

**Northmavine**

**Tourism Action Plan**

**2007**

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## **Abstract**

### ***What is the main aim and broad objectives of this action plan?***

Aim: to provide a detailed plan and timescale for developing tourist facilities in Northmavine.

Objectives:

- Identify current local facilities.
- Analyse visitor need for facilities.
- Evaluate potential projects.
- Organise a timescale.
- Identify funding.

### ***What were the methods used to complete this plan?***

- Brainstorming: both community consultation and through regular tourism group meetings.
- Local audit of tourist facilities.
- Discussions with local groups.
- Discussions with local accommodation providers.
- Northmavine Needs survey analysis.
- Shetland Visitor Survey 2006 analysis.
- Examinations of like minded group websites.

### ***How many visitors come into Shetland?***

- A recent survey stated there were 104,241 visitors to Shetland from October 2005 to September 2006.
- It was estimated the visitors brought £16.43 million into the Shetland economy.
- It is estimated 36,554 people visited the North Mainland; however this total does not include internal visitors, people arriving on yachts or cruise liners.

### ***What ideas are discussed in this plan?***

There are a large range of ideas presented in this action plan which can be broken down into four main categories:

- Promotion (e.g. website development).
- Facilities (e.g. interpretive centre).
- Things to do and see (e.g. footpaths and geoparks).
- Pastimes and Sports (e.g. angling and cycling).

### ***How will the plan be used?***

- To provide the Northmavine Development Company tourism sub-group with a guide and timescale in which to complete projects.
- By the general public to gain inspiration in starting their own private enterprises.
- By other local groups and individuals to further understand what progress has already been made and is expected to be made in the future.
- To provide a basis against which to test the potential future projects.

### ***What are the recommendations resulting from this plan?***

- Further promotion of Northmavine.
- Undertake a survey on visitors staying the Northmavine area with help from local accommodation providers.
- Create an interpretive centre group.
- Create an interpretive plan.
- Pursue accommodation development opportunities.
- Pursue the possibility of bringing the St Magnus Bay Hotel into community ownership and re-opening it.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The Scottish Executive designated Northmavine as one of the most economically and socially fragile areas in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. For this reason Northmavine was granted Initiative at the Edge Status in 2004, a project which encourages a community-led and multi-agency approach to help achieve a sustainable future for fragile areas.

As a result the Northmavine Development Company (NDC) was revived in the same year. The NDC carried out an extensive period of community consultation in each of the five main areas of Northmavine; North Roe, Ollaberry, Hillswick, Eshaness and Sullom. With the help of the NDC slogan "Northmavine...Where community counts..." the consultation was found to be very productive providing numerous discussions, comments and ideas.

Following consultation the NDC published the Northmavine Development Plan 2005. The plan focused on three strategic aims:

- Social. To work with the community to reverse population decline and improve services.
- Economic. To develop a diverse and robust economy to meet the needs, skills and aspirations of the community.
- Environmental. To protect and develop the environment, ensuring the sustainable use of its resources.

As well as these strategic aims the Northmavine Development Plan outlined several development priorities. The development of tourism in Northmavine was decided to be one of the main priorities and led to the establishment of the tourism group in November 2005.

In June 2006 a part-time Tourism Support Worker was recruited by the NDC to work with and support the Tourism Group. The main priority of the Tourism Group and support worker were to establish a Tourism Action Plan based on the strategic aims of the Northmavine Development Plan 2005.

## **1.2 Terms of Reference**

The ideas presented in this report are derived from the NDC community consultation process and comments of members of the Tourism Group during regular meetings.

The aim and broad objectives of this project are:-

**Aim:** to provide a detailed plan and timescale for developing tourist facilities in Northmavine based on the strategic aims of the Northmavine Development Plan 2005.

**Objectives:**

- Identify and list details of current local facilities.
- Analyse visitor need for facilities.
- List and evaluate potential projects.
- Organise a timescale in which to deliver projects.
- Identify potential partners and funding for projects (e.g. other groups, agencies).

## **1.3 Plan Outline**

Section 2

- Focuses on the methods used in developing this plan and describes them each in turn.

Section 3

- Provides information on the facilities and attractions currently available in Northmavine suitable for visitors. This also includes things to do and see in the area and pastimes and sports.

Section 4

- Analyses a recent survey undertaken on visitors to Shetland, in particular looking at: general information regarding visitor numbers; visitor spend; accommodation; sources of information and inspiration; activities undertaken; and feedback and opinions.

Section 5

- Lists several ideas received from community consultation and the tourism group regarding proposed future developments related to

tourism in Northmavine. Then describes these each in turn providing ways of developing these schemes further.

#### Section 6

- Details the 5 year timescale for tourism projects, covering existing projects, potential schemes and local events.

#### Section 7

- Provides information and details of potential funding bodies suitable for the projects mentioned.

#### Section 8

- Concludes the plan.

#### Section 9

- Provides recommendations for the future and points towards the next steps for the NDC tourism sub-group.

## **2. Methods**

### ***2.1 Brainstorming***

As previously mentioned community consultation was undertaken throughout Northmavine to gain an insight into the thoughts and opinions of locals regarding the future of the area. The hundreds of opinions, gathered in note form, from the consultation process were examined and those opinions related to tourism were sorted into categories.

The opinions of the community alongside the ideas created by the tourism group at regular meetings were collected to create a list on which to base this plan.

### ***2.2 Local Audit***

An audit of all the existing tourist facilities and attractions in the Northmavine Area was undertaken.

### ***2.3 Discussions with local groups***

Meetings were held with local groups to further understand their feelings towards tourism in Northmavine and gain an insight into the progress they have made and wish to see in the community.

### ***2.4 Discussions with local accommodation providers***

An informal survey with open-ended questions was undertaken with all of the accommodation providers in Northmavine. Information was obtained from each of the accommodation providers by either visiting the owner in person, or by telephone/email. The main aim of these informal discussions was to discover how well used the accommodation facilities are, how they are marketed and comments received from visitors.

### ***2.5 Northmavine Needs Survey Analysis***

Each household in Northmavine was recently sent a Northmavine Needs Survey and stamped-addressed envelope. The survey was undertaken for a separate project to learn more about how residents feel about particular aspects of community life and what they think is important in the area. Certain aspects of this survey were closely linked to tourism. The survey was analysed and comments regarding tourism noted.

## ***2.6 Shetland Visitor Survey 2006 Analysis***

The recent Shetland Visitor Survey undertaken by AB Associates in conjunction with Macpherson research for HIE Shetland was analysed in order to better understand the details of total visitor numbers and expenditure in Shetland as well as thoughts, opinions and feedback of Shetland visitors.

## ***2.7 Website Examination***

A variety of websites from like minded groups in Shetland, Scotland and abroad were investigated to obtain information on possible facilities and activities.

These websites are mentioned throughout the plan when applicable.

### **3. Audit of Local Facilities/Attractions**

A general audit of the visitor facilities and attractions available in the Northmavine area was conducted. As well as listing the existing visitor facilities this section also includes things to do and see in the area, pastimes and sports and scenery.

The NDC recently commissioned a report on digital mapping. This report includes SWOT analyses for several facilities in Northmavine and is attached (see appendix 1 pages 53-59). Although these SWOT analyses were created for a particular purpose, that is digital mapping, they are also appropriate to this plan and will assist in the development of other ideas and facilities that may be provided.

Details for the majority of the businesses mentioned in this section can be found at:

[www.northmavine.com](http://www.northmavine.com)

#### ***3.1 Existing Visitor Facilities***

##### **3.1.1 Accommodation**

###### Hotel

- None. Community ownership and the regeneration of the St Magnus Bay Hotel in Hillswick remains a key objective of the Northmavine Development Plan 2005.

###### Bed & Breakfast

- Almara, Hillswick
- The Booth, Hillswick

###### Self Catering

- Almara Chalet, Hillswick
- Askalong, Ollaberry
- Blydoit, Ollaberry
- Braewick, Eshaness
- Eshaness Lighthouse, Eshaness

- Gaza, Sullom
- Midfield, Ollaberry
- Nye Swarthoull, Hillswick
- South House, Heylor
- Stuytak, Nibon
- Swinister, Ollaberry

### Caravanning/Camping

- Braewick Café, Eshaness
- Collafirth Pier, Collafirth
- Johnnie Notions böd, Eshaness
- North Roe and Lochend Hall, North Roe

### **3.1.2 Hospitality**

#### Café

- The Booth, vegetarian restaurant and wildlife sanctuary, Hillswick
- Braewick Café, Eshaness

#### Public Toilets

- Braewick Café, Eshaness
- Hillswick waterfront
- Ollaberry Shop, Ollaberry

### **3.1.3 Retail**

#### Grocery Shop

- Hillswick Shop
- Ollaberry Shop (includes fuel pumps)

#### Post Office

- Eshaness
- Hillswick
- North Roe
- Ollaberry

## Galleries

- The Hoohevd Studio Gallery, Eshaness
- Sunbanks Gallery, Sullom
- The Smithy, Hillswick

## Crafts

- Lorna Sandison, photography and crafts, Lochend
- Kit Mowat, crafts, Ollaberry
- Book Croft, Hillswick
- Bruce Wilcock, photography, Hillswick
- Jeff Tungatt, sculptor, Hillswick

## Garages

- P.J. Hurson, Ollaberry
- A.M. Mowat, Eshaness

## Taxis

- Dennis Williamson, Sullom
- Douglas Murray, North Roe
- Martin Mowat, Eshaness
- John and Mary Scollay, Gluss
- Jamie Johnson, Lochend

Taxi service based out with Northmavine providing a service in the area.

- Johnson Transport, Brae
- Yvonne Hughson, Brae

### **3.1.4 Visitor Attractions**

## Museum

- Tangwick Haa Museum, Eshaness

## Venues

- Collafirth Pier Shed
- Eshaness Community Centre
- Hillswick Hall



- North Roe and Lochend Hall
- Ollaberry Hall
- Sullom and Gunnister Hall

The halls around Northmavine are host to several events throughout the year. These events include Up Helly Aa, The Big Bannock, Sunday Teas (occasionally with exhibitions), games nights, dances, car boot/auction sales, fish and chip nights and buffet suppers to name but a few.

There is also the prospect of future events to be held in these halls such as the annual Johnsmass Foy and Hamefarin in 2010.

### **3.1.5 Guided Tours**

- Fethaland Tours, currently the only available Northmavine based tour provider.

There are several tour providers elsewhere in Shetland that do provide a service in Northmavine. These include:

- Geotours
- Elma Johnson
- Leasks

### **3.1.6 Public Transport**

Unfortunately the bus service between Northmavine and Lerwick is extremely limited. There is a bus service which leaves the Hillswick junction (with feeder services from North Roe, Ollaberry, Eshaness and Sullom) Monday-Saturday at 0745h and 1015h (excluding Wednesday which leaves at 0745h only).

The bus leaves Lerwick Monday - Saturday at 1710 h, arriving in Northmavine around 1800 h.

There is also one late night bus a week which leaves Brae at 2230h for the Hillswick junction.

### **3.1.7 Facilities for Children**

#### Play parks

- North Roe Primary School
- Runnadale, Ollaberry
- Stucca, Hillswick
- Urafirth Primary School

- Valladale, Urafirth

### Multi-courts

- Ollaberry Primary School
- Urafirth Primary School

Youth and badminton clubs are also held in various halls throughout the winter months.

## **3.2 Things to do and see in the area**

As well as the numerous facilities available Northmavine has much more to offer:

- Archaeology – there are numerous sites in Northmavine ranging from the Neolithic period to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Fauna – rare birds, seals and otters.
- Flora – rare flowers including the oyster plant and North Roe Hawksbit.
- Crofting – traditional and current crofting practices.
- Fishing Heritage – haaf stations and couch kettles.
- Geology – hard granite in North Roe, exposed fault in Ollaberry and volcanic geology in Eshaness.
- Musical Heritage – Tammy Anderson heritage, traditional musical evenings in local halls.
- Folklore – standing stones, trows and giants.

## **3.3 Pastimes/Sports**

- Walking
- Angling, both sea and freshwater
- Cycling
- Boating
- Climbing
- Family History

### **3.4 Scenery**

Another way of passing the time is to do some general sightseeing in the area which boasts some of the most stunning scenery in the UK. The Northmavine landscape is somewhat unique ranging from dramatic coastal scenery and high exposed hills to inlets with beautiful sandy beaches and unspoilt wilderness. There are sights to suit all tastes.

There are many good examples of beautiful scenery and stunning views all around Northmavine. A few examples are at:

- Fethaland
- Stenness
- Eshaness
- Ronas Hill

Photographs of areas all around Northmavine can be found on the Northmavine website at:

[www.northmavine.com](http://www.northmavine.com)

## 4. Shetland Visitors

In order to understand the needs of Shetland tourists and ways of improving facilities in Northmavine it is useful to gain further information of the people who come to Shetland: their thoughts, opinions, general feedback and trip information. An exit survey of thousands of visitors was undertaken between October 2005 and September 2006.

The recently released Shetland Visitor Survey 2006 (SVS) prepared by AB Associates in conjunction with Macpherson research for HIE Shetland can be found at:

[http://www.shetland.gov.uk/council/documents/ShetlandVisitorSurvey2006\\_final\\_draft\\_11\\_01\\_07.pdf](http://www.shetland.gov.uk/council/documents/ShetlandVisitorSurvey2006_final_draft_11_01_07.pdf)

The survey provides extremely useful information on the type of visitor that comes into Shetland, their reasons for going to Shetland, how they research their trip, how they spend their time, as well as the economic value of tourism locally. Although the survey was based on visitors Shetland wide there were several points raised that are relevant to Northmavine and this tourism plan overall.

### 4.1 General Information

AB associates used a variety of surveys in order to obtain details on each of the different types of visitors to Shetland. Based on the differing visitors the survey was split into 3 main sections:

- Air and Sea Travellers (Sumburgh, Northlink and Smyril Line)
- Cruise Ship passengers and crew
- Yacht Travellers

The SVS states that between October 2005 and September 2006 there were 104,241 visitors to Shetland.

- 59,924 Air and Sea Travellers
- 43,035 Cruise Passengers and crew
- 1,292 Yacht Travellers

These visitors were valued at bringing a direct spend of £16.43 million into the Shetland economy.

- £15.3 million from Air and Sea Travellers
- £1 million from Cruise Passengers and crew
- £163,000 from Yacht Travellers

Therefore, as shown, the air and sea travellers make up the bulk of the visitors and the vast majority of direct spend in Shetland. The SVS also mainly focuses on these visitors. Although over 43,000 visitors to Shetland arrived on a cruise ship during the time period it was highly unlikely that they spent any time in Northmavine due to time constraints and pre-arranged tours. Similarly although 52% of yacht travellers claimed to have docked in the North Mainland in 2006 the points raised in this section will be based on the opinions made by the bulk of visitors, that is, air and sea travellers.

The SVS also broke down the air and sea travellers further by analysing those visitors:

- On holiday
- On business
- Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)

Thus occasionally the remarks made in this section may be based on the total air and sea travellers or, for example, based on visitors on holiday only.

Since 2000 there has been a 27% increase in air and sea travellers to Shetland which is equal to 12,745 people and an 11% increase in holiday travel in the low season period. The SVS believes this is an indication of development in shoulder season trips, that is trips in the low season period, and results have shown that a visitor's trip to Shetland is more likely to be their second holiday of the year.

The majority of air and sea visitors, that is 76%, were from around the UK and most likely to be Scottish. The average number of nights spent in Shetland was 5.8. The North Mainland was found to be the most popular place to stay outside of Lerwick for visitors to Shetland on holiday while 61% of all air and sea visitors visited the North Mainland.

61% of 59,924 = 36,554 visitors

## **4.2 Accommodation**

The main type of accommodation used by visitors, as may have been expected, was hotels with almost a third using a hotel at some point in their trip. There were several more types of accommodation used, some examples are provided here:

- 14.9% Bed and Breakfast
- 7.7% Self Catering
- 2.2% B&B
- 6.1% Camping

There has been a significant growth in the popularity of camping with a 2.4% rise since 2000.

53% of visitors claimed to have booked all accommodation before arriving.

### **4.3 Sources of Information/Inspiration**

The most common source of information or inspiration used was the internet with 48% of air and sea visitors researching Shetland online before travelling. The Internet has become vastly more popular since the last visitor survey was undertaken in 2000 with 48% using the internet in 2006 compared to just 6% in 2000.

The Visit Shetland website [www.visitshetland.com](http://www.visitshetland.com) was cited, amongst others, as one of the most popular research tools.

There were a large variety of responses when visitors were asked what inspired them to visit Shetland. The responses varied greatly depending on the place of origin and whether the visitor was on holiday, business or visiting friends and relatives. The most common responses received from visitors on holiday were:

- 17% Birds/Wildlife/Nature/Flora
- 10% Scenery/Landscape
- 10% Peace and Quiet, remoteness
- 9% Love of islands/island hopping
- 6% History, Archaeology, Vikings
- 6% Location, furthest North

### **4.4 Activities**

The air and sea travellers also provided numerous responses when asked as to what activities they did while on the isles. The most common activities participated in were:

- 54% visits to beaches and coastal scenery
- 45% general sightseeing/touring
- 37% bird watching
- 35% visits to historical or archaeological site
- 35% photography/painting

Overall the survey claimed that just 16% had undertaken no activities, however when comparing the responses of visitors on holiday with visitors on business and visitors visiting their friends and relatives it was found that 37% of visitors on business undertook no activities, 9% of VFR undertook no activities and just 1% of visitors on holiday undertook no activities. On the other hand 14% participated in 10 or more activities.

## **4.5 Feedback and Opinions**

The visitors were asked an open question in regards to anything that could be improved or anything that could have improved their trip to Shetland. A total of 44% could not think of any improvements that could be made, however, there was a variety of responses received from the remaining visitors, some are shown here:

- 6% of all visitors (and 9% of visitors on holiday) stated better public transport, both frequency and coverage.
- 6% more/better places to eat.
- 4% improved accommodation, better and cheaper.
- 2% improved signage.
- 2% better advertising/promotion.
- 1% tidy the place up, litter, graffiti, flowers etc.
- 1% (of holiday visitors) improved walking opportunities and access.
- 1% (of holiday visitors) improvements with public toilets.
- 1% (of holiday visitors) things to be kept unspoilt, keep up the local culture/tradition.

Visitors were also asked their opinion on activities they thought could be provided, that perhaps were not adequately provided in Shetland. Again a huge 78% could not think of anything or thought no additional activities were required. There were, however, numerous other responses to this question, for example:

- 2% (and 3% of holiday visitors) footpaths, stiles and walking trails.
- 1% kayaking, canoeing, water sports.
- 1% more organised tours, boat trips etc.

Again there were several varying responses when visitors were asked to provide details on the highlight of their trip. Some of the main reasons are mentioned here:

- 14% Scenery
- 7% people, friendliness, hospitality
- 6% wildlife (not including birds)
- 4% birds
- 3% culture/peace/remoteness/freedom
- 2% walking
- 2% (and 3% of visitors on holiday) Eshaness, specific area.

Visitors were asked whether their trip to Shetland met expectations. Overall:

- 42% exceeded expectations
- 55% met expectations
- 1% did not meet expectations
- 2% unsure

However when concentrating only on the visitors who stated they were visiting Shetland on holiday the responses varied slightly:

- 49% exceeded expectations
- 45% met expectations
- 3% did not meet expectations
- 2% unsure

Moreover, 91% of visitors (and 95% of visitors on holiday) claimed they would recommend Shetland to family and friends.



## **5. Developing Tourism in Northmavine**

### **5.1 Ideas**

The community consultation process and discussions at regular tourism group meetings have resulted in numerous contributions and ideas for development of tourism in Northmavine. The various ideas presented by both the Northmavine community and Tourism Group members can be broken down into four main categories:

- Promotion
- Facilities
- Things to do and see
- Pastimes/Sports

The following list is of course not exhaustive and will continue to grow, however, the most frequent responses received at community consultation and group meetings are covered here.

#### **5.1.1 Promotion**

- General promotion of Northmavine
- Mavis Grind development
- Promotion of local products
- Northmavine DVD

#### **5.1.2 Facilities**

- Development of Accommodation including the St Magnus Bay Hotel.
- Interpretive Centre, interpretive display boards and digital mapping.
- Public House
- Public Toilets
- Something to entertain young people
- Public Transport

#### **5.1.3 Things to see and do**

- Creation of footpaths and signage
- Geoparks
- Ranger Service
- Bird/Otter Hides
- Picnic Tables
- Improve the visual appearance of area

- Tourism thread resulting from renewable energy audit
- Earthship
- Trows and Giants

#### **5.1.4 Pastimes/Sports**

- Angling
- Water Sports for example sailing, surfing, yachting, canoeing
- Boats trips
- 4 x 4 course
- Shooting
- Rock Climbing
- Cycling
- Cruise Liners into Collafirth Pier

### ***5.2 Development of Ideas***

Each of the ideas listed above will be discussed in turn in the hope of establishing priorities in order to produce a timescale.

#### **5.2.1 Promotion**

##### General Promotion of Northmavine

In promoting Northmavine it is very important to recognise that two important tourist markets exist. Firstly, there is the traditional external tourist market and secondly, the internal tourist market. With the majority of the Shetland population being resident in or around Lerwick there is an important market that can be developed.

The NDC have already taken a large step in promoting Northmavine with the introduction of the <http://www.northmavine.com> website in August 2006. With over 12,000 hits and 75+ members this website is continually growing in popularity. Considering the internet was the most common source of information, with 48% of Shetland visitors going online before arriving, it is an excellent promotional tool.

Another advantage of the Northmavine website is the fact that there is a link to it from the Visit Shetland website. This is a highly useful link bearing in mind it was stated as one of the most highly used websites in researching Shetland.

Northmavine is also promoted in:

- Visit Scotland

- A variety of other websites including Undiscovered Scotland - which can be found at [www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk](http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk)
- Literature from Visit Shetland and the Amenity Trust
- Several guide books

### Possible Further Developments in Promoting Northmavine

One possibility in promoting Northmavine is to find ways of continually expanding and changing the website. An increased level of funding to develop the website will be made available in February 2008; giving the potential to promote Northmavine further. This will help to keep people interested, increase awareness and also gather new members. Website development has been discussed on the Northmavine website forum, a few suggestions are to:

- Sell Northmavine products on the website.
- Put interactive webcams on the website.
- Create a history section (including family history).
- Create a youth section

The webcams in place on the Visit Shetland website are very popular, so well-used in fact Visit Shetland are proposing to develop more, including one at the Eshaness lighthouse. Once in place there is a possibility a link could be made from the Eshaness Lighthouse webcam to the Northmavine website. Moreover the local youth group 'Da Young Eens fae Nort' have been approached regarding the development of a youth section on the website and are very keen to get started.

Website development could also make targeting niche markets of visitors easier in the future. The tourism group could potentially contact rambling group and bird watching websites, for example, and ask them to put in a Northmavine website link, making a link to their website in exchange. Promoting Northmavine as an excellent area to bird watch, go walking and generally as an alternative to city life may gain many more tourists. Tourism groups that offer trips such as bird watching tours could be reached via the website link and contacted to see if they would have any interest in travelling to Shetland. Numerous groups could be promoted in this way.

### Mavis Grind Development

Preparations to the land around the Mavis Grind area and creation of the "Welcome to Northmavine" sign are already well advanced. The tourism group is closely involved in developing this project and arriving visitors will soon see Mavis Grind as the gateway to Northmavine. Information will be presented on display boards encouraging people to visit other areas of Northmavine. The volcanic trail also starts here with a volcanic wall display. As a result visitors will be drawn to this focal point.

The tourism group should continue to engage with the NDC members who are involved with this development.

### Promotion of Local Products

The promotion of locally made products in Northmavine is closely linked to the general promotion of Northmavine. There are several Northmavine residents who have a variety of products for sale. These residents as well as other locals should be encouraged to bring forward their products and ideas and the tourism group should work together in developing ways of promoting these products.

As mentioned previously, one possible method in promoting local products would be to sell them via the Northmavine website. This would have the potential to:

- expand the Northmavine website
- allow local people to get their goods marketed
- create an income for the NDC

Numerous items can be sold online, right from pencils and postcards to sculptures and hampers filled with local produce. Online purchasing is a continually growing market and this certainly should be an avenue for the tourism group to go down. They should liaise with local craft makers and consider this opportunity in February 2008 when increased funds are made available to develop the website.

### Northmavine DVD

The production of a DVD providing a snapshot of what is available in Northmavine could be an excellent marketing opportunity. If particular niche markets, as mentioned previously, were found and contacted the promotional DVD could be sent to them as a way of encouraging them to visit.

A DVD could also be promoted and sold on the Northmavine website.

## **5.2.2 Facilities**

### Current Northmavine Accommodation

Discussions were undertaken with all accommodation providers in Northmavine, details are noted in appendix 2, pages 60-62.

Accommodation is obviously a critical factor in attracting and retaining visitors as well as encouraging visitors to make repeat trips to Northmavine. For the 2007 tourist season there will be a total of 71 bed spaces available in Northmavine. This figure does not include people in tents and caravans and can be broken down into:

- 8 in Bed & Breakfast accommodation
- 59 in Self Catering accommodation
- 4 in camping böd accommodation

On the whole, as shown in appendix 2, accommodation in Northmavine was very well used in 2006 and most accommodation providers were fully booked between April and October. One accommodation provider even stated he could have filled three houses with the amount of enquires he received for his self catering property at some points during the summer. Some accommodation providers also noted an increase in the numbers of off-peak season visitors and all applicable accommodation providers claimed they have had repeat visitors.

Although the Northmavine accommodation was very well used in 2006 it must be noted that it is very unlikely all bed space was occupied at any one time. This is due to the fact that the majority of accommodation in Northmavine is self catering. Self catering cottages are seen as fully booked even if there is only one person occupying the accommodation. Indeed the self catering accommodation providers generally stated their accommodation was most frequently occupied by couples. Therefore although the cottage may have room for 5 it was likely only 2 bed spaces were being used. Taking this into consideration a suitable figure of bed space usage throughout the summer may only be around half of the actual figure.

Many of the accommodation providers have their own websites advertising their property and almost all advertise with Visit Shetland and Visit Scotland. However, some of those who did mention advertising with Visit Shetland also claimed to receive very few bookings through the tourist office in Lerwick.

Visitor comments tend to be very complimentary towards Northmavine with most people visiting due to the beautiful scenery, interesting wildlife and to get away from the hustle and bustle of city life. In general the only comments regarding improvements to Northmavine were for broadband access and more places to eat in the evening.

On the whole Northmavine accommodation is extremely well used throughout a large chunk of the year and increasingly during the off-peak season. Visitors to Northmavine are generally very complimentary and tend to make repeat trips to the area year after year.

## Re-opening of St Magnus Bay Hotel, Hillswick

The hotel closed late in 2004 and the current owners have not re-opened it. An approach was made in 2005, following strong support through public consultation, with a view to looking at the feasibility of a community purchase of the hotel. The owners at that time were not willing to work towards this. The NDC therefore commenced the process required to position the community to purchase under the terms of the Land Reform Act (Scotland), and this has progressed to the point that the NDC are in the final stages of restructuring the company to make it possible to follow the process through, should the owners place the property on the market. This is the status in March 2007.

The re-opening of the hotel would provide enhanced facilities for tourists visiting Northmavine, with increased bed space, food and bar facilities. From a community viewpoint it would retain a larger proportion of tourism revenue within the area, creating employment opportunities, and providing the community with enhanced recreational facilities.

## Accommodation Development

With the significant rise in popularity of camping since 2000, as mentioned previously, it would perhaps be worthwhile to develop more campsites or cheaper accommodation in similar style to the camping bōds that are situated around Shetland. There are several areas to look at if developing cheaper accommodation, for example:

- Bunkhouse accommodation
- Wigwam accommodation

Both of these projects would be possible as either a community venture or private enterprise. By encouraging private individuals to invest as a means of agricultural diversification more accommodation could be made available. An example of agricultural diversification is shown at:

[www.thebarnwestray.co.uk](http://www.thebarnwestray.co.uk)

This website provides details of a hostel in Westray, Orkney which started life as a barn. A local couple converted their barn into a hostel in 1999/2000 and have been running since May 2000. They have also more recently converted their byre into very basic kitchen and lounge facilities for campers and caravan dwellers. They have found this facility to be very well used and local amenities, including the local hotel, have benefited from this diversification.

In addition, a member of the tourism group recently made a trip to mainland Scotland in order to research bunkhouses and wigwams, please refer to appendices 3 and 4, pages 63-65, for the two reports. The Ardenbeg

Bunkhouse and Miltonhaven Wigwams, as described, are typical examples of these types of accommodation. With self catering cottages being the vast majority of Northmavine accommodation there is a potential market for these types of cheaper accommodation.

Wigwam sites have an excellent marketing aid since all wigwams in Britain are marketed together on one website, see:

[www.wigwamholidays.com](http://www.wigwamholidays.com)

Thus allowing holiday makers to view and book holidays to wigwam sites all around the country. The website also provides information on creating your own wigwam site with the possibility of having the wigwams delivered ready made.

Another useful way of promoting potentially cheaper types of accommodation is to create a theme. For example, a hostel in Westray, Orkney has a nautical theme throughout, see:

[www.bisgeos.co.uk](http://www.bisgeos.co.uk)

This five star hostel, with self-catering cottages attached, is decorated with rope, net, oars, fish boxes and has boat shaped areas. Ideas such as these offer a little difference which creates a great novelty value and quirk. This hostel in particular has changed and developed over time and received many repeat bookings over the years. It runs as a not-for-profit organisation with all profits going back into the accommodation in order to continually improve and develop the property. Indeed many bookings for this accommodation were made from Orkney residents. This therefore suggests that residents from other areas in Shetland may be tempted to stay in quirky accommodation if available in Northmavine.

To develop opportunities such as these it is important to engage with agencies such as the Shetland Islands Council (SIC) and HIE Shetland, in order to create seminars which will inform and advise individuals to consider self-employment opportunities in the tourist accommodation market. From the information provided by the accommodation providers in Northmavine and the feedback received from the SVS there is most certainly a market for cheaper type accommodation in the area.

### **Interpretive Centre**

In order for visitors to benefit fully from their trip to Northmavine an interpretive centre is essential. Fetlar Interpretive Centre is a good example of a well used, community-led, information point in Shetland, see:

[www.fetlar.com](http://www.fetlar.com)

An interpretive centre has the potential to improve a visitor's trip immensely. Community consultation was recently undertaken regarding an interpretive centre and numerous ideas resulted from the meet. It was thought an interpretive centre could:

- Provide information on facilities available in the area.
- Provide maps showing marked footpaths, interpretive displays and bird and otter hides.
- Play host to digital mapping and virtual tour projects.
- Hire powerful cameras to picture birds and other wildlife in the area.
- Be situated close to accommodation projects such as wigwam facilities.
- Sell local crafts.
- Hold public toilets.
- Sell tea, coffee and light snacks.
- Be the starting point for tours of the area.
- Provide indigenous courses, for example kishie making.
- Hold an area for young people.

These are just a few of the ideas that were suggested at the community consultation although what would most certainly be key to the survival of an interpretive centre would be to make sure it could provide something entirely different. For instance, the Fetlar Interpretive Centre is very much a museum as well as an interpretative centre; since Northmavine already has the Tangwick Haa museum it would be important to make sure there was no duplication and the interpretive centre offer something different.

From the list above, one of the less common options for an interpretive centre is homing cameras to picture wildlife. An example of such a centre is situated in North Berwick, see:

[www.seabird.org](http://www.seabird.org)

The centre which is situated along the coast 25 miles from Edinburgh allows visitors to observe, zoom in and pan on hundreds of birds and marine wildlife without disturbing them in any way. This sort of remote viewing is very unique and would work well in a remote, scenic area filled with wildlife like Northmavine. Although it is only one of several potential opportunities an interpretive centre would offer.

One major drawback with the development of a Northmavine interpretive centre is the location. One suggestion made at the community consultation was to hold a pilot interpretive scheme in the local halls. This would allow the group to gauge the use and popularity of interpretation before proceeding with the project.

The next step will be to form an additional group to focus solely on the development of an interpretive centre and ascertain how this project can be achieved. Those who expressed interest at the community consultation should be contacted in order to form the basis of an interpretive centre group.



Upon formation the tourism group should continue to liaise with this group and support the project.

### Interpretive Displays

Interpretive Displays are a highly useful method of providing a visitor with information in a particular area. In contrast, if visitors were to travel to North Roe looking for Fethaland, for example, road signs would direct them to the end of the A970 at Isbister. Upon asking locals they might end up arriving at Fethaland and the Haaf Station. Having achieved this they would be presented with a group of derelict buildings in a scenic place, explore the area and return to their vehicle. At no point would they have been able to find out what the buildings were for or how the Haaf Fishing was conducted and it is unlikely they would have located the Viking Bowl Quarry.

This example could be repeated in a number of areas throughout Northmavine. If people are allowed to visit the area and not learn about it then their visit will fall short of what can be offered and they will be unaware of the wealth of history that exists in the area. For this reason interpretation and orientation are essential.

The Shetland Amenity Trust (SAT) have recently received funding from the European ISLA project to develop interpretation/orientation display boards around Shetland. SAT have put in place a ranger service to get the 50 boards erected, three of which will be in Northmavine.

Alternative sources of funding should be examined in order to prioritise interpretive displays for additional places around Northmavine. One idea presented at regular tourism group meetings was to create interpretive displays out of recyclable materials in order to create an altogether alternative and unusual feature. Another was to get input from the schools and children in Northmavine, asking the children to design or construct some sort of interpretation for the area, such as a sculpture or mosaic.

Members of the NDC and tourism group are in the process of investigating areas around Northmavine that would benefit from interpretation and form an interpretive plan. This interpretive plan will of course be the essential first step towards gaining funding. The tourism group and NDC members should continue to research the ideas mentioned above. This may produce a self-employment opportunity and once again a multi-agency approach should be used to inform and promote such opportunities.

### Digital Mapping

A report was recently undertaken by a STEP student for the NDC regarding digital mapping. The report describes various types of digital mapping and looks at the opportunities digital mapping would have in Northmavine

particularly from a tourism perspective (copies of the report are available from the NDC office).

On the whole digital mapping is an excellent way of providing detailed maps and information on specific areas. It would be an extremely useful tool for visitors to Northmavine and can be customised to suit each area. As shown from the SWOT analyses in appendix 1 (pages 53-59) the main problem in obtaining digital mapping facilities is finding a suitable location. An ideal location would of course be an interpretation centre, however, as recent community consultation suggested it would also be possible to pilot a scheme in a community hall. License fees are annual so after one year can be renewed if popular.

A volunteer is currently planning a virtual field tour around Eshaness. Although a basic type of digital mapping if successful further developments in more advanced digital mapping could be developed around Northmavine. Digital mapping is an opportunity that cannot be missed and would be a useful attraction to an interpretive centre.

### Public House

Please refer to the previous section Re-opening of St Magnus Bay Hotel, Hillswick on page 22. Since the closure of the Hotel in December 2004 the opening of a pub in Northmavine has been a familiar remark around the community in general as well as in community consultation. If the St Magnus Bay Hotel were to open once more the bar would certainly reopen for public use alongside the accommodation. However as it is still not on the market it is unsure as to when this process will go ahead.

Meanwhile one possibility in providing a public house to Northmavine would be to regularly open hall bars to members of the public. The Hillswick Hall already offers this service opening every Wednesday night. The Ollaberry hall bar also opens roughly once a month while serving fish and chips. Hall committees from other areas should be approached to see if it would be something they could commit to.

### Public Toilets

Although there are public toilets situated in Hillswick, Eshaness and Ollaberry there is definitely a need for more, particularly in North Roe, due to the huge expanse of area that Northmavine covers. The need for public toilets was mentioned ten times during community consultation and again a further four times in the 'other' section in the Northmavine Community Needs survey and so is obviously a concern for the Northmavine community. Several ideas as to how to solve this problem have been brought forward:

- Open local halls during the summer for people to access toilets.
- Gain funding to build public toilets at the Collafirth Pier shed.

- Situate public toilets in the potential interpretive centre.

Although under no legal obligation to do so the SIC service involves the provision, operation and management of the majority of public toilets around Shetland, comprising 34 sites at present. Therefore for any further developments regarding public toilets in Northmavine, particularly North Roe, the SIC should be contacted.

### Entertainment for Young People

A youth group 'Da Young Eens fae Nort' has been set up to develop facilities for young people in Northmavine. There were several suggestions received from discussions with this group as to how to get more young visitors, particularly internal visitors, into the area.

It was thought that the most popular events in Northmavine for young visitors are currently Up Helly Aa and the Big Bannock which results in hundreds of young people coming into the area. For this reason Da Young Eens thought a continuation of this type of theme would be a good way of getting more people visiting the area. They hope to organise three events over the coming year. The first event, to be held at the beginning of the summer in a local hall, is likely to be a gig with several local bands and barbeque facilities. Da Young Eens are advancing well in organising their projects and are continuing to research further opportunities.

A second idea was to have a place for young people to meet. The Höfn youth centre in Westray, Orkney is a good example. Comprising of two main areas with kitchen and toilet facilities the centre is open unsupervised every Friday and Saturday night for secondary 2's and over and supervised fortnightly on Tuesdays for secondary 1's and over.

The centre is heated by wind turbine as part of the Wind2Heat Scheme and cost around £80,000 to complete. This type of youth centre differs somewhat from the youth clubs that currently run in local halls in that there is very much an emphasis on youth ownership. There is more emphasis on the young people of the area being responsible for the youth centre, for example getting involved with fundraising and keeping the centre clean and tidy. Since the young people have sole use of most of the centre they can also arrange things and decorate the way they like. The fact that the centre is unsupervised also allows the young people more freedom, although there is always an adult on call.

Although a youth centre works well in small isolated places like Westray there are issues which need to be considered:

- Location. Since there is no real centre to Northmavine it is very difficult to decide where to place a youth centre which would attract young people from all around the area, including out with Northmavine.

- Transport. Many young people may not have easy access to a youth centre. The Höfn centre solved this problem by offering a cheap bus service home.
- Age Groups. The needs of 12-17 year olds are very different from 18-25 year olds. Perhaps one way to solve this problem is to offer different nights for different age groups.

Funding was received to build and run the Höfn youth centre from Lloyds TSB and Children in Need. It is therefore important for Da Young Eens to now further research and produce ideas for a youth centre while keeping in mind the issues raised. It would also be worthwhile for Da Young Eens to discuss their ideas with the future interpretive centre group as it may be a possibility for a potential interpretive centre to hold a room for young people to meet.

### Public Transport

Almost two thirds of respondents to the Northmavine Community Needs survey claimed that public transport is in the top three of the most important things they would like to see improved in Northmavine, making it the most common response received. Also with 9% of visitors on holiday in Shetland claiming improvements to public transport are necessary this issue is a priority.

Da Young Eens fae Nort recently met with the SIC head of transport to voice their feelings and opinions towards the lack of public transport in Northmavine in the hope of initiating some improvements. A transport group has also been set up to develop ideas on how to solve the public transport problems. 56% of respondents to the Northmavine Community Needs survey claimed they would use a dial-a-ride bus to get around Northmavine making it a very promising start to transport developments.

### **5.2.3 Things to see and do**

#### Creation of Footpaths and Signage

The proposed creation of footpaths, gates and styles etc in certain parts of Northmavine has been very popular with 81.3% of respondents to the Northmavine Community Needs survey 'FOR' the paths. This compares to just 8% providing comments 'AGAINST' the proposed developments. The remaining 10.7% were either unsure or gave no response.

This development is well under way. From the routes identified on the maps presented to the SIC planning department the SIC with the help of crofters and local contractors are working on improving access to walks at:

- Mavis Grind

- Eshaness coastal walk
- Hillswick ness coastal walk
- Fethaland and Uyea walks
- Ronas Hill
- Ollaberry

As well as visitors from all over Shetland there have been comments made in the visitor's book on top of Ronas Hill from people as far a field as England, Norway, Sweden and Canada, showing that walks around Northmavine are already popular with tourists. Although Northmavine has the added advantage of having the highest hill in Shetland, and therefore receives a lot of word of mouth advertising for Ronas Hill, all of these walks should be further promoted. Following completion of the core paths, literature should be produced to market and encourage visitors to go on the walks. Maps should be displayed at Mavis Grind and made available at certain facilities, such as shops and cafés, around the area.

The tourism group are in the process of developing locally provided guided walks around the area. The first walk, to take place around Eshaness in June, will hopefully be the first of many with the advantage of employing someone local and promoting Northmavine. Details of the proposed walk are currently available on the Northmavine website. If popular more specialised walks will be developed as well as a walking group.

Access to the walks must also not be ignored. For example, access to the walk up Ronas Hill starts at the top of Collafirth Hill. The road up to Collafirth hill is full of pot holes and in dire need of repairing. This access road is currently still under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence. They have been approached to undertake repairs and the SIC have stated that once repairs are complete they will adopt the road and undertake any future maintenance. Since the SIC are responsible for the maintenance and improvements of public access roads Shetland wide the tourism group should make them aware of any other problem areas. Thus allowing, funds permitting, problem areas to be patched up.

## Geoparks

Geoparks is a European wide initiative, details can be found at:

[www.europeangeoparks.org](http://www.europeangeoparks.org)

In this initiative, 30 European zones work together to explore geological heritage. Their main aim is to provide information on geological history and formation and overall protect and conserve geological heritage. In order to be supported by the European Geoparks network an area must:

- Have clearly defined boundaries with adequate surface area for development.

- Have particular geological heritage with sites of importance in scientific quality, rarity, aesthetic appeal or educational value.
- Produce a sustainable territorial development strategy.
- Develop geotourism in the area.
- Enable residents of the area to actively participate, due to the fact that a geopark would directly influence their living conditions and environment.
- Work alongside other geopark initiatives.

The NDC as well as several other organisations around Shetland including the SIC and SAT are closely involved in promoting Shetland geological heritage and gaining European Geopark status. Focus is currently on Northmavine and the North Isles, due to their outstanding geological heritage.

SAT have appointed a worker to develop a Volcanic self guided trail along a route from Mavis Grind, on to Braewick, Stenness then ending up at the Eshaness lighthouse. A geological wall is also being developed to be put in place at Mavis Grind which will indicate the start of the volcanic trail and will be built from the various rock types which make up Northmavine. It is hoped this wall will be a forerunner for others throughout Shetland.

This project is developing well and the tourism group are working closely with the volcanic trail worker to ensure that this project is used to promote the geology of Northmavine to its best advantage. The focus now is on the volcano story which will be available at the Tangwick Haa in the form of a simple leaflet. Residents with an interest in geology should be encouraged to come forward with information; their input would be very welcome.

The SAT has recently prioritised other developments they wish to undertake in Northmavine. These are listed in the timescale in section 6.

### Ranger Service

There is currently one ranger based in Unst which covers the North Isles and as far south on the mainland as Laxo. As previously mentioned the ranger service is involved with the European ISLA project which is in place to produce and place interpretive displays all around Shetland.

The other main service the ranger offers to tourists is guided walks. Unfortunately there will be no guided walks in Northmavine this year as the Ronas Hill walk was cancelled due to lack of demand. Hopefully this walk will be reinstated in 2008.

There is funding in place to retain the ranger service until April 2008. It is expected there will be more funding made available after this time to continue the service until 2011.

## Bird/Otter Hides

Bird and otter hides are very easily obtained and popular with nature enthusiasts all over the world. They are very easily constructed and can basically be any shape or size possible. Numerous examples can be found at:

[www.bird-hides.co.uk](http://www.bird-hides.co.uk)

The recent BBC spring watch programmes and follow ups gave Shetland a considerable amount of publicity in 2006. For this reason it is likely that nature enthusiasts will be coming to Shetland in 2007. With 37% of visitors undertaking bird watching evidence suggests that if you provide a facility, no matter how basic, it will be used by wildlife enthusiasts.

Contact with Northmavine bird watchers and consultation with the RSPB and other appropriate agencies could lead to the establishment of hides in Northmavine. Suitable areas for bird hides may include:

- Near the trees in Sullom
- Greenbrae, Collafirth
- Da Knowes, Ollaberry

Another possibility would be to put bird/otter hides near the proposed core paths. Their position could then be marked on the maps showing the core paths and walking trails. If there were a number of hides in the area their existence could be widely promoted. It is possible that funding for such hides could be available from the SIC in conjunction with the core paths plan.

There are two main issues regarding hides that should be considered. Firstly, wheelchair access and secondly otter hides require a licence.

## Picnic Tables

Picnic tables would be an excellent addition along core path routes and dotted around Northmavine giving people a chance to rest and enjoy the scenery and wildlife.

One locally made picnic table has already been provided to the NDC office for public use with funding from the SIC planning department. Funding is currently available for more picnic tables and so is a good local money making opportunity.

## Improve the visual appearance of the area

Improving the cleanliness and visual appearance of Shetland was mentioned by several visitors as important in the SVS. Indeed if the area is to be

promoted to visitors it has to look its best and unfortunately there are a few eyesores around Northmavine.

One of the key activities of the SAT is environmental improvement and with their strategic objective “enhancement of visual amenity and public enjoyment of the countryside” it is important to liaise with the SAT to improve the visual appearance of the area.

The annual ‘Voar Redd Up’ is the largest community-led clear up throughout the UK and always very successful. Projects such as these, alongside ‘Mini Redd ups’ and ‘adopt a beach’ schemes, would soon fix the problem areas of Northmavine. Similarly for other areas with larger problem items such as old vehicles SAT offer the ‘muck and bruck squad’ service for removals.

Perhaps funding could also be found alongside the creation of picnic benches for litter bins in the area.

### Tourism thread resulting from Renewable Energy Audit

Due to its location Northmavine has the potential to develop numerous renewable energy resources. The NDC has recognised the potential of tapping into renewable energy and thus commissioned a renewable energy audit. The audit was completed by Pure Energy Centre Ltd and North Isles Renewable Energy Partnership.

The audit: recognises that several renewable energy projects have already been completed, for example, the wind2heat projects undertaken in local halls; realises that several projects are expected to start, for example the Hjalmland Housing Association unplugged houses; and offers recommendations and proposals for a future in renewable energy in line with the Northmavine Development Plan environmental strategic aim.

The audit looks at the short, medium and long term when delivering recommendations for continued renewable energy projects in Northmavine. Since it is understood that ‘green’ areas are becoming more and more popular with visitors the short term goals of renewable energy schemes is to, on the whole, raise awareness. The promotion of renewable energy in Northmavine is already well under way. The fully operational wind2heat schemes in place at the North Roe and Lochend and Sullom Halls are already increasing awareness of renewable energy and encouraging other local groups to undertake similar developments.

In the medium term goals of renewable energy projects it is hoped that some of the benefits of renewable energy will be seen. An unplugged community garden project in North Roe is a good example. The North Roe community gathered together approximately 5 years ago to discuss the opportunity of turning a disused graveyard into a small community garden with the possibility of making it into a tourist attraction. A feasibility study was carried out in 2005. The resulting recommendations included:



- A shed with light, heat and power in which to stay dry and work with the plants.
- A heated green house/poly tunnel for fruit and vegetables.
- A visitor's tea room and public toilets.
- Powered as far as possible by renewable energy.

It is hoped that a renewable project such as the community garden in North Roe would be completed as a medium term goal however developments are currently at a stand still due to a lack of local interest. It was thought the garden could work in conjunction with an interpretive centre thus should be on the agenda at an interpretive centre meeting. Indeed an interpretive centre also has the potential to be 'unplugged', that is, run solely by renewable energy.

**Renewable transport and an environmental trail** are also good examples of medium term projects which would raise the profile of Northmavine and help attract visitors. An environmental trail, that is several wooden tourist information points lit by a renewable energy project such as solar panels, would be a good tourist attraction which could be placed throughout Northmavine.

The long term recommendation resulting from the audit is a community owned income generating scheme, for example, **a wind farm established to export energy for community profit.** A scheme such as this would result in giving Northmavine a reputation as an innovative community with good employment opportunities. Community funds generated by renewable energy could then be employed into increased leisure facilities, overall increasing tourism.

### **Earthship**

An earthship is another good example of a possible renewable energy project for Northmavine. A tourism group member recently visited and completed a report on such a renewable project, please refer to appendix 5 (pages 66-67).

As shown in appendix 5 the earthship example is made wholly of recycled materials and is now run as a fully autonomous self-sustaining visitor centre. An initiative such as this would certainly be a tourist attraction in Northmavine. As well as the tourism attraction a self-sustainable facility would create there are several other things that could be done in an earthship. For example, it could be used as:

- An alternative to an interpretive centre.
- An information point for visitors.
- A place for young people to meet.
- A social club.

As shown, there are several opportunities available for unusual self-sustaining developments such as an earthship. However, the main problem in starting this sort of project is initial funding. Of course £25,000, as stated in appendix 5, would be significantly less than the cost of a new interpretive centre and the residents of Northmavine are renowned for undertaking very successful fundraising events this is certainly an opportunity to be further developed. An earthship should be on the agenda when an interpretive centre group is formed.

### **Trows and Giants**

Northmavine is well-known for its troll (trow) and giant folklore. Trowie and giant stories have been told to the children of Northmavine for generations. Developing this theme around Northmavine was suggested at community consultation and has also been discussed in the Northmavine website forum. There have been several ideas put forward as to how to develop this theme:

- Create a trows and giants trail recognising areas such as the björqs in Lochend with the giants' garden, giant's grave and trowie houses. There are several areas such as these all around Northmavine.
- Create trow crossing signs to add a little quirk and novelty value to the area.
- Create literature on local trows and giants to sell to visitors.
- Build a trowie themed earthship/social club where visitors could go 'in about da fire' at story telling nights and listen to what the trows used to get up to around Northmavine.

These are just a few of the ideas that have been raised from this theme. The next step is to investigate ways of developing this theme further and seek out the people who know trowie and giant stories and are particularly interested in the subject. These ideas could be particularly marketed for families; children would probably enjoy going on trowie trails and listening to trowie tales. It may also be useful for someone with knowledge of trowie and giant tales to be a member of the interpretive centre group.

## **5.2.4 Pastimes/Sports**

### **Angling**

Northmavine has a large number of lochs which are stocked with trout. If sea angling, both boat and shore, is added to freshwater angling an attractive range of sport is offered. The Shetland Angling Association are responsible for restocking the lochs in Northmavine, see:

[www.troutfishing.shetland.co.uk](http://www.troutfishing.shetland.co.uk)

This website provides details of how to get to Shetland, where to go to gain more information on the best lochs and invites visitors to contact them via email for more details. Considering 4% of visitors undertook fishing while in Shetland in 2006, as stated in the Shetland Visitor Survey 2005/2006, promotion of angling is key in increasing numbers of both internal and external visitors.

Consultation with the Shetland Angling Association is essential in developing the profile and stocking the lochs around Northmavine. Angling could potentially be promoted on the Northmavine website with like minded groups targeted and links made between websites.

### Water Sports

The fact that Northmavine is surrounded by water should mean that there are opportunities in developing water sports. Yoal racing is already popular with an annual regatta held at the Collafirth Pier in May. Sports such as sailing and windsurfing are popular in areas like Brae and have the potential to be developed at Collafirth.

The next stage would be to gather interest in water sports and gain some funding. Canoeing in particular could be popular with the tourists as this sport can be undertaken successfully without much practice.

### Boat Trips

Boat trips are certainly an excellent way of making the most of stunning coastal scenery that surrounds Shetland. An example of an award winning Shetland based boat trip provider focusing on trips around Bressay and Noss can be found at:

[www.seabirds-and-seals.com](http://www.seabirds-and-seals.com)

There are several other boat trip providers throughout Shetland but with none based in Northmavine there is a potential gap in the market for a local private venture.

Engaging with the SIC and HIE Shetland would help advise anyone who would like to start this sort of business and full support would be given by the NDC and tourism group.

### 4 x 4 Course

Again this is a great idea, an ideal tourist attraction and would make an excellent private venture for a local resident. If anyone wished to start a 4 x 4 course they would also get full support from the NDC, tourism group and agencies such as the SIC and HIE Shetland.

## Shooting

Details for the Shetland Clay Target Club can be found at:

[www.shetland-communities.org.uk/sctc/](http://www.shetland-communities.org.uk/sctc/)

There is another gap in the market here and with plenty of open spaces in Northmavine there is potential to develop this sporting opportunity within the area.

## Rock Climbing

Northmavine is a good area for extreme rock climbing. There is currently an excellent climbing group based in Northmavine, details of which can be found at:

[www.climbshetland.co.uk](http://www.climbshetland.co.uk)

This website describes Eshaness in Northmavine as “Shetland’s climbing capital” with climbs which include the Grind of the Navir and Eshaness Lighthouse. Other climbing areas in Northmavine include crags on Ronas Hill and Ronas Voe, as well as the Red Head of Hamar and Heylor. According to the website Shetland climbers are the most unlucky, lucky climbers in the UK. Lucky due to a lack of climbers in the region meaning the climb Shetland members are free to climb wherever they please and unlucky because of the bad weather Shetland is renowned for!

The Climb Shetland website is very well used receiving hundreds of hits a day. It has been mentioned in several climbing websites and magazines throughout the UK as well as discussed in the Northmavine website forum. This excellent promotion has the potential to bring many visitors to the area. Although the website is not targeted at external visitors experienced climbers visiting the isles often contact members of the website to get information on and go out on climbs.

In order to develop Climb Shetland and the website the members of the club are currently applying for funding and fundraising. They are also in the process of creating guides of climbs in the area to sell online. The tourism group should liaise with members of Climb Shetland in order to best promote Northmavine and climbing.

## Cycling

Shetland is currently being promoted as part of the North Sea Cycle Route see:

[www.northsea-cycle.com](http://www.northsea-cycle.com)

The promotion and provision of cycle routes in Northmavine was repeated several times during community consultation and has been discussed on the Northmavine website forum. With many cyclists arriving in Shetland each year promoting cycling in Northmavine is potentially an excellent tourist attraction.

This could be done by developing cycle routes alongside the paths currently being developed around Northmavine; or similarly allowing cyclists to go on the paths being developed. The Urafirth Primary School, NDC and HEARD group have recently been involved in gaining funding from the SIC to create a cycle route from upper Urafirth to the school and further on to the Hillswick Shop.

If, once completed, the Urafirth cycle trail is successful the tourism group could apply for further funding from the SIC to develop more. Tracks could then be promoted alongside core paths. Suggestions for further tracks are currently being discussed on the Northmavine website forum, some suggestions are:

- Sullom – Mangaster
- Mangaster – Nibon/Gunnister
- Tingon

As well as creating cycle trails there is also a potential gap in the market for cycle hire which could be run as a private enterprise.

### Cruise Liners to Collafirth Pier

The NDC have recently been involved in looking at ways of running a pilot project for cruise liners to berth at Northmavine's largest pier, in Collafirth. The report, which is still in draft form, lists the attractions available in Northmavine and outlines various options for an itinerary:

- Bus trip from Collafirth to Eshaness: taking in views of Ronas Hill, Ronas Voe, Hillswick and Eshaness, cliff scenery, visit to Tangwick Haa Museum, visit to Hoohevd Gallery, food, toilets and crafts provided at Braewick café, stop at Eshaness Lighthouse with spectacular views and an opportunity to take a walk along the cliffs – total time approximately 4 hours (this could be increased or decreased to suit).
- Bus trip with walk to Fethaland, North Roe: taking in history of the Collafirth Pier, views of the Collafirth burn, visit the standing stones and Giant's grave and listen to the legends surrounding them, walk to Fethaland with Fethaland Tours guided walks with an opportunity to bird watch, spot other wildlife, flora and fauna, consume a packed snack provided by local café on walk and return to North Roe and Lochend Hall for a hot meal and toilet facilities – total time approximately 4 hours (this could be increased or decreased to suit).

- Package for those who do not want to go on bus trips e.g. crafts in shed, heritage display by local history group, food, walks from pier, virtual bird/otter/seal watching.
- Out with Northmavine option e.g. Muckle Roe, Brae, Voe.
- Bad weather option.
- Night time entertainment package to encourage the liner to berth overnight e.g. musical evenings, storytelling, suppers etc.

At this point in time there may not be enough facilities in place, for example public toilets, and the development of this initiative should perhaps be put on hold. However, due to the potential revenue that could be generated for the local economy this project cannot be ignored. The tourism group should continue to work with the NDC in attracting cruise liners to Collafirth and developing pilot project schemes with itineraries as listed above. As other projects develop this concept should be continually re-considered and promoted to other sub groups that may arise from this action plan.

### ***5.3 Shetland Wide Initiatives***

Events occurring in Shetland, such as the Tall Ships in 1999 and Island Games in 2005, are guaranteed to bring increased numbers of visitors to the isles. Any sort of increased visitors will subsequently mean more visitors to Northmavine. If Northmavine is appropriately promoted in an area in which a one off or annual event is to be held it stands to reason that visitors will come into the area.

Northmavine has the opportunity to organise events in conjunction with larger events held elsewhere in Shetland. For example, Northmavine residents are closely involved with the annual Johnsmass Foy in June; events are expected to be held in North Roe and Mavis Grind for the first time in 2007 as part of this annual event which is primarily based in Lerwick. Northmavine could also potentially get involved with the hamefarin in 2010 which will also be largely based in Lerwick.

In addition, as well as annual or one off events as mentioned any facility in Shetland has the potential to boost tourism. For example, the new Lerwick museum is expected to increase tourist numbers. Anything from a new museum to a cinema or ten pin bowling ally has the potential to attract visitors.

On the whole, promoting Northmavine at big events elsewhere in Shetland or getting involved in certain events can lead to many more visitors arriving in Northmavine each year.

## 6. Timescale

The suggestions and ideas mentioned in this plan will only work as long as there are appropriate timelines in place to follow. For this reason a five year timescale has been included as a guide for projects to be completed. This five year timescale includes:

- Definite projects with expected completion dates.
- Potential projects with estimated completion dates.
- Events occurring in Northmavine that bring many visitors to the area.
- Shetland wide events with the potential to bring visitors to the area.

Timescale		
Year	Month	Details
2007	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Completion and launch of Tourism Action Plan.</li> <li>➤ Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROA) year 2 funding begins.</li> <li>➤ Geology leaflet put in place around points of Northmavine.</li> <li>➤ Interpretive centre group initiated.</li> <li>➤ Learning Journeys undertaken.</li> </ul>
	April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Questionnaires for accommodation providers produced and surveying started.</li> <li>➤ Interpretive centre group constituted.</li> <li>➤ Voar Redd Up.</li> <li>➤ Mavis Grind sign in place.</li> <li>➤ Learning Journeys undertaken.</li> </ul>
	May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Rowing regatta, Collafirth.</li> <li>➤ Public transport issues discussed.</li> <li>➤ Picnic tables in place at Mavis Grind.</li> <li>➤ Talks with RSPB regarding Bird Hides.</li> <li>➤ Talks with Shetland National Heritage regarding Otter Hides.</li> <li>➤ Learning Journeys undertaken.</li> </ul>
	June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Learning Journey conference.</li> <li>➤ Johnsmass Foy at Mavis Grind and Fethaland.</li> <li>➤ Gig organised by Da Young Eens fae Nort.</li> <li>➤ Webcam at Braewick Café in place.</li> <li>➤ Locally provided guided walks around Eshaness initiated.</li> </ul>
	July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Completion of car park and concrete bunkers at Mavis Grind.</li> <li>➤ HEARD water mill project completed.</li> <li>➤ Urafirth cycle trail in place.</li> <li>➤ Digital panoramic views of Northmavine developed and available online.</li> <li>➤ Locally provided guided walks around Ronas Hill initiated.</li> </ul>
	August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ More picnic tables and benches in place around Northmavine.</li> <li>➤ Interpretive boards erected.</li> <li>➤ Big Bannock in the North Roe and Lochend Hall.</li> <li>➤ Wigwam accommodation in place at Braewick Café.</li> <li>➤ Walking group formed.</li> <li>➤ Locally provided guided walks around Nibon initiated.</li> </ul>
	September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Volcanic trail developed.</li> <li>➤ Geological indoor display put in place at the Eshaness Lighthouse.</li> <li>➤ Geological exhibits and interpretive panels put in place at Mavis Grind.</li> <li>➤ Landscaping and planting complete at Mavis Grind.</li> </ul>

	October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Completion and compilation of questionnaires provided to accommodation providers.</li> <li>➤ End of IATE funding.</li> <li>➤ Further funding secured for development worker and office.</li> <li>➤ Gig organised by Da Young Eens fae Nort.</li> </ul>
	November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Launch of geoparks website.</li> <li>➤ Interpretive centre feasibility study initiated.</li> </ul>
	December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Northmavine Interpretive Plan complete.</li> <li>➤ Youth section on Northmavine website complete.</li> <li>➤ Worker employed to take forward Interpretive Centre project.</li> </ul>
2008	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Lerwick Up Helly Aa.</li> <li>➤ Review of public toilet provision in Northmavine.</li> <li>➤ Working with the Shetland Amenity Trust, local schools and youth clubs to develop interpretation around Northmavine.</li> </ul>
	February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Northmavine Up Helly Aa.</li> <li>➤ Increased funds received for development and better marketing of Northmavine Website.</li> <li>➤ Northmavine DVD production.</li> <li>➤ Event organised by Da Young Eens fae Nort.</li> </ul>
	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ ROA year 3 funding begins.</li> <li>➤ Walking guides identified.</li> <li>➤ Marketing of the core path network around Northmavine so visitors can 'Walk the Northmavine Way'.</li> <li>➤ Bird and Otter Hides in place.</li> <li>➤ Further funding secured for development worker and office.</li> </ul>
	April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ranger service providing walks up Ronas Hill reinstated.</li> <li>➤ Voar Redd Up.</li> <li>➤ Wigwam accommodation in place around Northmavine.</li> </ul>
	May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Digital Mapping Project initiated.</li> <li>➤ Rowing regatta at Collafirth.</li> </ul>
	June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Johnsmass Foy.</li> <li>➤ Locally provided guided walks around Northmavine.</li> </ul>
	July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Cycle trails developed throughout Northmavine.</li> <li>➤ Locally provided guided walks around Northmavine.</li> </ul>
	August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Big Bannock at the North Roe and Lochend Hall</li> <li>➤ Locally provided guided walks around Northmavine.</li> </ul>
	September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Trowie and giant trails and haaf fishing walks to be initiated.</li> </ul>
	October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Meeting place for Da Young Eens fae Nort discussed including Earthship idea.</li> </ul>
	November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Local produce filled hampers for sale on the Northmavine website in time for Christmas.</li> <li>➤ Training for walking guides undertaken.</li> </ul>
	December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Interpretive centre business and archaeological plans developed.</li> </ul>
2009	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Shetland Amenity Trust to develop visitor centre at the Eshaness Lighthouse.</li> <li>➤ Lerwick Up Helly Aa</li> </ul>
	February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Northmavine Up Helly Aa.</li> <li>➤ Interpretation from local schools and youth clubs in place.</li> <li>➤ Updated Northmavine Development Plan in place.</li> </ul>
	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ongoing Interpretive Centre fundraising.</li> <li>➤ Further funding secured for the development worker and office.</li> </ul>
	April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Voar Redd Up.</li> </ul>
	May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Rowing regatta, Collafirth.</li> </ul>
	June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Johnsmass Foy.</li> <li>➤ Locally provided guided walks around Northmavine.</li> </ul>
	July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Locally provided guided walks around Northmavine.</li> </ul>
	August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Big Bannock at the North Roe and Lochend Hall.</li> <li>➤ Locally provided guided walks around Northmavine.</li> </ul>



	September	➤ Webcams in place around Northmavine with links to the Northmavine website.
	October	➤ Local produce filled hampers for sale on the Northmavine website.
	November	➤ Indigenous craft night classes held in local halls. ➤ Story telling in local halls.
	December	➤ Indigenous craft night classes held in local halls. ➤ Story telling in local halls.
2010	January	➤ Lerwick Up Helly Aa
	February	➤ Northmavine Up Helly Aa.
	March	➤ Potential Interpretive Centre building started. ➤ Ongoing fundraising for Interpretive Centre. ➤ Further funding secured for the development worker and office.
	April	➤ Voar Redd Up.
	May	➤ Rowing regatta, Collafirth.
	June	➤ Hamefarin. ➤ Johnsmass Foy. ➤ Locally provided guided walks around Northmavine.
	July	➤ Locally provided guided walks around Northmavine.
	August	➤ Big Bannock at the North Roe and Lochend Hall. ➤ Locally provided guided walks around Northmavine.
	September	➤ Review of interpretation in the area.
	October	➤ Local produce filled hampers for sale on the Northmavine website.
	November	➤ Indigenous craft night classes held in local halls. ➤ Story telling in local halls.
	December	➤ Indigenous craft night classes held in local halls. ➤ Story telling in local halls. ➤ Potential re-opening of St Magnus Bay Hotel under community ownership.
2011	January	➤ Lerwick Up Helly Aa
	February	➤ Northmavine Up Helly Aa.
	March	➤ Official Interpretive centre opening. ➤ Further funding secured for the development worker and office.
	April	➤ Funding for ranger service ends. ➤ Voar Redd Up.
	May	➤ Rowing regatta, Collafirth.
	June	➤ Johnsmass Foy. ➤ Locally provided guided walks around Northmavine.
	July	➤ Tall Ships race. ➤ Locally provided guided walks around Northmavine.
	August	➤ Big Bannock at the North Roe and Lochend Hall. ➤ Locally provided guided walks around Northmavine.
	September	➤ Review of interpretation in the area.
	October	➤ Local produce filled hampers for sale on the Northmavine website.
	November	➤ Indigenous craft night classes held in the interpretive centre. ➤ Story telling in the interpretive centre.
	December	➤ Indigenous craft night classes held in the interpretive centre. ➤ Story telling in the interpretive centre.
2012	January	➤ Lerwick Up Helly Aa
	February	➤ Northmavine Up Helly Aa
	March	➤ First anniversary of Interpretive Centre opening. ➤ Crofting holidays offered in Northmavine. ➤ Further funding secured for the development worker and office.

## **7. Potential Funding Bodies**

As with many of the ideas mentioned in the plan funding is essential. There are several funding bodies situated around Shetland, Scotland, and the UK, which provide grants and support for rural communities such as Northmavine. Several examples are provided in this section.

### **7.1 Shetland Islands Council**

The SIC provides funding for many facilities, events and projects around Shetland. Details can be found at:

[www.shetland.gov.uk](http://www.shetland.gov.uk)

The SIC offer a number of grant aid schemes including general development, arts development, feasibility and design and maintenance. Overall they are designed to support, enhance and develop the contribution that the community and voluntary sector can make to the quality of life for people in Shetland.

### **7.2 HIE Shetland**

Formerly Shetland Enterprise details can be found at:

[www.hie.co.uk/shetland](http://www.hie.co.uk/shetland)

HIE Shetland provide funding for constituted groups in Shetland for a huge range of things such as feasibility studies, purchase of equipment and refurbishment of buildings. However, they do not provide grants for on going running costs or general maintenance.

The average grant provided is usually around 25% of the full cost. Groups are more likely to get grants if their idea has a cultural, social or sporting benefit to the community.

### **7.3 Shetland Amenity Trust**

Details for the Shetland Amenity Trust can be found at:

[www.shetland-heritage.co.uk/amenitytrust/](http://www.shetland-heritage.co.uk/amenitytrust/)

As mentioned throughout the plan the Shetland Amenity Trust is responsible for funding several ongoing projects and services, including the Ranger service and volcanic trail worker. They also organise the Voar Redd Up's throughout Shetland and are looking to develop several more projects

throughout Northmavine, including a visitor centre at the Eshaness Lighthouse.

In addition, SAT operates a grant aid scheme which provides financial assistance for the preservation of archaeological heritage, environmental improvements initiatives and archaeological projects.

## **7.4 Big Lottery Fund**

The Big Lottery fund Scotland provides funding to tackle the problems found in disadvantaged areas and helps regenerate communities in need. Details can be found at:

[www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/scotland](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/scotland)

Several programmes have resulted from the Big Lottery, for example:

### Investing in Communities

With £257 million to spend in Scotland from 2006 - 2009 this programme offers grants of £10,000 - £1 million. The main aim of Investing in Communities is to make communities grow and develop to become stronger and more dynamic.

A wide range of groups can apply, including charities, voluntary and community groups, local authorities, social enterprises and health boards.

### Awards for All

Awards for All is supported by Scottish Arts Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, Sport Scotland and the Big Lottery Fund. Details can be found at:

[www.awardsforall.org.uk/scotland/index.html](http://www.awardsforall.org.uk/scotland/index.html)

This initiative awards grants of £500 - £10,000 for projects which allow people to take part in art, sport, heritage and community activities, and projects that promote education, the environment and health in the local community.

Applications are downloadable and individuals can apply if they are a not-for-profit group, a parish or town council, school or health body. In general Awards for All prioritises applications received from people under 25, over 64 and people with disabilities.

## Young Peoples Fund: Scotland

The Young Peoples Fund is a £20 million grant programme which helps the 11-25 year old age group. Grants are provided to help young people learn new things and take part in healthy and positive activities to make them feel good about themselves.

Grants vary from £5,000 - £1 million. Applications are welcomed from community or voluntary organisations, charities, limited companies and statutory bodies such as local authorities or community councils.

## Investing in Ideas

In order to receive funding from this initiative, Investing in Ideas states communities must come up with novel ideas worth investing in. With £4.6 million available grants range from £500 - £10,000.

Funding received from Investing in Ideas is generally used for feasibility studies, market research or business planning.

## Fair Share

Certain parts of the UK have missed out on lottery funding in the past. This programme hopes to change that. Fair share is a £50 million trust with grants varying from £5000 - £250,000.

## ***7.5 Rural Developments Small Awards Fund (RDSAF)***

The RDSAF is a Scottish Executive Rural Development initiative aimed at community groups in Scottish rural areas of less than 3,000 inhabitants. Details can be found at:

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Rural/rural-policy/16780/6554](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Rural/rural-policy/16780/6554)

The aim of RDSAF is to support these community groups with a small amount of money on a one-off basis. Grants range from £500 - £5000 and applicants are asked to be creative with their ideas. Grants are generally used for activities related to project planning and consultation.

Application forms are downloadable.

## **7.6 Communities Scotland**

Communities Scotland is an agency of the Scottish Executive, details of which can be found at:

[www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk](http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk)

Communities Scotland aim to tackle Scotland's housing problems and improve the opportunities for people living in disadvantaged communities.

There are several grant schemes associated with Communities Scotland:

### Seeing is Believing

Seeing is Believing is a fund derived from the Scottish centre for Regeneration, based in Glasgow. Seeing is Believing provides grants of £100 - £5,000 for community and voluntary groups in disadvantaged areas to visit and learn from like-minded groups or access other learning opportunities.

Application forms are downloadable.

### New Ideas Fund

The New Ideas Fund is also aimed at community and voluntary groups in disadvantaged areas around Scotland. Grants vary from £100 - £5,000 in order to develop the feasibility of new ideas.

Application forms are downloadable.

## **7.7 Co-op Community Dividend Fund**

The Scottish Co-op award thousands of pounds to charities, community groups and self-help organisations around the country each year from their Community Dividend Fund.

Several groups from around Shetland have already benefited from this funding and application forms are available at Co-operative group stores.

## ***7.8 Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland***

The Lloyds TSB Foundation is a grant making trust which gives over £7 million to charities throughout Scotland per annum. Details can be found at:

[www.fundingthefuture.org.uk](http://www.fundingthefuture.org.uk)

The Lloyds TSB Foundation aim is to help disadvantaged or disabled people play a fuller role in communities throughout Scotland. Information from the website lists numerous areas that have already received funding. The Höfn Centre in Westray, Orkney is one such organisation.

## 8. Conclusion

The main aim of this tourism action plan was to provide details on and a timescale for developing tourist facilities in Northmavine while taking into consideration the social, economic and environmental strategic aims of the Northmavine Development Plan 2005. As this tourism action plan shows, the community of Northmavine and tourism group have produced numerous ideas as to how to develop and boost tourism in Northmavine in line with these strategic aims.

Some of the ideas mentioned in the plan are already well under way, such as developments at Mavis Grind and core paths around Northmavine. With almost 105,000 visitors entering Shetland per annum with a direct spend of over £16.4 million it is hoped continued promotion and developments in Northmavine will only help to increase this figure.

The proposed developments in this plan, as suggested by the Northmavine community, tend to also be in line with the thoughts and opinions of visitors to Shetland. Considering 17% of visitors on holiday to Shetland arrived due to the birds, wildlife and nature and 10% arrived due to the scenery and landscape, peace and quiet and remoteness it is appropriate that developments in this plan on the whole complement the wishes of visitors. Similarly, developments are in line with the feedback obtained from visitors (as shown on page 15) regarding improvements in Shetland.

It is hoped this plan will act as a basis and guide for all future tourism group developments. Similarly it is hoped this development plan will aid individuals and residents of Northmavine gain inspiration and ideas for their own businesses and private enterprises and other local groups should use this action plan as a reference to keep up to date on expected and potential projects and their completion dates.

If the ideas, themes and potential projects suggested in this plan are followed, as shown in the indicative timescale provided, increased tourism in Northmavine would lead towards: reversing population decline; developing a diverse and robust economy; and protecting and developing the environment. As such it aligns with the Northmavine Development Plan.

Updates of the Northmavine Development Plan 2005 will be tested against the Tourism Action Plan to ensure strategic aims and objectives are maintained. Projects resulting from this plan must consider the main aim of sustainability detailed in the Northmavine Development Plan.

## **9. Recommendations**

From the numerous ideas and suggestions made in this action plan many recommendations could be discussed here and the recommendations mentioned in this section are certainly not exhaustive. Six main points are discussed; however, all of the points raised in previous sections should not be ignored.

### ***9.1 Promotion***

The promotion of Northmavine is essential for further developments. Northmavine already has an excellent promotional tool, that is the continually expanding Northmavine website. This website should be fully utilised as it grows in popularity and gains more members. Increased funds to develop the website will be made available in 2008, meanwhile the website should be used as an information point to discover what people would like to see and what they would be willing to volunteer to in the area.

Moreover, the tourism group recently reviewed the new Northmavine leaflet from the Shetland Amenity Trust. It is hoped a final draft of this leaflet will be made available soon and displayed in areas around Shetland. It is hoped continued promotion will encourage internal as well as external visitors to the area.

### ***9.2 Survey of visitors in Northmavine Accommodation***

To gain a further insight into the visitors of Northmavine a survey should be undertaken in Northmavine between April and September at each point of accommodation, owners willing. This would allow the tourism group to receive information on visitors to Shetland who have stayed at least one night in Northmavine. The questionnaire should focus on several areas:

- Party details
- Length of stay
- Reasons for visiting Shetland, in particular Northmavine
- Research undertaken before arriving in Shetland
- Activities undertaken while in Northmavine
- Facilities used
- Expenditure
- Opinions
- Feedback

Of course this is just a few of the areas that could be looked at. Some of the accommodation providers in Northmavine have already been approached to see if they would be interested in participating in such a survey. The response has been positive.



The next step for the tourism group is to create a survey, print and send to all accommodation providers in the area. All surveys could then be gathered and collated at the end of the summer season. A report could then be produced in a similar style to the SVS prepared by AB Associates. It would be a highly useful tool in determining where improvements in facilities could be made in Northmavine.

An alternative would be to continue to gather surveys from accommodation providers for a full year before gathering and compiling the data. This would allow for an increased number and range of visitors and comments could be received on local events such as Up Helly Aa as well as events in the summer season.

### **9.3 Interpretive Centre Group**

In order to further develop the potential interpretive centre it is essential to now create a constituted interpretive centre group. Several residents around Northmavine have already expressed an interest in gaining an interpretive centre and starting a group. Members of the tourism group are currently spreading the word and contacting interested persons. A public meeting was recently held to gauge interest and express opinions on what should be held in an interpretive centre. The group are not constituted as of yet, however, it is hoped another public meeting will be held soon, with more members, in order to become constituted.

From the many ideas and suggestions mentioned in this plan there are several points an interpretive centre should consider and include on their agenda, for example:

- Possible sites.
- Feasibility study.
- Funding.
- Pilot project.
- Contents.
- Digital mapping.
- Remote nature videoing.
- Earthship.
- Community garden.
- Renewable energy.

Each of these points should be discussed over the course of the meetings. It is hoped the productive start made by the Interpretive Centre group will continue and they shall soon become a constituted group. Due to the time constraints of a project such as an interpretive centre the group should consider applying for funding to employ a worker to undertake a plan and arrange for a feasibility study. The tourism group and NDC members should continue to liaise with the interpretive centre and help them in any way.

## ***9.4 Interpretive Plan***

The NDC are currently in the process of creating an interpretive plan for Northmavine. Through gaining local input and expert knowledge the NDC hope to gather enough information on each area in Northmavine to best decide how the area can be interpreted to visitors. As the timescale, in section 6, states the interpretive plan structure should be complete by December 2007.

Once information is obtained and the interpretive plan is in place the NDC can then apply for funding and gain input from the Shetland Amenity Trust and local schools and youth clubs. Input from these areas can then be used to create unusual interpretation for the area.

Interpretation in the area is essential for providing appropriate information in order to provide a tourist with the best possible visit. For this reason Northmavine interpretation should continue to be reviewed, at the points as detailed in the timescale provided.

## ***9.5 Accommodation Development***

HIE Shetland have recently been approached and have agreed to provide funding for new developments in the provision of cheaper style wigwam accommodation around Northmavine. With the first wigwams soon to be homed in Eshaness this is an excellent development opportunity for the much lacking cheap accommodation options in Northmavine.

Due to the excellent marketing opportunities available for wigwam owners and ease of purchase and construction there are opportunities for wigwam sites all around Northmavine. Any interested locals with available land who would like to develop visitor accommodation should contact the NDC office at Greenbrae for further information.

## ***9.6 St Magnus Bay Hotel redevelopment Group***

Now that the NDC are in the final stages of restructuring the company to make it possible to purchase the St Magnus Bay Hotel a separate group should be formed to bring this project forward (in similar style to the interpretive centre group).

When the St Magnus Bay Hotel comes on the market a separate group would then be in the position to act immediately.

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## Appendix 1 – SWOT Analyses

Copied from the Northmavine Development Company Report on Digital Mapping Software.

By Mark Ratter

### 10. Potential Digital Map Zones (with SWOT analysis)

#### Brae Community Office

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parking available</li><li>• Staff members present</li><li>• Open all year round</li><li>• Public access computer + internet + printer</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some inconsistent daily opening times</li><li>• Generally limited signposting</li><li>• Not an ideal location</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential as office is just before visitors enter Northmavine</li><li>• Potential to promote digital mapping</li></ul>	

#### *Discussion*

The Brae Community Office is a potential location for a digital mapping system as it has a good number of facilities such as a computer with an internet connection and printer. Whilst staff would be present (important for security, ability to help user and charge them for usage) during opening times, the system would not be available if staff were not in on particular days and would not strictly be open 9-5, etc. The system could store information relevant to the local community and be promoted locally. The office could be used as an information point (including the digital mapping system) before entering Northmavine but generally the location is far from ideal and the signposting is also limited.

## Braewick Café

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good location</li><li>• Signposting</li><li>• Good parking</li><li>• Good customer base</li><li>• Consistent opening daily, weekly, yearly</li></ul>	
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Broadband to be installed</li><li>• Aims to introduce a computer system in the future</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Numbers may drop in low season</li><li>• Maybe too busy sometimes (i.e. no time to help digital mapping users)</li></ul>

### *Discussion*

Currently, Braewick Café is potentially the strongest location to introduce a digital mapping system. There is a good customer flow, although this may decline during winter months. A strong advantage is also the caravan park where visitors may specifically require internet access and could use digital mapping as well. Broadband is soon to be installed at the café although this may only be internet access standing up – perhaps not ideal for digital mapping users. Yet, despite this, it still has to be considered a very strong location.

## Eshaness Lighthouse (Accommodation)

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good location</li><li>• Signposting and parking</li></ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not generally open to the public</li><li>• No constant staff</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make agreement with amenity trust to install digital mapping programme</li></ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would likely be inconsistent times</li></ul>

### *Discussion*

Whilst Eshaness is a good location, the lighthouse is not currently adapted for much public use, other than people staying at the lighthouse. One possible option to get around this may be to make an agreement with the Amenity Trust to install a digital mapping programme (with additional equipment) for their guests to use. Yet, this is likely to minimise the amount of visitors with access to the programme considerably.

## Tangwick Haa Museum

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Signposting</li><li>• Parking</li><li>• Consistent opening in summer</li><li>• Consistent visitor numbers</li><li>• Toilet facilities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Little room for more computers, etc.</li><li>• No computer based facilities</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Could be used in correspondence with the museum's themes (i.e. genealogy, archaeology, heritage, etc)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would perhaps take away from the museum's atmosphere, etc.</li><li>• Charging customers for use would be</li></ul>

### *Discussion*

Summer openings at Tangwick take in a good number of visitors despite being off the main road. Opening hours are consistent in the summer (shut rest of the year) and staff would be present. A possibility here would be to 'theme' the digital mapping system to be relevant to the museum (i.e. layering genealogy, heritage, culture, etc). The main drawback is probably the lack of room to move a computer into.



## The Booth (Vegetarian Restaurant and Wildlife Sanctuary)

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parking</li><li>• Signposting</li><li>• Attraction base and customer flow</li><li>• Computer + internet access</li><li>• Food facilities, etc</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some inconsistent opening times</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wildlife layered theme to link with</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May suffer in low season</li></ul>

### *Discussion*

The Booth could potentially be a good location as it has a customer flow and already has a computer and internet facility present. The main drawbacks may be its inconsistent opening times and the fact that the system may be dormant outside summer months.

## Northmavine Development Company Office

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public access computer + internet + printer</li><li>• Fairly consistent opening times</li><li>• Staff present when open</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited parking</li><li>• Limited signposting</li><li>• Difficult access</li><li>• No real incentive to go here</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>

### *Discussion*

The main reason the NDC office could be a possibility is because of its new public access computer, printer and internet facility. However, it is a difficult location and there are little other incentives for visitors to go here.

## Others

### St Magnus Bay Hotel

If ever re-opened, St Magnus Bay could be a good location for installing digital mapping, depending on who the targeted customers are to the hotel. It would meet many facility requirements as well as being a good location with parking and signposting.

### Community Halls

With several community halls in Northmavine, and constant discussion on how to get more use out of them, perhaps the digital mapping could be located in one or more of the halls. Drawbacks would include difficulties in consistent opening times, lack of available staff and the fact that the halls are generally quite cold and isolated when there is minimal use.

### Shops

If there was extra available space within the community shops, perhaps a system could be introduced here. This would include constant activity and a staff presence with consistent opening hours.

### B&Bs

Although potentially less people will have access to a digital mapping programme in a B&B, guests will have more time to use it. Also, most B&Bs are likely to already have computer facilities.

### Future Interpretive Centres

If any headway is made regarding a Northmavine Interpretive Centre (whether North Roe, Mavis Grind or elsewhere) it would be recommended that digital mapping is installed here as a point of information for the visitor.

## Appendix 2 – Details received from accommodation providers

Type	Years in Operation	Seasonal	Number of Bedrooms	Sleeps	Usage in 2006	Advertising	How do people make bookings?	Do people tend to make repeat bookings?	Any other comments
Self Catering	10	No	3 - 2 dbl, 1 sgl	5	Very well used, fully booked between May - Oct. Though sometimes the house may be occupied by just couples.	visit Scotland, visit Shetland, northmavine.com, hidden places book and website	Usually phone direct	Very many repeat bookings	Mostly elderly people. Love the Northmavine peace and quiet
Self Catering	12	No	3 - 2 dbl, 1 sgl	5	Very well used, fully booked between May - Oct. Though sometimes the house may be occupied by just couples.	visit Scotland, visit Shetland, northmavine.com, hidden places book and website	Usually phone direct	Very many repeat bookings	Mostly elderly people. Love the Northmavine peace and quiet
Self Catering	14	Yes, Apr-Sept	2 cottages each with one twin	4	Very well used	visit Shetland website	Usually phone direct, receive very few bookings from tourist centre	Yes very many repeat bookings, often coming every 2nd year	Receive good comments about walks and views
Self Catering	Not quite finished	No	4 dbl when finished	8	Was used occasionally if needed due to overspill	Not yet	-	-	-
Self Catering	5	No	3	8	Very well used, fully booked between Apr-Oct, occasional bookings out with that time	personal website and visit Scotland	Three quarters of bookings are made via email, the rest by phone	Yes, there tend to be a lot of repeat booking	Visitors tend to be very impressed by the area, scenery and wildlife
Self Catering	8.5	Yes	1	2	Quite well used	Personal website	Through the website, emails	Yes people tend to return	Visitors love the scenery and walks

Self Catering	Opening in summer	No	4	8	-	Visit Scotland and personal website will be up and running soon	Will be able to email through the website and phone direct	-	-
Self Catering	10	No	3 - 2 dbl, 1 twin	6	Yes very well used between Apr-Sept, extremely busy in June, July and Aug	Visit Scotland	Generally book through the internet and phone, not so much from tourist providers	Yes there are very many repeat bookings	Like the wilderness but lack of shops a problem
Self Catering	2	No	3	6	Yes very well used completely booked between June-Aug. Busier than year before.	Personal website, visit Shetland and outdoor magazines	All bookings made through tourist office in Lerwick	Yes there have been repeat bookings made	Feedback very positive. Would like the option of broadband for a longer stay
Self Catering	over 20	No	2	3	Fairly full all summer	visit Shetland website	generally phone directly	yes there is quite often repeat bookings	Visitors tend to come for the wildlife and tour all over Shetland
Self Catering	over 30	No	2	4	Well used, fully booked part of May, June, July, Aug and Sept	Visit Scotland and personal website	Internet, phone and visit Shetland	Yes many returning visitors over many years	Love Northmavine scenery and walks
Bed and Breakfast	8.5	Yes		6	Very well used throughout the summer	personal website and visit Shetland	Tend to receive mostly emails	Yes very many repeats	No place to go out for a meal in the area in the evening.
Bed and Breakfast	13	Yes, May - Sept	1	2	Was not well used last year due to owner illness however pre-bookings for this year look promising	word of mouth, lonely planet, vegetarian Britain book, lets go (well-known company in America and Canada)	Mostly phone and email directly	Yes, there are repeat bookings.	Love to get away from Lerwick

Camping	15	Yes, Mar-Oct	1	4	Quite well used, not as much as previous years.	Personal website which will be redeveloped soon, several outdoor magazines	All bookings made through tourist office in Lerwick	Yes, there are repeat bookings.	Enjoy the more primitive novel experience
Camping and Caravanning	1	Yes	Holds 10 caravans, many tents	-	400 caravan nights and 100 tent nights	Visit Shetland website	People tend to just turn up, though some phone	A lot of people do return, there is a discount for return bookings	All comments received are good
Caravanning	3	No	Room for around 12 caravans	-	Very seldom used	Word of mouth	Phone directly	Yes, the same people use the facilities each year	Just two power points and toilet facilities at the moment, hope to get more soon
Caravanning	25	No	At least 20 caravans	-	Very occasionally used	Word of mouth	No charge for this facility, caravans are allowed to park here if they wish	Yes people do tend to return	There is fresh running water, telephone and garbage disposal facilities
			<b>Total</b>	71	Not including people in tents or caravans				

## Appendix 3 – Bunkhouse Report by Christina Nicolson

Ardenbeg Bunkhouse

Ardenbeg Bunkhouse  
Grant Road  
Grantown on Spey  
PH26 3LD

Tel 01479 872824

[enquiries@ardenbeg.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@ardenbeg.co.uk)  
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The bunkhouse is situated in the lower part of Rebecca's home. It is very basic accommodation, large dormitory type rooms with functional furniture. The rooms sleep up to 8 people; the mattresses are 3 across and 2 bunks high. You need to be a good sleeper for this type of accommodation. Mostly her customers are groups doing out door activities. The rooms get heavy use and need constant upkeep. There are toilets and showers, although Rebecca felt she needed more the layout of the house meant it would be difficult to provide. The accommodation is on 2 floors; both floors have a large cooking, eating and recreation area. There were games, TV, & radio provided. The kitchen was kitted out with cooking equipment, crockery, cutlery and basic cooking ingredients. A washing machine and drying room is essential at Ardenbeg as a lot of the groups are out taking part in water sports. A pillow and duvet is provided, an inner sheet can be hired. There is an information board on each floor. The accommodation is worn but clean and welcoming. There is a large garden with a bonfire site which is very popular, outdoor seating and barbeque area.

Rebecca organises trips and activities for her guests as part of her service. She has a very good booking system in place, which saves her a lot of time on paperwork.

She constantly checks how she is doing and has systems in place for complaints, suggestions and any feedback from her customers. She knows where her customers come from and how they find out about Ardenbeg, this helps her to target her advertising budget where she gets the best value. From her customer research she now only advertises in publications which have a website link.

My impression of Ardenbeg- This type of accommodation would be great for school trips and groups taking part in outdoor activities, low cost but clean and warm. Rebecca herself was very welcoming and helpful, she made every effort to give her guests as much information as possible and worked with other outside service providers to organise activities for them. By co-operating with other businesses in the area she can add value to her own business.

## Appendix 4 – Wigwam report by Christina Nicolson

Miltonhaven campsite

Contact Miltonhaven Wigwams, St Cyrus, Kincardineshire, DD10 0DL

Phone 01674 850 413

Fax 01674 850 861

e-mail [miltonhaven@btconnect.co.uk](mailto:miltonhaven@btconnect.co.uk)

There were 6 wigwams on this camp site, 4 for accommodation with a further 2 being used as toilet blocks. From the outside they look a bit like an upturned boat, it is a wooden structure, which is delivered on site ready made. There are 12 short legs, which hold the wigwam off the ground, these have to be placed on even blocks, the ones on mainland Scotland have no need to be tied down.

Inside there are 4 beds which double as seating during the daytime, there is also another 2 beds which are stored under the seating until needed, when set up they form a large sleeping area in one half of the wigwam. There was also a small work top with a small fridge underneath, a kettle was also provided. The lighting worked all the time but the sockets and a small heater worked by coin meter.

Our visit was on a cold day but the wigwams did not feel cold, there is 3" insulation inside the walls and 4" under the floor. Newer ones also have double glazed windows.

It was very basic accommodation, wooden floors and painted walls, the mattresses were covered with hospital grade breathable plastic. There was no running water in these wigwams. The inside fittings are made by the builder to the customers requirements. For the toilet block the Wigwams had a door on each end, the building was split in two and a toilet, shower and wash hand basin was fitted in each half.

My impression of the wigwams – I liked the shape, they looked very rustic and blended well with the landscape. Easy to clean, roomy and cosy. I think they would make good low cost accommodation for families; it is in between a tent and a caravan.

The main disadvantage is having no water, and having to go to another building for the toilet facilities.

The site provided a large area for private caravans; these people paid a ground rent to the site owner. There was space for small caravans, campervans and tents.

In a porta-cabin Miltonhaven also provided a small kitchen fitted with cookers and sinks and a small dining room, cooking utensils, crockery and cutlery. Another larger cabin was fitted with easy chairs, a pool table, TV, games, books etc. there was a sink and glasses provided if people wanted to have a



drink. On site they had a small shop, selling milk, sweets, ice cream, beer, wine and a few basic goods, which the owners ran for little or no profit, but was enjoyed by the holiday makers. They provide barbeque grills and had a children's sand pit, climbing frame and a cart.

There are some animals on the site, goats, rare breed sheep, a horse and some poultry.

This site operates for seven months in the summer.

## Appendix 5 – Earthship report by Christina Nicolson

Earthship

Sustainable Communities Initiatives  
Kinghorn Loch  
Fife  
KY3 9YG

Phone 01592 891 884

[inquiry@sci-scotland.org.uk](mailto:inquiry@sci-scotland.org.uk)

[www.sci-scotland.org.uk](http://www.sci-scotland.org.uk)

We found the Earthship at the edge of a loch; the site had an information centre, which we did not have time to visit. There were canoes on the loch and poultry in another area. The Earthship was much smaller than expected, only one room or two as it is called in an earthship, a small toilet and a sun porch. It was built into a hillside, so only the front of the building was visible. The reason for building the earthship was to see if it was possible to build and heat a building using recycled materials and renewable energy.

The building was constructed from old tyres packed with earth, the inside walls were made from drinks cans and clay. A feature at the door was a panel made from clay with glass bottles set in to let light through. The roof was covered with nylon sheeting. Insulation for the building was made from wool, crushed glass, and paper.

We were shown samples of different types of recycled materials used for insulation.

The renewable energy sources were solar panels, wind and water turbines. These provided all the electric needed in the building. The water turbine was the most constant providing about 60% of the energy.

Rain water was collected from the roof and filtered through a series of filters, drinking water going through more filters than other water. The water from the sinks was then fed out into the sun room which had a bottom layer of chips then earth in which a few tropical plants were growing, after running through the flower bed the water was then collected and piped back to be used to flush the toilet. The next step was to pipe the water into a tank in a greenhouse, where the outfall was again used to water plants. For this system to work care had to be taken not to use any harmful chemicals or bleach.

The earthship is a charity and was built by volunteers at a cost of £25,000. They work with schools and groups on environmental projects.

My impression of the earthship- A very interesting project. There were lots of recycling ideas which could be used on their own for smaller projects. Perhaps a wind turbine to power lighting for the wigwams.

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CommunityDividend



Highlands and Islands  
Community Energy Company



Europe and Scotland  
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