



Uist Third Sector Organisations : News



Plana Gàidhlig Agus Coimhearsnachd Uibhist

Through wide engagement with the community, Ceiteag NicDhomhnaill, Uist Gaelic Plan Officer at Ceolas, has been busy shaping the Uist Gaelic and Community Plan, building a more positive future for Gaelic in Uist. She has met with representatives of local primary schools, and Sgoil Lionacleit pupils, who have shared their ideas to help set priorities for the future. Heritage groups and businesses are also being invited to engage. The Gaelic Charter is being

rolled out as a way to deliver on many of the actions in the plan. The charter is a voluntary scheme for community groups, businesses and heritage organisations to take practical steps to grow Gaelic use and visibility across all of our islands. This plan is about raising confidence, daily usage and pride from Berneray to Eriskay. Let's protect, strengthen and grow Gaelic together. Want to get involved? Email ceiteag@ceolas.co.uk

In this newsletter
you can expect:

Gaelic & Culture

Volunteering

New Play Spaces

Community
Groups

Health &
Wellbeing

Local
Organisations



Tea, baking and community

UCVO is delighted to continue to support community groups and spaces across the islands to offer community events over the winter months. Aiming to reduce isolation and improve wellbeing, events have included activities such as reminiscence, live music, talks, crafts and board games. Everyone is welcome, and the events will start again in the new year. Venues across the islands offer events: The Caladh Trust, Grinish Taigh Ceilidh, Stoneybridge Hall, Howmore Church Hall, Cnoc Soilleir, Daliburgh Thrift Shop, Lochmaddy Hall, Taigh Sgire Sholais

Photo: Cupan aig Cairinis, Comann Eachdraidh Uibhust a Tuath



Ceann na h-Àirigh

Annag is one of a number of volunteers who stepped up to keep the café open and provide a warm welcome at Ceann na h-Àirigh, Grimsay, over the last few weeks. Volunteers ensured Cafaidh Chriomasaigh remained a popular meeting place for the local community during a period of transition.



Daliburgh Thrift Shop

The Monday Club takes place every week 1.30 to 3 pm. It's a very relaxed and informal get together over a cup of tea and treats; an occasion to meet friends old and new. People can have a laugh as well as a rant or moan and are welcome to bring any arts, crafts or knitting along. At times guests come to chat about various things happening in the community. Everyone looks forward to meeting up and as one of the group said last week, 'it helps keep me sane'. All welcome to join and enjoy.



Eriskay Hall

Eriskay Youth Club meet every Tuesday evening during the winter months in Eriskay Hall. They have around twenty five primary aged children attending each week, who come together to socialise and take part in fun activities.



Langass Woodland

In July this year Langass Woodland had some exciting new additions thanks to the Nature Restoration Fund. Studio Vans worked with the Langass Woodland Committee and local experts to create a series of interactive play sculptures using recycled plastic. The abstract flower installation uses plastic collected from Uist beaches. Each sculpture teaches users about a different aspect of our local landscape from the forest floor, insects, animals and birds.



Taigh Sgìre Playpark

In June this year Sollas saw the grand opening of a much anticipated playpark at Taigh Sgìre Sholais. The playpark is proving incredibly popular with families.



Feis Tir an Eorna

Feis Tir an Eorna evening classes have started at Claddach Kirkibost Centre. Over 40 pupils have signed up for in-person Guitar, Fiddle and Accordion classes and online Chanter classes. Classes will stop for Christmas break on Wed 10th December and restart the week beginning January 12th. The AGM was recently held at Westford Inn and there remains a strong committee who are now planning for Summer Feis which will be held in Sgoil Uibhist a Tuath from 29th June to 3rd July 2026.



Lochmaddy Playpark

Work has started on an exciting stage of the Lochmaddy Recreation Ground, with play pieces hoping to be in situ by Easter 2026. Thanks to Place Based Funding, YLAG, CLLD, WILLottery, Uist Asco, Loch Duart and MOWI.



Advocacy Western Isles

Independent advocacy service for people of all ages now is now available in Benbecula, completely free of charge. Advocacy Worker Sarah-May Brown is based at UCVO, and is available to support individuals and families throughout Uist and Barra. Advocates can help people have their voice heard on a wide range of issues, such as Self-Directed Support and social care, mental health, children and young people, alcohol and drug issues, learning difficulties and generic advocacy. They don't tell people what to do – instead they listen, explain options, and stand beside people so their views are clearly heard.
office@advocacywi.co.uk advocacywi.co.uk



Cnoc Soilleir

The new addition to Cnoc Soilleir is taking shape and MacInnes Bros Ltd are working hard to complete in Spring 2026. The building continues to host the popular Cidsin Ceilidh led by Allan Henderson (UHI), Iain MacDonald (Ceòlas) and many talented others from the community. Please come along on Wednesdays 1pm - 2pm and enjoy the music, the company and a good cup of tea. Access to the building is still through the entry next to Daliburgh Thrift Shop.



Tagsa Uibhist

Tagsa recently hosted a *Life Around the Menopause* day at An Caladh, which was an informative and supportive gathering. Dr Heather Currie MBE, shared her extensive knowledge on the menopause, Sheila MacDonald lead a calming and restorative relaxation session, and Dunes Catering provided a hearty and delicious lunch that kept everyone fuelled throughout the day. If there are topics you'd like to explore in future please get in touch: info@tagsa.co.uk.
www.menopausematters.co.uk



Berneray Historical Society

Knowledgeable volunteers welcomed visitors to the Nurses' Cottage, Berneray, helping them with queries about genealogy and natural history. They hosted many events such as a presentation of photographs by Susanne Barding, a Danish anthropologist, who spent a significant period of time on Berneray in the early seventies, studying every aspect of the Berneray community and the crofting way of life.
www.bernerayhistorical.com



Western Isles Cancer Care Initiative

Western Isles Cancer Care Initiative (WICCI) Uist & Barra provide non-clinical support services to cancer patients and their families across Uist & Barra. This support ranges from grants and complementary therapies to support groups and various means of counselling. The Macmillan *Improving the Cancer Journey (ICJ)* process

was introduced in the Western Isles and Sandra MacKinnon joined the team as the ICJ Link Worker for Uist & Barra. ICJ enables WICCI to ensure people diagnosed with cancer have an opportunity to identify areas where further support may be needed as they come to terms with their diagnosis and begin their treatment path.



Mental Wellbeing Website

This NHS Mental Wellbeing website provides support for anyone experiencing mild to moderate mental health challenges, bringing together a range of practical resources and links to local and national organisations. The website is designed to be user-friendly and offers self-help options that people may find useful.

www.mentalwellbeing.wihb.scot.nhs.uk



Gentle Movement

Marion Matheson, Health Improvement Practitioner, delivers gentle movement sessions for older adults across the Western Isles. Sessions are offered in person in Uist, with refreshments provided, as well as online for anyone who may find it difficult to travel. Carers or family members are always welcome to join.

Contact
marion.matheson1@nhs.scot



Volunteer Centre Western Isles

Throughout Autumn this year, Volunteer Centre Western Isles ran a knitting appeal for The Leanne Fund, who support families of children with Cystic Fibrosis, Blythswood, and Knit-a-Square. Among those in Uist who got their knitting needles out, was Sharyon Hawes. From her home in South Uist, Sharyon produced beautiful blankets, squares, babies hats, jackets and booties. The knitted squares will be sent off and made into blankets by Knit-a-Square, who provide blankets for vulnerable children in Africa. Volunteering from home allows people to fit activity around their own timetables and gives a sense of purpose and connection. From her fireside in South Uist, as well as helping local causes, by knitting her squares, Sharyon is connecting with a global community and benefitting children thousands of miles away.

uist@volunteercentrewi.org



Community Climate Action Plan

UCVO worked with Community Energy Scotland to create a Third Sector Climate Action Plan for Uist, funded by Carbon Neutral Islands, a Scottish Government project. Additional funding has been secured from Climate Hebrides to start a community composting trial; from the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund for a fashion upcycling project with Benbecula Thrift Shop to tackle waste textiles, and to start a Repair Cafe in Uist, reducing the amount of repairable items being sent to landfill. If you are interested in being involved, please contact sorcha@ucvo.org.uk



Taigh Chearsabhaigh Museum & Arts Centre

Taigh Chearsabhaigh has enjoyed sharing exhibitions and events all through the year, welcoming familiar and new faces in for a treat — whether that's a soup and a scone, or a printmaking class! A host of sparkling local talent has been featured, including Yasmin Davidson and Calum Ferguson's ambitious exhibitions of new work in and of Uist itself. Visitors have been entertaining audiences too, like *Sian* and Susannah Stark with their respective new album tours of Gaelic folk song. Pàdruig MacAoidh, the Makar of Scotland,

delighted everyone with his wit, while Hercules the Bear kept the story alive on the stage in Carinish Hall and in the lounge at Trianaid.

Favourite moments have included seeing young people enjoying art and heritage in their own way, like the OH!CON dragons and comic strips made in October. Here's a photograph of S4 students from Sgoil Lionacleit visiting the UHI studios for some project inspiration, seeing where the NC and BA students create imaginative new work in Lochmaddy.



Caraidean Uibhist

Caraidean Uibhist have had a very full year with new befriending partnerships made, new friendships established with folk attending events, and support and assistance provided by the diligent and caring team. Demand for services continues to rise and Caraidean are taking a holistic approach, by also giving time, understanding and a voice to family members, through the CRAFT program, which supports those living with someone with an addiction by giving them coping tools and resources.



Uist Community Riding School

The stables had a busy summer hosting a show and the equine part of South Uist and Benbecula Agricultural Show, as well as a pony camp and a sponsored ride to raise funds for winter feeding, All with the help of much valued volunteers like Maise Wheeler, who turn up in all weathers to help out.



Uist & Barra Foodbank

Due to generous donations from the local community, and dedicated volunteers, Christmas Hampers have been delivered to those in need across Uist. The Food Bank is closes on 19th December and opens on 5th January.

Food parcels are also available to pick up at the food bank, including frozen food, and a few presents, until they are all gone.

Emergency food parcels are available for collection - contact via email: uistandbarrafoodbank@gmail.com



Uist Community Archaeology Group

As well as regular walks to explore the rich archaeological remains in Uist, there were talks and events by local and international experts, providing insight and discussion. Highlights this year have included visiting groups such as Guerilla Archaeology, inviting engagement with heritage and archaeology in a fun, accessible way, taking part in an excavation at Sgeir nam Portan led by Dr Rebecca Rennel and Dr Emily Gal from UHI, and a visit and talk by Dr George Hambrecht and students from Maryland University, USA.

uistcommunityarchaeology.weebly.com



Western Isles Lifestyle Lottery Lights up Uist Christmas Trees

UCVO, with funding from Western Isles Lifestyle lottery has been delighted to help provide communities with Christmas cheer. Benbecula Community Council has a Christmas tree trail, Clachan Sands Community Hub has a phonebox all lit up, plus Hacklett, Sollas, Bayhead, Lochmaddy, Locheport, Milton and Lochboisdale.

Photo: Clachan Sands & Torlum



Benbecula Thrift Shop

Benbecula Thrift Shop has been running for over 30 years, with a dedicated and fabulous group of volunteers including Heather pictured here, and Joan and Chrissie on the front cover. This year, as well as keeping Uist in style, even more effort is being made to keep items out of landfill and to increase opening hours, to include some Saturdays and evenings. Funds raised go towards the UCVO Trust Fund which directly helps local families and individuals. For more information about the fund email sheena@ucvo.org.uk



Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

From everyone at UCVO, we wish you a festive holiday season filled with joy and warmth. We're grateful for the opportunity to work with the amazing community groups and organisations of Uist this year, and we're excited to continue our collaboration in 2026.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication!