



NEWSLETTER

Spring 2024

How old?

Grimsay Community Association was formed in 1999 so this year we are celebrating our silver anniversary. Also, Ceann na h-Àirigh was opened in 2014 and so, is ten years old this year. What started as a pipedream became a reality, after much blood, sweat and tears (and a lot of effort from many Grimsay people). To celebrate these historic events throughout the year we are holding a number of events, the high point of which will be The Grimsay Boatfest on 1ST June this year.

New Management Structure

Matthew Topsfield, Programme Manager at Ceann na h-Àirigh for nine years, left in November 2023 to take up a position with Nature Scot. Anne Wilson, and Ruth Gottschall, with the support of committee members and volunteers, have kept Ceann na h-Airigh the vibrant centre we all appreciate. We are delighted to welcome Sara Stewart as our new Post Office assistant.

We are always on the lookout for **additional help** so if you feel that you have skills to offer then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Highlights from the last 3 months

Seachdain na Gàidhlig/World Gaelic Week

Three events were held in February to mark World Gaelic Week: Sgrìobhadh, an afternoon of poetry, short stories and drama; Faclan, a 'show and tell' gathering where people brought items and remembered forgotten Gaelic words; and lastly Adhradh, a Gaelic worship service. All were very well attended, and feedback was unanimously positive. We even had BBC Alba film the poetry event and it was broadcast on An La.

Soup and pudding Saturdays

We restarted having soup and pudding lunches on Saturdays. In the past these were very popular and those held over the winter met with equal success. We held 6 sessions which brought in around £1500. Once again if you are willing to either provide food and/or help out on some Saturdays then please contact Anne Wilson. These are in addition to the warm hub Cidsin kitchen which also continue to be held.

Workshops and other community fundraising events

We have held various events such as tabletop sales, 'Talks on Tuesdays', quizzes, book sales, and Botanical Illustration and Gingerbread making workshops. In addition, there were regular events such as the Craft Café and fortnightly health walks. Keep your eye open on the Ceann na h-Airigh noticeboard or Facebook for more information, including upcoming workshops e.g. Dry stone dyking, quilting, basket weaving, and felting.

Polytunnel and outside area

Many thanks to John Hudson who has cleared the area at the back of Ceann na h-Airigh. This being used for planting willow which will be used for basket weaving in the future. We also creating outside raised beds, some of which will be for growing produce to be used in the Scandinavian Café. Margaret Wiseman is maintaining the polytunnel along with an enthusiastic group of volunteers. Please contact Margaret directly if you would like to have a bed. She is always on the lookout for helpers, (not necessarily with green fingers.) The polytunnel team has also been selling plants, with the proceeds going to GCA.

100 Club

We have started a '100 Club' which has a monthly draw. At last count we have 64 members. 50% of the proceeds go to GCA to help towards running costs and the other 50% is split between two lucky winners, i.e. GCA gets £64, and the winners get £32 each. Why not join the club, push up the prize pot, and help us reach 100 members.

Music

Earlier this year we held a sellout Old New Year ceilidh coordinated by Pàdruig Morrison and featuring lots of talented local musicians. It was a great way to usher out the old year and welcome in the new, a long-held tradition in the Hebrides. We have two more traditional ceilidhs planned for 2024.

An informal music group started last year and met up at the centre once a month to learn new songs and tunes, play old ones, and generally have a good time in a relaxed, supportive environment. The group recently held a wee ceilidh, hugely enjoyed by musicians and audience alike. GCA is now hosting a monthly session for singers and musicians (first Friday in the month) and a monthly 'Grimsay Folk and Live Music Night' (second Friday in the month) to which all musicians and audience are welcome (by donation). Keep an eye out for publicity - posters and Facebook posts. GCA is grateful to UCVO for helping to support the music initiatives through the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for adults.

Volunteering sessions

We have fortnightly volunteering sessions where we do such things as cleaning the Grimsay Boat Museum, cleaning/tidying the exhibits on the Grimsay Boat Trail, refurbishing the phone box at the Grimsay road end and assisting with garden projects and other maintenance as required. Please get on touch if you have a little time to spare and would like to help out.

Scandinavian bakery

Emma continues to provide a distinctive and well received offering at Ceann na h-Àirigh. As well as providing food and drinks to locals and tourists, the income from the café gives GCA a very good source of income. Turnover in 2024 is exceeding that for the same period last year.

Estates news

We have had new doors fitted at the boat museum and a new dishwasher installed in the kitchen. Both of these were funded from successful grant applications to the Outer Hebrides Communities Led Development fund. Work to progress the link corridor/extension was also funded by a grant from the same fund. This work entailed further design work as well as planning and building warrant applications.

Finance/fundraising

GCA is a charity and as such is reliant on grant income to supplement what we generate through the café, the shop, fundraising events, classes, workshops and activities as well as from donations. However, the financial outlook, as for many other similar organisations, is not rosy.

Some of the fundraising events listed above have been very good at bringing in money, which all helps, but we are always open to ideas for other events. So, if you have suggestions for something that we can put on at Ceann na h-Airigh, then please speak to Anne Wilson or a Committee Member to discuss it with them.

A BIG thank you.

The last six months have been a challenge but with the help of the staff, the Committee, and many, many volunteers GCA has continued to provide a very valuable service to the Grimsay community.

So, a big thanks to everyone who has helped, and also to everyone who has come to Ceann na h-Àirigh, in any capacity, to enjoy what we offer and will continue to offer in the future.