

INITIATIVE AT THE EDGE

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April 2007

Issue 5

Northmavine Development Company Newsletter

Welcome to Northmavine Day - 29th April 2007

“Let’s put Northmavine on the Map!” was something the Northmavine community repeated time and again at the Initiative at the Edge community consultation back in 2004.

Proposals for a “Welcome to Northmavine” sign were put forward at the consultation and when most people were found to be in favour funding was sought from Communities Scotland Regeneration Outcome Agreement Fund and Highlands and Islands Enterprise Seedcorn funding.

The sign is now ready and will be unveiled on Sunday 29th April at 2.00 pm at Mavis Grind. The ceremony will be followed by Sunday Teas and a display at the Sullom and Gunnister Hall. All proceeds going to Hall funds.

Final reports from two other successful latE projects, the Health & Well Being investigation and the Renewables Audit will be on display in the hall along with details of other projects.

**Don’t miss this unique event!!
Take yourself along and you
will be made most welcome.**



Alan Hart working on the Welcome to Northmavine Sign. Photo Maree Hay

Renewable Audit Report

Check out the results of the Northmavine Development Company’s Renewables Audit on Sunday 29th at the Sullom and Gunnister Hall. This audit was funded by Highland and Island’s Community Energy Company and is the only audit of this type to have such a comprehensive community consultation to back up its findings.

The audit covers existing renewable projects in the area, identifies gaps and suggesting projects that could be taken forward in the future.

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‘Sustaining a healthy community in Northmavine’ is one of the reports which will be launched on the 29th April at the Sullom & Gunnister Hall.

Based on the findings of the Northmavine Community Needs Survey (remember the bright, yellow smiley paper!), sent out to all households last July, this report combines research and community comments to suggest ways in which we can improve our social health here in Northmavine through improvements to transport, services for elderly and youth, social and leisure facilities and sustainability.

So if you are interested in discovering the findings of this report and what folk from the community have suggested in order for us to keep Northmavine sustainable and vibrant please come along to the launch where copies will be available. From 1st May copies will be available from the NDC office at Greenbrae.

Tourism Plan launched

The Northmavine Tourism Action Plan, compiled by Ingrid Laurenson, Tourism Support Worker, was launched on Thursday 29th March at the Sullom and Gunnister Hall. Around 40 people, including Shetland MSP and Scottish Minister for Transport, Tavish Scott, attended the event. There was a general buzz of enthusiasm as everyone gathered. Tea, coffee and home bakes were enjoyed while folks browsed photographs and displays of NDC projects.

Margaret Roberts, NDC chair began by welcoming everyone. Then Kate Blazeby, from Shetland Amenity Trust, gave an excellent presentation on Geoparks. Our current MSP Tavish Scott went on to praise the Action Plan and the work done so far in Northmavine. Ingrid Laurenson presented the main points raised in the plan, including methods, ideas and recommendations for the future. Visit Shetland representative, Steven Simpson, concluded the evening by highlighting Northmavine's popularity with visitors and offered support for the Plan from his organisation.

Funding to carry out this extensive piece of research was granted from Communities Scotland. This enabled the Northmavine Development Company to employ a Tourism Support Worker. The main aim of the research was to look at existing tourism provision in the area and identify gaps. Ingrid said, "A lot of hard work went into this document and I really hope it can be used by local individuals to gain inspiration for their own projects as well as for use by groups for community development.

Local Development Worker Pat Christie added, "We are in a unique position here in Northmavine as we now have a valuable document on which to base tourism related developments in the area. What we need to do now is to keep the momentum going and take a few of the suggested projects forward as soon as possible."

Currently the Tourism Group are organising a guided walk in Eshaness on Saturday 9th June. Places will be limited to twelve persons and will cost £10. Anyone interested in booking a place please contact Pat at the Greenbrae Office.



Photo: From left to right: Stephen Simpson, Visit Shetland, Tavish Scott MSP, Ingrid Laurenson, Tourism Support Worker, Alistair Williamson, NDC Director, Margaret Roberts, NDC Chair and Kate Blazeby, Shetland Amenity Trust. Photo Lorna Sandison.

Da Young Eens Fae Nort



Young Eens, James Morton, Andy Sandison, Kelly Goodlad and Daniel Robertson at the Holm Centre. Photo: Lorna Sandison

It has been a hectic few months since *Da Young Eens Fae Nort* formed. The Group were formally constituted at their AGM in February and they are currently involved in a number of projects.

They have been on a Learning Journey to Westray in Orkney. The main reason for visiting was to see the Höfn Youth Centre, which is

entirely run by the island's young people. They also visited The Barn, accommodation that was converted from an old agricultural building. There are also camping grounds attached to the site.

Da Young Eens Fae Nort then met Sam Marcus of the Westray Development Trust who took the Group on a tour of the island and showed them a DVD detailing the projects they have been involved in.



In March *Da Young Eens Fae Nort* were contacted by Michael Craigie who heads up the Shetland Transport Strategy now referred to as ZetTrans. He wanted to discuss local transport issues with young people in the area. A meeting was held in Eshaness and those present really felt that he listened to their views.

Da Young Eens Fae Nort are now looking at ways of getting young people in Northmavine involved in the Group. They have funding in place to have gigs and an event which will help them to generate interest from the local community.

If you want to help create a good future for yourselves in Northmavine then contact Daniel Robertson on daniel@youngshetland.info

Geoparks? What's in it for us? By Davy Cooper

A lot has been written and said lately about Geoparks and the possibilities of Shetland gaining Geopark status. Northmavine is one of the areas chosen because of its geological diversity to be a pilot area for the project. Many people must be wondering however just exactly what it is about Geoparks that could benefit the lands North of Mavis Grind. I believe that there are several potential outcomes of the project which could be used to the advantage of the community.

Firstly there is the chance for new business to spring up on the back of Geoparks. Businesses that could produce merchandise and products either directly or indirectly related to the geology. These businesses may be small craft producers or producers of merchandising who are ideally placed to use Northmavine's pilot status to get ahead of the game.

Secondly there is the direct economic benefit that can be brought to local business by the increased number of tourists coming to the area and the increased spending power that they will bring with them. Opportunities will arise for many tourism businesses to capitalise on the publicity that being within a Geopark will bring and to use the Geoparks branding as part of their own marketing strategies.

Finally there is the simple academic and educational value. Schools and community groups will have a resource on their doorstep that covers large areas of the curriculum and impinges on most areas of daily life. The essence of Geoparks is that it should cover all aspects of the influence of geology on the landscape and the people, plants and creatures that live on it.

I would urge the residents of Northmavine to look seriously at Geoparks and make sure that they are part of the process of developing the Geopark in their area. This is a wonderful opportunity and I hope it can be exploited to its full potential when Shetland gains full Geoparks status. Communities and individuals should start to think about the opportunities that the park may bring and ways in which they might be able to use those opportunities not just for their own benefit but also to help promote the concept of the Geopark itself.

Giants Garden by Claire Laurenson



Company Structure

The structure of the Northmavine Development Company is in the process of changing. This is necessary to allow us to register an interest in the community purchase of the Hillswick Hotel, as our Memorandum and Articles of Association don't meet the requirements of the Land Reform Act

The proposed new company structure will consist of a charitable body with a trading arm, so we don't spoil our chances of getting grant funding, whilst still being able to undertake trading activities. The legal work should be finished early this summer and will require adoption at an Extraordinary General Meeting. If you want to know more, contact Margaret Roberts on 01806 544224.

Afore Da Doors

Grant Funding from Communities Scotland Regeneration Outcome Agreement has recently been secured to undertake a photographic archive project to be displayed on the local Northmavine website.

Letters will be arriving soon asking for volunteers from local households in Northmavine to take part and to get photographed *Afore Da Doors*. You would also be asked to give a brief caption for the photo. This archive would create a snapshot in time and would be a unique and valuable asset to the community website.

2008 Calendar - Liz wants your photos

As part of fundraising for the NDC it is intended to produce a calendar, but we need photos. Landscape orientation of views and also photos which prove that there are young people in Northmavine - come on lets dispel the myth! Please post photos on the web site together with details of either scene or the people. The plan is to have the calendars ready by the end of August. I don't like to mention this word especially when spring has barely started but I'm sure they will make fantastic Christmas presents for loved ones far and near. Easy to post and not fragile! Contact: andersonliz126@aol.com.

Crofters Fact Find in North Ronaldsay and Shapinsay

Members of Northmavine Development Company Crofting Focus group recently went on a fact-finding trip to the islands of North Ronaldsay and Shapinsay in Orkney. Funding for this project was available through Communities Scotland and allowed for local people to learn at first hand how other communities were dealing with similar issues to Northmavine. These include depopulation and crofting diversification.

North Ronaldsay was the first port of call. Members of the North Ronaldsay Trust took the group around the island showing them the myriad of projects they are currently working on. Among these was of course the now famous Dennis Head Old Beacon project, which featured on the BBC Restoration Village programme.

The group also sampled North Ronaldsay mutton and agreed that it had a unique taste due to the diet of seaweed the sheep exist on. North Ronaldsay with a population of only 60 people is a truly inspiring and very beautiful place that is well worth a visit.



Dennis Head Old Beacon with North Ronaldsay Sheep in foreground, by Pat Christie

Drew Cromarty, member of the Crofters Focus Group, samples some Orkney Isles Preserves, by Pat Christie



Shapinsay was next and although the weather was blustery the Shapinsay Development Trust also provided the group with a valuable insight into crofting diversification projects Orkney style. Orkney Isles Preserves is a small family run company, which operates out of a converted farm cottage. They use local ingredients for their jams and chutneys and pride themselves on the quality of the product.

For more information about the Crofting Group or to join contact Pat Christie at the Greenbrae office.

Mavis Grind Redevelopment

Anyone recently passing through Mavis Grind on their way to Northmavine could not have helped notice that there are new fences and gates in place, drainage is underway and that concrete sections for the heavy plant screens have arrived. This is all part of the redevelopment of the area. Also planned are a car park, picnic benches, interpretation, leaflet dispensers, way markers for the path up to the Neolithic house site and landscaping.

Volunteers are also conducting a Voar Redd Up at Mavis Grind on Monday 23rd to help generally tidy up the brukk that's lying around.



Alan and Christina enjoying a cup of tea at the first picnic benches destined for Mavis Grind. Photo - Pat Christie.

AGM

The AGM of the Northmavine Development Company was held in January.

Geoff Bevan, Pete Bevington, Ivor Johnson, Ronnie Johnson and Christina Nicolson stood down as directors at the meeting and were thanked for their hard work and support.

Four new directors were appointed.

- ◆ Susan Bowie
- ◆ Ian Davidson
- ◆ Daniel Robertson
- ◆ Tommy Robertson.

Four directors remained: Margaret Roberts, Chair, John Alex Cromarty as Vice Chair, Maree Hay, Secretary and Alistair Williamson.

IS THERE DEMAND FOR CROFTS IN NORTHMAVINE?

Whenever anyone contacts the Crofters Commission in Inverness looking for a croft, his or her details can be added to a database. This can be used to provide evidence that there is demand for crofts in a certain area and can also be helpful if someone contacts the commission wanting to give up a croft and see it passed on to someone else.

At a recent meeting of the Northmavine Development Company Focus Group, in Sullom, members of the group felt that, while this was all well and good, it maybe did not provide an accurate picture of actual demand for crofts in the area, particularly from folk new to crofting, who want to get their first croft but perhaps do not have an immediate family member willing to assign a croft to them.

The Crofting Focus Group, through the local Crofters Commission Development Manager, Jane Thomas, would like to hear from anyone in this position, who would like to take on the tenancy of a croft in Northmavine as a new entrant to crofting. The group cannot promise that a suitable croft will be available but they think there is merit in providing more up to date information, which can be added to the Crofters Commission database and they can also, with the necessary agreement, let local grazings committees and folk active on the crofting scene know that there is demand out there.

“Having a better picture of demand for crofts in Northmavine could be useful in a number of ways. If folk realise there are young people interested in establishing themselves and wanting to actively use a small piece of land, perhaps to start a horticulture business, they may be willing to look at sub-dividing a unit which is now larger than they need, or they may be willing to release a tenancy sooner than they had planned.”

Anyone who would like their name to be added to the demand list for Northmavine or who is interested in releasing a croft to a new entrant to crofting should contact Jane Thomas at jane.thomas@crofterscommission.org.uk or tel 01950 460 067 for more details.

Northmavine Rowing Regatta - 26th May

The Northmavine Rowing Regatta will be held on the 26th May at Collafirth with a dance to follow In the shed with barbeque, bar, etc. Come along it's a great family day out.

Race categories

- ◆ Veterans (over 40s) men and women
- ◆ Open men and women
- ◆ Under 21 men and women
- ◆ Under 18 boys and girls.

The club is looking for new rowing members and volunteers to help with the event.

£50 will be donated to charity or community project of the for each Northmavine team taking part. Maximum donations will be £500. With £100 being donated if a Northmavine team wins a race.

Contact John Alex at john.cromarty@virgin.net



Photo: Lorna Sandison

Who is Liz? - well let me tell you.



Me outside Greenbrae.

Photo: Pat Christie.

I was asked by the board to act as the company accountant following the untimely death of Bob Holyoak last September. I have to admit to being a recent convert to Northmavine and have been won over by the fantastic scenery and it goes without saying the people as well. My ancestors hail from Skerries and Whalsay so Northmavine will always run a close third to them both. For my “sins” not only am I preparing accounts for the company and providing general advice I have taken on the responsibility for the newsletter, for the next few issues at least and to put together the 2008 calendars. Being honest, but what else would you expect from an accountant, I'm loving every minute of it! Currently I'm based in Lerwick, with occasional days at Greenbrae, but will soon be located, if everything goes to plan somewhere in the Central Belt of Scotland which will mean fewer visits to Northmavine.

Johnsmas Foy

As part of the Johnsmas Foy celebrations Northmavine are holding a peerie foy on Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th June. Along with other attractions on Sunday 24th at Mavis Grind we hope to have a photo display. We would be grateful for any old photos of Mavis Grind especially its connection with fishing.

If you can help please contact Maree Hay on 01806 522390 or email maree2@btinternet.com

Busy, busy, busy...

There have been a total of 596 visitors to the Greenbrae Office over the past year. While a considerable number of these are folk who regularly attend meetings at the office other visitors include folk coming for advice or to discuss private or community enterprises.

Greenbrae is a busy little office and has the advantage of being situated in the central location of South Collafirth in Northmavine. So, the message is if you think Pat or anyone else at the NDC can help you in any way then drop along.

www.northmavine.com

With almost 14,000 hits since August last year and 85 members no one can deny that Northmavine's community website is a huge success. It's potential for promoting the area has been recognised and the Northmavine Development Company has managed to get funding once more to develop the project further this coming year.

The forum has proved very popular and posting photos or dropping into the virtual pub *Da Magnie's Rest* has become a regular activity for many members. Information for the *What's On* diary has also been well received with more and more folk adding information to the calendar.

Ideas for future pages on the site include children's section, job adverts and webcams. If you have any other ideas then contact Pat at Greenbrae.

Up coming events

23 rd April	Da Voar Redd Up
4 th May	Folk Festival – Ollaberry Hall
6 th May	Sunday Teas & Car Boot – Hillswick Hall
11 th May	Fish & Chip Night – Ollaberry Hall
	Plant Sale – North Roe & Lochend Hall
20 th May	Sunday Teas – Ollaberry Hall
26 th May	Northmavine Rowing Regatta
29 th May	Quiz Night – Hillswick Hall
3 rd June	Sunday Teas – Hillswick Hall
10 th June	Sunday Teas – Ollaberry Hall
23 rd & 24 th June	Johnsmas Foy
24 th June	North Sea Atlantic Challenge – Mavis Grind
29 th June	May & Mackie – Hillswick Hall
1 st July	Sunday Teas & Car Boot – North Roe & Lochend Hall
15 th July	Sunday Teas – Ollaberry Hall
28 th July	Sullom Eela

For those of you with internet access updates can be found at www.northmavine.com.

Equipment Bank

Northmavine Development Company now has some useful equipment at the Greenbrae Office for use by the public. Items for use at the office at a small charge include:

- ◆ A public access computer and printer
- ◆ A laminator (kindly donated by local resident Malcolm Johnson)
- ◆ A binding machine (plastic & metal combs)
- ◆ A set of display boards which can be hired

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