

New Office at Greenbrae, South Collafirth



Left: Pat Christie, Northmavine Development Worker
Right: Alex Purbrick, Administration Assistant
Photo by Lorna Sandison

Pat and Alex are now completely settled in at the new office at Greenbrae in Collafirth. The move from the Ollaberry Hall took place in December which was fortunately a quieter time of year. It is amazing how much equipment, files and storage is needed for any organisation to function these days. The Greenbrae office has a reception area, small side office and a reasonable sized

Mavis Grind as - 'The Gateway'

Interpretation of Mavis Grind, with the North Sea on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other is an opportunity waiting to happen. Last year at the Northmavine consultation one of the items discussed was the possibility of placing a 'Welcome' sign below the Virdins quarry and this was well received. This project is now underway, with funding having been secured to design and erect such a structure.

It is envisioned that this will be a catalyst for other developments at Mavis Grind opening it up as the 'Gateway to Northmavine' through

meeting room for small groups. Visitor numbers to the office are on the increase and the meeting room is being used regularly by the various NDC sub-groups and by people who come to see Pat for advice.

Appointments have been set up in the meeting room with representatives or advisors from the various agencies that support the NDC such as Shetland Enterprise and Shetland Island Council in order that people do not have to travel to Lerwick to be seen.

Pat and Alex always welcome visitors and will take time to listen to any issue raised. The motto being "if we can help we will."

The building itself can be found by turning right at the Hillswick/Ollaberry junction, if travelling from the south, and carrying on along the main road past the red phone box at the Leon junction, past the Barnafield signpost and on to the top of that hill where you will see a red corrugated iron shed to your left and a winding road down to your right taking you to a yellow house set in a very pleasant mature tree plantation. That is us! Call along any time or phone for an appointment.



Mavis Grind—'The Gateway to Northmavine'
Photo by Pat Christie

other improvements such as a car park, picnic benches and information point. A walk with a geological emphasis is also planned.

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If you have any ideas on how Mavis Grind might be interpreted e.g. through history, geology, location, then let us know!

Volunteer Centre Shetland is here to help (you!)

The role of Volunteer Centre Shetland is to help match volunteers with volunteering opportunities, and to offer training and support, both to volunteers and volunteering managers (this might be someone on the management committee of a community group). Volunteer Centre Shetland is based in Market House in Lerwick, and we are happy to come and meet organisations and groups in Northmavine to discuss your volunteering opportunities and needs.

Volunteer Centre Shetland has a new Volunteering Co-ordinator, Sue Beer, who joined the organisation on December 1st. Sue is keen to meet groups who rely on volunteers and people who are looking for opportunities to volunteer. Sue is currently organising training for people who manage volunteers such as 'support and supervision strategies' and 'health & safety & risk management in volunteering'. Please contact her soon to find out more: Sue is on 01595 743909 or email sue.beer@shetland.org

Laura Singer is the Youth Volunteering Development Worker. Her role is to help young people get started with volunteering, encourage groups to develop more volunteering opportunities for young people and also to help groups of young people set up their own projects. Laura promotes MV Awards, a great way for organisations to say 'thank you' to volunteers aged between 16 and 25. MV Awards help the young volunteer who wants to show their commitment, have something for their CV, or just get a peerie bit of extra motivation. You can contact Laura on 01595 743911 or email laura.singer@shetland.org



Volunteering in Northmavine
If you would like to volunteer to help with any of the NDC projects then we would welcome your input. Just contact the Greenbrae office for details.

All Quiet on Da Western Front?

Back in October 2005, we asked Northmavine folk for their support in registering an interest under the Land Reform Act to acquire the Hillswick Hotel for the community. As we explained at the time, this is the first of several steps which could lead to community ownership, if that turns out to be the right thing to do. Many thanks to everybody who responded; we received much more than the necessary 10% of the Northmavine community's support.

Since then, it may feel like nothing's happened. In fact, we have been getting everything in order so we can move forward, and at the moment we're modifying the structure of the Northmavine Development Company so we can successfully register an interest in the hotel without jeopardising our ability to carry out other projects in the future.

Once that's done, we will submit the registration, which will give us first option to buy the hotel if it comes up for sale. If you want any further information on this project you can contact Margaret Roberts about da night! (of an evening) on: 01806 544224.



St Magnus Bay Hotel Photo by Geoff

Health Research Project

Northmavine Development Company has recently received funding from the Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROA) - a Community Involvement Grant which is administered by the Shetland Islands Council. The community consultation in December 2004 found that health in the Northmavine community was an issue that needed to be addressed. This funding will go towards researching the health concerns of the community and gathering these findings into an action plan. A questionnaire will be sent out to all households in the area during the summer months so have a think about what health issues or concerns the community has e.g more transport for elderly folk to social events and please remember to return the completed form!

Tourism Support Worker

Another ROA project to gain funding is for a support worker for the Tourism Group. This is a very busy group with many ideas and the potential for many large projects.

The support worker will initially be concentrating on gathering and collating information about tourism provision in the area which will be put into a report and action plan for Northmavine. They will also be conducting interviews and gathering information from local people and relevant organizations about what people would like to see in the area. It is important that we have a strategic approach to tourism in Northmavine as we have to build on what already exists as well as introducing new amenities.

Shetland College Classes

Shetland College Community Learning Section ran two "Beginners Computing" classes at North Roe School on Monday afternoons/early evenings, between September and December last year. Sixteen people attended these classes. The school installed a wireless connection and router in the G.P. area to enable the students to access the Internet using the 10 week course.

Shetland College will be looking at putting their daytime/evening class programme together for 2006/7, sometime in May of this year.

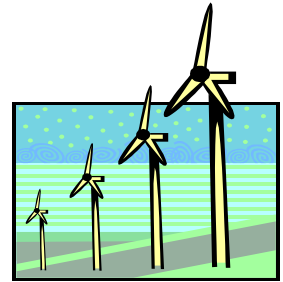
Andrew Anderson, Community Learning Lecturer would welcome any thoughts and ideas you have for classes you would like to be able to attend during 2006/7. He is based at the Brae Community Office, 4 Havragord and his contact details are as follows:

E-Mail : andrew.anderson@shetland.uhi.ac.uk
Telephone : 07771 856942

There's Gold in Them Thaar Mills

Many rural communities around Scotland are realising the potential benefits of energy generated from renewable sources through wind to heat and other schemes. At the moment there are a number of projects happening in Northmavine, for example wind turbines for local halls, and we believe there are other opportunities out there.

To that end Northmavine Development Company has applied for funding to carry out a study which will quantify what more can be done to get the most out of renewable energy generation in Northmavine. We aim to have this complete by the middle of this year, so the community can reap the benefits. Watch this space!



UR Nortmaven Youth Consultation and Updated Plan



'Da young eens' have fun during the UR Nortmaven consultation project
Photo by Pat Christie

Last year the NDC received funding from the *Scottish Policy on Architecture National Programme Innovation Fund* through an organisation called *The Lighthouse*.

The funding was given to the NDC to carry out a consultation exercise and it was decided to concentrate on involving and engaging 'da young eens' in this process.

Eshaness Café was chosen as the venue and activities were organised which were both enjoyable and designed to look at the needs of young people in Northmavine.

The result is a re-crafted and updated Northmavine Development Plan which is included within this newsletter.

Following on from this meeting a Youth Group is being Developed who are looking for more members and ideas.

If you are interested then please contact the Greenbrae office.

Rural Home Ownership for Crofters

Over 20 folk turned out at the Hillswick Hall last October to hear from a range of speakers on crofting issues. Hjalmland Housing Association explained the workings of the Rural Home Ownership grant scheme, which is available to crofters and small holders who do not qualify for crofter housing grants, while Jane Thomas from the Crofters Commission went through the basics on the Croft House Grant Scheme, which has recently been revised.

Jane also gave details of the Highlands and Islands Croft Entrant Scheme, which offers a small incentive payment to new, young crofters taking over a tenancy or let from an out-going crofter who also receives a small payment as compensation.

Jane explained that there is demand for crofts which exceeds

the supply. The Crofters Commission keeps a record of all serious enquiries for a croft but there are not enough being released for young folk to satisfy the demand. Therefore, anyone thinking to give up working their croft, or maybe wanting to keep a small part of it for themselves but give up the bulk of it should get in touch with the Crofters Commission as there could be a young family waiting for the chance to take it on.

Give Jane a call on 01950 460 067 for more details.

The evening was rounded off with a Question and Answer session after the audience had heard from Joan MacPherson from the Crofters Commission in Inverness on the various ins and outs of crofting regulation, such as Sub-division and Sub-letting.

Northmavine Development Company – Who Are We and what do we do?

We've been asked by one or two folk to spell out exactly what it is the Northmavine Development Company does. So, here goes.

At the moment, the Northmavine Development Company is the organization responsible for overseeing the Initiative at the Edge process in Northmavine.

Initiative at the Edge is a designation - a status if you will, or perhaps more like a badge, that is awarded, by the Scottish Executive, to areas within Scotland that are seen as needing regeneration - socially and economically.

Northmavine, because of its more isolated situation in Shetland, its small and declining population and the problems it faces with housing, employment and services – has enabled it to achieve Initiative at the Edge status, which will thereby give us the opportunity to receive money from grant aiding bodies for projects to help reverse decline.

It's really up to the community of Northmavine to say what it wants the Initiative at the Edge programme to be. That is why the Company conducted the recent community consultation, produced a Development Plan based on the consultations, and continues to consult folk on issues affecting the area - like the St Magnus Bay Hotel, changes in crofting and provision for young people in the area.

We can be very creative with the projects we take on but it's important to be very clear that we only have a small amount of money of our own which is generated through donations from local individuals and fund raising.

The money we have to run Initiative at the Edge comes from the Scottish Executive. This pays rental office space and for a part time Northmavine Development worker, Pat Christie, and a part time administrative assistant, Alex Purbrick.

All of Northmavine Development Company's Directors are volunteers from the community who are elected annually at the AGM. Their role is to oversee and develop projects and to support and supervise staff.

The aim of the Northmavine Development Company is to

help make Northmavine a more prosperous and attractive place to live, work and visit. This means seeing what we can do about creating more jobs and housing, better transport and facilities, and making more of things like tourism - in fact, anything, which would bring social and economic benefit to the area.

The Northmavine Development Company is able to get hold of money to help this happen, especially because it's operating under the Initiative at the Edge scheme, but any money we are able to obtain must be for the benefit of the Northmavine community as a whole.

We can't fund individuals or businesses, which are intended for private profit. But we can direct folk to the organizations who can, such as Shetland Enterprise and The Crofters Commission and we can also act as facilitators for workshops, and meetings.

We're more than happy to offer help and advice to anyone who has a new business idea, so please feel free to come and discuss your thoughts with us!

Northmavine's Website

Readers may recall that the NDC gained funding last year for a website for Northmavine. This is a community website and will rely on content from the community to keep it going. Over the winter months a group of volunteers have been working at designing and putting together the website and information for the content of the website is now steadily coming in.

WE WANT YOUR IDEAS FOR THE WEBSITE!

The Northmavine Community website is almost ready and due to be launched early this summer. We are looking for thoughts or suggestions on content including events in the community, places of interest and things people are doing. Please contact the Greenbrae office to get your ideas included.

Proposed Workshop Units

Many folk dream of being their own boss in their own locality. There are many hurdles to jump, but finding suitable, affordable premises is often the first problem folk incur.

Northmavine Development Company recently sent out a questionnaire to identify if demand existed for workshop space, and if so, where the preferred area in Northmavine would be. The response was fantastic, with many varied ideas coming forward; Eshaness, North Roe, Hillswick and Sullom were the favourite areas – come on Ollaberry!

We hope something concrete (pardon the pun) will come from this, although lots of hard work and paperwork has to be done now. Shetland Enterprise is a helpful port of call for anyone requiring advice and information on setting up a business. Anyone still wishing to register an interest or for further information on this project can contact Pat at the NDC office.

Contact Details

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