public. Plans include more roofing for the livestock area, insulating the building to make it more user friendly and energy efficient, improvements to the drainage system, installation of water to the livestock areas and grooving of the concrete areas will also be part of the plan. We will consult with you all on the lead up to this submission for your thoughts and ideas, and hope to get your full energy and support to enable us to take these plans forward.

Finally, the AGM will be held in March please consider attending and giving your support, which wouldn't necessarily mean you joining the committee, your attendance itself would be appreciated.

Alastair



The Ringside Theatre

The transformation of our auction ring into a fully functioning 'authentic' cinema has been complete. Wall lining, insulation, a carpet and heating units have made 'going to the cinema' a warm & comfortable experience with high quality picture & sound.

From 'Tinkerbell & The Great Fairy Rescue' to 'The King's Speech', The Ringside Theatre has shown around 20 films in the past year.

Lynne MacKinnon has now joined the committee to help us with the ordering of films, advertising & helping out on film nights.

Elsbeth MacKinnon



Powerdown

Sadly TRD said goodbye to Frances Woodhead the Powerdown Officer who was in position for 2 years. The project concluded with the successful launch of 'Tiree Goes Green' community project and also securing funding for the rural centre We must send out a massive thank you to Frances, if it wasn't for her then we would not have our fantastic turbine!!



The Turbine!!

This year saw an exciting new change for TRD as our brand new turbine was erected!! See Frances's report on page 2. Many thanks to contractors Shetland Wind Power & Graeme MacColl.

Information Point

This year TRD recruited Karen MacKinnon and Steve Nagy as Information Officers. Karen & Steve both provided an excellent information service for visitors and residents.

TRD would like to thank Alan, Julie, Lisa and Jeanette for all their hard work keeping the Rural Centre clean and tidy through the year

We were also able to provide a dedicated office which made the Rural Centre an excellent venue for this service. The number of users increased dramatically from last year. This post was funded by the Wind Fall fund, Discover Tiree & TRD.

Overall number of attendees to the information point

341 non residents & 13 residents

Access

2011 has been another successful year for the Access project and David Taylor as the Campervan scheme has been supported brilliantly with 319 overnight campervan tickets sold.

Furthermore sale of car stickers raised a fantastic £700+ to help with the project.

We must say a huge thank you to David Taylor who once again did an excellent job as Access officer and also Steven Nagy who took over for the final few weeks.

£3,231 went to crofters from overnight parking for campervans and **£321** went to TRD for running the scheme.



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TRD AGM

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New Faces in the Cobbled Cow

March saw a big change at the Rural Centre as we welcomed Alan & Jeanette Reid to the Cobbled Cow. The tearoom reopened as bright as ever. Alan & Jeanette are providing an excellent resource and have taken charge of catering for sales and other events in the building.

Internet up-grade

Spring saw a fantastic upgrade for our broadband hot-spot! We were grateful for funding from the Tiree Windfall Fund for purchase of 2 new laptops and a printer. We have also upgraded the system to an online card transaction which has made the whole system much better and faster! The new equipment has been such a hit and has had around 900 users over the summer which has been a brilliant boost for TRD.

Exhibitions & Presentations

The upgrading of the ring to create the Ringside Theatre has also provided an excellent exhibition, conference, presentation and workshop space. Over the past year we have hosted several events in the Ringside Theatre including the SPR offshore wind farm exhibition, the Young Farmers Club launch, visits from wind-turbine suppliers, the Scottish Committee MP's visit and

the Tiree Tapestry Group dying workshops.

Goose egg oiling

Leader funded a goose egg oiling project lead by TRD which successfully destroyed 1000 goose eggs before they hatched to help the goose management program.

Note from the Access Officer

Time to reflect on another year, which despite inclement weather has been very busy for Tirees' overnight sites and car parks.

The project continues to gain momentum with most visitors appreciating the measures taken to protect the fragile flora and fauna of Tiree. Although much has already been done to improve the facilities available to holiday makers, further work in the planning will hopefully compound this.

As this is my final year as Access Officer I would like to say a big thank you to all who helped make this sometimes difficult job a pleasure to do and to wish it well for the future.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all.
David Taylor

Access improvements On Track

TRD completed a six month consultation to find out where the community would like to see tracks, car parks, paths and walkways to improve access management at beach 'hotspot'. Recommendations have been published and, with the assistance of Lynne MacKinnon, Community Development Officer, the first stage of an application for capital funds of around £150,000 has been submitted to Scottish Natural Heritage for work to begin in spring 2012.

HEAT, INCOME and LOWER BILLS a three way win with the new turbine at the Rural Centre

Our 10 kW Westwind turbine was commissioned in June. The turbine supplies the building with electricity with any surplus being exported to the national grid.

The turbine benefits us in three ways. Firstly, by keeping the building warm! This makes a big difference to folks based at the Rural Centre. No chilblains this year! The project included 3 new storage heaters to maximize the amount of energy used on site. The storage heaters charge at night leaving more turbine energy for use during the day.

The second way the turbine helps us is through the 'Feed In Tarrif'. This provides a payment for every kW of energy the turbine produces whether it is used on site or not. This payment is guaranteed for 20 years.

The third benefit is a small payment for each kW hour not used on site, plus the savings from lower electricity bills as the turbine reduces our dependence on grid-supplied electricity.

Due to proximity to the airport, the turbine is smaller than we would have liked and so we still need to take care of our power use.

We have also installed solar hot water further lowering the buildings energy demand and carbon footprint. The project included a 5-year maintenance contract with Shetland Wind Power. They are working with local electrician Steve Naggy to deliver the annual service and to increase local skills in small turbine care.

Frances

To date the turbine has produced 8000 kW hours of clean, green electricity.



July 2013 will be the Rural Centre's 10th anniversary – any ideas about what we should do to celebrate? Let us know....

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TRD has provided 7 jobs this year looking after the Access, and Information Service Projects and the Rural Centre cleaning

Information Point

The Information Point proved very popular during 2011. After an initial slow start in April, users of the service built up quickly, with June through to August being the busiest period. In all nearly 1200 visitors accessed the Information point. A like for like comparison shows that compared to the two month trial period of 2010, visitor usage increased by 185%. Internet usage proved very popular with over 200 people using the service in August alone. The majority of visitors ask for information on island services and leisure activities, or just general questions about the island. A large number of leaflets were handed out and on several occasions the Information Point started to run out of leaflets. Considering how successful the service was this year and the demand for information from visitors it is strongly recommended that anybody wishing to promote their business to visitors ensure an adequate supply is made available at the

Information Point for the next season.

TRD would like to thank the Windfall Fund & Discover Tiree for providing funding to support the provision of the Information Point and are looking at how funding can be obtained to continue this popular service.

Steve Nagy

A fantastic £1,160 was raised from the sale of public Internet access.

TRD 'Building on Success' Project Progress

The Rural Centre has struggled to cope with the high volume of use it has had over the last few years. Over the last 18 months or so the TRD Directors have been putting together a plan to improve the facility for its users (both people and livestock).

The building is in desperate need of some modifications to make it more comfortable and to create additional space so that it is not so overcrowded. There is urgent work needed on the mart to improve animal health and welfare. TRD has had repeated approaches for workshop space for practical community activities such as The Boat Project,

Tiree Tech wave, The Tapestry Group and the Young Farmers Club. Most of the proposed improvements which are included in the plans are responding to requests or concerns from TRD members and the wider community. We are applying for grants to help with the improvements which we hope to complete by the end of 2012.

Paper.works has been given the job of progressing plans and securing funds. Over the next few weeks we will be finding out whether the community agrees with TRD's plans. Improvements included in the plan so far are: - to insulate the public foyer area and give it a ceiling to make it warmer; to up-grade the septic tank and drainage system so that it can cope on busy days such as sales and the show; to put running water to the paddocks for hot sale days and missed boats; to roughen the market floor to make it less slippery; to extend the lean-to roof to create a covered area at the entrance to the ring; to enclose and extend the existing lean-to to create storage space for the café, exhibition/workshop space for community projects. Finally we would like to employ a manager to help the directors look after the building, TRD's project staff, tenants and the public.

The 'Building on Success' Project will be expensive so the Directors want to make sure it's right. It would be fantastic if you had a minute or two to complete the attached questionnaire and return it (I have left a box for completed questionnaires inside the front door of the Rural Centre). Final plans will be presented at the TRD AGM in March. **Jane**

Grofters Levy Fabric Account

End of year 2010 £11,466.44
End of year 2011 £14,478.78

TRD Office

Paper.works has looked after the TRD office for another year. TRD generates an incredible amount of paperwork with all the projects it runs as well as looking after company matters and finances. We have 2 new team members who help with TRD; Mhairi MacKinnon looks after company matters such as members, company business files and publicity. Claire Hamilton is in charge of project files, paying bills and sending invoices and Shari MacKinnon does the book-keeping, VAT and wages. The girls have worked hard all year and deserve a big thank you. **Jane**

TRD is grateful to the Windfall fund for a grant to help with some urgent maintenance in the kitchen and also to replace the front door. This work will be carried out early in the new year.

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Blast from the Past

This year we have decided to include something different into the newsletter. Here are some memories and stories from various islanders about what Tiree used to be like. Enjoy!!



“We had great days and good sales sometimes at the old mart in Crossapol but it was brilliant when the new mart came along. There is a funny story about one sale at Crossapol with Mr Mair (chief auctioneer from Oban). A farmer brought into the ring a stirk which did not look very good, Mr Mair thinking that he would get a laugh said ‘What is this?’. The farmer - who was quick witted replied ‘a native of Oban like yourself Mr Mair’. (The stirk had came from his own firm as a calf)”

*Lachie MacKinnon
(Parkhouse)*

“In the case of Hay, Hayricks were built in the field. These were collected by a horse drawn wheeled float. This could be tilted under the hayricks with two ropes one from each side each having an iron fastening, were stretched round the rick & then the float was lifted with the rick on it”.

Donald MacIntyre (Gott)

“As school boys we were needed especially at harvest time to help the adults. A special potato grape was used by the adults to dig the potatoes & we young ones lifted them and put them into sacks and carts in the field. Advance was made when potato diggers came along. These were drawn by a horse & as before the young ones lifted the potatoes & put them in the carts. Sometimes they had to be left in the field in sacks to dry out before being stored in the steading or potato pits in a dry part of the field”.

Donald MacIntyre (Gott)



“From after the First World War horses were the main source of income to crofters and farmers on Tiree up to the late forties and the beginning of the fifties when tractors came onto the island for Ploughing and haulage. Dealers used to come from the mainland to buy horses and sometimes they went to horse sales in Oban (usually during the month of March.)

When tractors came to the island the number of cattle increased. Tomas Corsan the auction firm from Oban conducted two days sales on the island in the month of April. Up until the beginning of Word War 2, two day sales were held. One day at Crossapol for the West end of the island and the second day it was in Gott for the East end crofters.

Every October five boat loads of cattle left Tiree for the great October sale held in Oban, this went on for a week. Those who went to Oban to sell their cattle enjoyed those sales and were very much looked forward to it as it meant meeting with farmers from all over the country. This ceased when the mart in Oban was sold and Tesco bought the stance”.

Lachie MacKinnon (Parkhouse)

I would like to thank both Lachie & Donald for their fascinating contributions.

*‘Blast from the Past’ will be now be featuring in the Newsletter each year and as of January we will have a ‘memories’ book in the Rural Centre. **Please** send any interesting memories you have and would like to share to Mhairi MacKinnon, Tiree Rural Centre, Crossapol, Tiree*

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