



The purpose of this research trip was to exchange knowledge and network other organisations and projects supporting their island communities.

Members of the Westray Development Trust and Sanday Development Trust visited organisations across Shetland between 25th—27th September 2018.

Project Meetings

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WDT and SDT visited organisations and projects in and around, Lerwick, Bressay, Yell, Sandness and Sumburgh.



The value of community learning exchange

The third sector works hard to challenge a range of social, economic, political and environmental issues. Through this work organisations amass large amounts of specialised experience and knowledge that similar groups can also benefit from. As a result networking and knowledge exchange is a key part of charitable activity. Through this groups across the region, country and even the world can work together to solve the difficulties individuals and communities face. By sharing our experiences and solutions to the problems we have faced we can boost each other and rise together.

The value of face-to-face meetings has long been recognised as essential for building and maintaining long-term relationships and partnerships. Spending time with each other in this way means we became closer as people and as teams, this makes collaboration much easier and more likely in the future. It also gives more context and insight into what we're doing individually and collectively. This enriches knowledge exchange in a way that conference calls or emails never could. Face-to-face meetings are also highly effective for problem-solving and idea generation. Therefore enabling us to do our jobs more effectively and improve both our productivity and innovation as we support our community.

Day 1: Transition Turriefield



Set up

Born from a personal project to be self-sufficient Penny and Alan's community supported agricultural scheme, Transition Turriefield (TT) in Sandness, began in 2008, becoming a Community Interest Company (CIC) in 2011. It began in response to a growing demand for fresh, locally grown produce in Shetland. Of which there is currently a distinct lack.

The scheme aims to be as organic and sustainable as possible. Making use of recycled materials and human effort as much as possible.

This project has received funding from Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE), First Port and the Climate Challenge Fund. However the vast amount of funding has come from Penny & Alan's own pocket.

TT aims to grow as much as they can outdoors, their outdoor beds are sheltered by their 'homemade' poly-tunnels, tyre wind-breaks and enviro-mesh. Their only issue with enviro-mesh is that it chafes leaves, scarring the plant. This is not good for produce such as broccoli which would be damaged but fine for something like cauliflower where the outer leaves are not used.

“Fresh local food for a more sustainable future”

Preparing the Land

WDT's Food Miles to Food Smiles project and Transition Turriefield both face the issue that we can't dig down into the ground but must create soil. WDT because our land is sandy and TT because their land is marshy.

TT prepare their land for planting by laying down large sheets of agri-plastic which are weighted down by 140 old tyres donated by local garages. Pigs are used to help clear the ground and churn up the soil. They layer the land with layers of flour sacks (from the local bakery), seaweed, silage, horse manure and finally loam. They also make use of biodegradable mulch and plastic sheeting. Within a year this has all rotted down together well and is ready for planting. See Photo 1.

Tyres tyre tyres!

TT uses a lot of old tyres. After a Facebook plea for donations of old tyres TT now have a huge supply. Local garages must dispose of old tyres which forces them to pay for haulage to take them south to mainland U.K. Donating the tyres to TT saves them this cost. TT uses the tyres to weigh down their plastic sheeting, building compost stores and construct tyre windbreaks to shelter their outdoor beds. See photos 1 and 2.

Photo 1; preparing the land



Photo 2; compost experiment



Photo 3; salad leaves



Future Plans

TT's current plans include erecting three more polytunnels and investing in a soil steriliser.

Composting

TT's compost stores are made from old tyres. They suggest that tyres work better than pallets as they attract and store heat and allow more air flow. Pallets also generally have a limited life-span of about 4 years in their experience whereas tyres last longer. The ideal compost conditions should be warm, with air flow and the moisture level of a 'wrung out sponge'.

TT face the same issue as WDT in that they struggle to source organic compost that can be shipped to Shetland. They recommend we DO NOT use New Horizon Compost. They have had a lot of difficulty with this organic compost in the past and found the quality both poor and nitrogen deficient which had a negative impact for a whole season of produce. They are currently experimenting creating their own with seaweed and straw, this mixture is covered and weighted down with old tyres. See Photo 2. They are also considering investing in a soil sterilizer.

TT's recipe for 'seaweed soup' to feed the soil is two large bags of seaweed to 200 liters of water in large barrels. This 'soup' is stirred every two days. Horse manure is added to increase nitrogen content and the mixture is diluted again. It takes a week to get the 'soup' going.

Notes on produce, pricing and popularity.

TT base their produce prices on the Soil Association Produce List, Waitrose Organic and their gut feeling. E.g. their tomatoes are priced at £10 per kilo. TT tried to grow a variety of tomato known as 'sub-arctic plenty' grown in Canada but found that the plant couldn't handle the hot flashes in weather that Shetland can get in the summer months. They now favour growing Aurora and Ida Gold varieties.

TT's most popular produce and biggest earner is garlic. They buy in about 25g of garlic for £140. This produces on average of 3,000 bulbs. Each bulb is then sold for £1 generating a return over £2,000. Their produce is very popular with local and Lerwick hotels, because of the variety of fresh produce TT can deliver. The biggest earners from the hotels tend to be edible flowers and florence fennel.

TT have also had success growing edible mushrooms using horse manure.

Poly-tunnels

TT construct their own poly-tunnels which they estimate cost approximately £500 to construct (large tunnel), see Photo 6. Instructions are attached to this report. A sowing and planting plan is also attached to this report.

The poly-tunnels work on a 4 year rotation. Within each tunnel TT aim to fill as much space as possible to maximise production. As a result TT recommend growing in beds inside the tunnels, not pots, where possible. The tunnels work with natural heat most of the year. However in the winter months TT also use heat mats and lights. Using this method means that in the winter months they can create different light and heat conditions within the same tunnel for different plants.

TT's watering system is 'soakahose' which is made from recycled tyres. See Photo 4. They have found this the most useful as the water goes deep into the soil. Whereas their past alternative of drip tape only drips onto the base of the plant and has a limited life span of about 5 years. TT water the polytunnels for about 30 minutes each week. Their land was formally very boggy so holds a lot of moisture.

Within the tunnels they have had issues with an unidentified type of mite which appears in the early evening. TT have found that sprinkling diatomaceous earth around the base of the plants affected solves this issue.

TT also create 'mini poly-tunnels' to place over the top of their raised beds. This means they can grow produce outside as much as they can but also provide additional shelter if needed. These mini-tunnels have a wooden base which is screwed into the wooden frame of the raised bed. This stops the wind carrying them away. See Photos 5 and 7. The raised beds are used mainly for garlic which is big earner for TT. When the beds are not being used for garlic parsnip or beetroot are grown in them. Before planting in the beds TT use a black plastic cover to warm the soil between March and April. Once the parsnip is planted they place the mini-poly-tunnel on the raised bed. This has meant that they can start the parsnips off early and produce a better quality root.

Education

TT received funding from the Climate Challenge Fund to set up a 'community classroom'. Through this they teach courses on composting, polytunnel construction, how to grow in a poly-tunnel etc. They run about 5 courses per year.

They highly recommend seeking funding from the Climate Challenge Fund.

Photo 4; 'Soakahose'



Photo 5; mini-tunnel raised beds



Photo 6; 'home-made' poly-tunnel



Photo 7; mini-tunnel hoop frames





Photo 8; Transition Turriefield



Photo 9; Veg Boxes

Veg Box Scheme

While TT supply local shops and restaurants and run an honesty box outside the site, most of their income comes from their very popular Veg Box Scheme. Approximately 50% of their total produce go into these veg boxes. TT currently supply 31 customers across Shetland and have a further 36 on a 2-3 year waiting list. TT's Veg Scheme membership and subscription agreements are attached to this report.

Each box will contain about 15 items. As summer produce tends to weigh less than winter veg the price of the veg boxes were calculated to average out as £11 per box. Customers can sign up to a weekly or fortnightly veg box subscription. This has proved popular because customers are guaranteed a supply of vegetables from TT. The scheme was set up in response to complaints that local shops sold out of the produce so quickly people struggled to get their hands on the veg! The scheme runs every month except January, and this is only because Penny and Alan need a break.

To harvest and pack the veg boxes requires about 55 hours of work per week. Leafy veg is harvested, bagged and sealed on a Wednesday. The rest of the veg is harvested on a Thursday before the boxes are taken for delivery. TT's packing shed was funded by First Port and HIE. On average 5 people work in the shed on packing day, 3 of these are regular volunteers at TT. TT cannot afford to pay any wages beyond sustaining Penny and Alan, but they cover some travel expenses and provide lunch for their volunteers. TT works with a local charity which support individuals with disabilities. This charity volunteers to do a large portion of the Veg Box deliveries to keep their members active, engaged and experiencing work.

Each year Penny and Alan also donate two veg boxes to low income families in the area.

Volunteer dependency

TT is heavily dependent on volunteers. A condition of their Veg Box Scheme is that each customer must donate at least 4 hours of volunteer time to the project a year. Many volunteer more. On average TT has at least 20 volunteers at the garden each year. In order for the scheme to be able to 'wash its face' they are dependent on volunteers and could not afford paid staff.

The difficulty is that volunteer management takes Penny and Alan away from tasks in the garden. As a result they have limited volunteer days to a Saturday. This is with the exception of a limited number of regular volunteers also donating time during the week. As a result a lot is achieved on Saturday and Penny and Alan can spend the rest of the week focusing on the garden rather than volunteers. In the past TT have used WOOF, World-wide Opportunity Organic Farms, to source extra volunteers.

Volunteers come from all over the world in exchange for food and accommodation. TT has a caravan which it houses international volunteers in on site see Photo 8 above. They have however decided not to continue with WOOF as they found that post-BREXIT less people were willing to travel all the way to Shetland from overseas. They also found that an increasing number of volunteers were recently out of school or sent by schools and so were not yet fully independent and required a lot of looking after.



Day 1: North Yell Strawberries

Set Up

David and Jem Henry set up their Strawberry Poly-tunnels as a side-line business 23 ago in order to diversify their croft with funding from the Croft Entrance Scheme. With this grant money they erected 3 large poly-tunnels and 2 small tunnels. Each plastic poly-skin has lasted them 9 –10 years despite being told they would last 5-7 years in Shetland. This is because using garden/grow bag/strawberry plant waste and turf they have created bund walls around their poly-tunnels, providing more shelter from the wind. The large poly-tunnels are 30ft by 90ft while the smaller tunnels are 21ft by 40ft. The private enterprise is ran entirely by David and Jem with occasional help from family members.

The strawberries are grown in grow bags which are placed on benches. As seen in Photo 12 on the following page. Water feed pipes are looped along these benches. The strawberries' feed is administered through water. David and Jem use a pump system to water their plants see Photo 11, they have found that the feed pipes with the narrow-pointed ends work best as these can be inserted directly into the grow bags, as seen in Photo 10. The plants are watered once or twice a day (ideally twice) when the water system is left to run 10-15 minutes at a time.

Growing Medium

Jem and David grow their strawberries in Botanicoir Grow Bags which are coconut husk based. This is cheaper to buy as it is lightweight and dehydrated upon arrival so more can fit on a pallet than heavier peat based alternatives. These grow bags are re-ordered along with the plants bi-annually. In theory the grow bags can be reused but this would require a method of sterilising the bags at the end of each season. If they could do this the grow bags would last 7 years rather than 2, but this would mean additional labour. These lighter grow bags are also preferable because it is easier for 2-3 people (Henry family) to move them around when setting them up. See Photo 12.

Botanicoir can also design a feeding plan for the strawberry plants at an additional cost. Jem and Henry have not pursued this and use their own plan.

Photo 10; Growbags and feed system



Photo 11; pump system



Photo 12; plants stored over winter



“For strawberries it is all about lots of light”

Buying Stock

Approximately 8,000 strawberry plants are ordered bi-annually from RW Warpole Ltd. David and Jem pre-order these plants which the company freeze-stores. David and Jem simply need to call in March about a week before they need their plants and they will be dispatched by normal carriage. The plants do fine even if there is transport delays getting them to Yell. New plants are bought every two years as the yield of the plants plummets dramatically in their third year.

Packaging is also bought in bulk every 2-3 years as there is economy in bulk purchasing, especially considering haulage costs to Yell which is one of Shetland’s northern isles. 20-25g bags of feed are also bought in bulk and mixed by David into the plant’s water supply. This water supply is from mains water. They considered sourcing their own water from a local source, however this would mean environment authorities (SEPA) would require regular water samples to ensure the supply was not contaminated. This would create additional labour and cost to David and Jem so they have not pursued this further.

Setting up the plants

It takes David and Jem three days to set up the plants each year. Once the plants have arrived from RW Warpole Ltd they can be ‘trenched in’. This allows them to stagger setting up the plants and so stagger when the plants crop. The growing season is short and labor intensive. The strawberries are planted in March and crop at the end of May until late July. The harvest season lasts approximately 8 weeks. Very little power is needed as the plants do not require heat. Priority for the strawberries is light and shelter. In fact cooler temperatures slow growth resulting in larger and sweeter fruit. The only power needed is used in the shed and to charge the refrigerated trailer David and Jem use to weigh and pack the fruit by the tunnels.

Raspberries

David and Jem previously experimented with growing raspberries in pots. However, they found that they were more labor intensive and time-consuming compared to strawberries as they needed to be picked daily. As a result they now focus on strawberries alone.



Fruit growth and harvest

The time between the plants flowering and forming fruit is approximately 6 weeks. This is the time when the plant produces runners which need to be removed. This conserves the energy of the plant for fruit formation.

Care is also needed to ensure that the plants stems do not become 'kinked' as this affects the water supply to the fruit. This can easily happen when the plants become heavy with fruit as each plant produces approximately one pound of strawberries. To avoid this the plant needs extra support to hold the plant up from the benches. David and Jem have made small frames for the plants which consist of two small pieces of wood with white strapping suspended between them. The wooden pieces are placed on the bench at the top and bottom of a grow bag. The plant leaves and fruit are then rested on the white strapping. See Photo 12 and 13.

Harvest involves 2-3 big harvests per week for about 8 weeks. (May-July).

David and Jem have found that having the poly-tunnels on slope means that one end crops sooner due to the heat rising. This allows harvest to be staggered. They have also found that the strawberries do better in the smaller poly-tunnels.

End of the season

At the end of the season the fruit trusses are removed from the plants to conserve energy for the following year. The plants are stored over winter in the tunnels until the next season.

When new life once again begins to show on the plants, usually at the end of February, all dead foliage must be removed. This foliage as well as the leftover coconut husk from old grow bags is what Jem and David have used to build up the land around the poly-tunnel to create additional shelter.

Future Plans

David and Jem are happy with the size of their enterprise although if they started again they would have chosen to have smaller tunnels rather than the larger ones.

They are going to look into ways of reusing their growbags.

Photo 13; extra support frames



Photo 14; strawberry benches





Day 1: North Yell Development Council

Yell is one of Shetland's northern isles with a total population of approximately 800, an estimated 250 of those live in North Yell.

Wind Turbines

The North Yell Development Council (NYDC) as of March 2017 have five 900Kw wind turbines. This wind farm will be their main source of income in future. The site and turbines are 100% funded with an £8.3 million loan. 85% loaned from Triodas Bank and 15% from Scottish Enterprise. £2.5 million alone was needed to develop the foundations of the site and the 2 km access road. WDT had previously been led to believe that 100% loan was not permitted for community wind turbines.

NYDC cannot withdraw money from the wind farm for 5 years while they build up a reserve and pay off some of their loan. This reserve is just in case there are any issues with any of the turbines which may incur repair costs.

NYDC's turbines are 20% capped and with FITs (Feed in Tariff) payments of £0.03 per unit. This is viable for the NYDC to repay their loan. WDT's FITs are higher and the WDT turbine is not restricted. As a result the income WDT can generate from one turbine NYDC can generate with five. This again highlights the good fortune Westray Development Trust and Westray Renewable Energy had in getting their wind turbine established when they did.

Photo 15: Cullivoe Industrial Estate and Turbines



Tidal Turbine

NYDC was heavily involved in the first Bluemull 30kw tidal turbine off the coast of North Yell in the Bluemull Sound. They were key in attracting the funding from HIE and Shetland Islands Council to purchase the first turbine from Nova Innovation. From an early stage there were huge problems with the turbine. The turbine was producing very little and being still in the early stages of its development it would be longer than anticipated before NYDC saw any return on investment. That is if all technical issues were resolved. Another issue was that the turbine needed to be routinely lifted from the seabed, inspected and lowered again at a cost.

The Cullivoe ice factory, which was supposed to be powered by the Nova 30 tidal turbine along with the Cullivoe industrial estate and 30 homes, were forced to switch off the connection because the turbine was draining more energy than it was producing. As a result it costing to be connected to the turbine. As problems grew so did NYDC's concerns. It was NYDC who held the lease on the seabed where the turbine was situated. If anything happened to the turbine company NYDC would be obliged to clear the seabed which would incur considerable cost. This was a big risk which added to their other growing concerns making the tidal turbine less viable for NYDC. Therefore they contacted HIE and SIC to request that they write off the grants so NYDC could walk away. HIE and SIC agreed. Nova Innovation took back ownership of the turbine.

“Enterprise – Initiative – Self Help”

Photo 16; Cullivoe Harbour



Cullivoe Harbour

Cullivoe Harbour, completed in 1991 is the pride of the North Yell Development Council, being the result of decades of effort and campaigning. It remains the most active port in Yell despite no longer being the site of the Unst ferry. Fishing, ice-making and now fishing tourism businesses are able to bring income to North Yell as a result of the harbour. The community is in many ways highly dependent on Cullivoe Harbour.

NYDC Industrial Estate

NYDC's Cullivoe Harbour Industrial Estate was established in 2003. The Development Council bought the land with grant funding from Highlands and Island Enterprise and Shetland Islands Council. It had previously been common grazing land. Once bought the area was de-crofted and divided into plots. Each plot is rented to a business on a 25 year lease at a reasonably cheap rate. This helped businesses establish themselves at Cullivoe Harbour. The two biggest businesses currently on the Estate are Cooke Aquaculture and a mussel processing business. The industrial estate has been such a success that NYDC have plans to expand the site as both main businesses have plans to grow and so require larger plots.



Photo 17; Mussel factory – Cullivoe Industrial Estate



Day 2: Mackenzie's Farm Shop

Mackenzie's farm shop and café is based in Cunningsburgh expanding from its origins as an honesty box. The shop specialises in local produce, supporting over 50 different crafters in Shetland, the shop however also imports many other products.

The business received 50/50 funding from LEADER and Shetland Islands Council (£123k from each) and has been open just over a year. In that time the shop has increased in popularity and is particularly popular with tourists looking for locally made souvenirs and local produce.

Photo 18; ©Mackenzie's



Day 2: Moving On

Moving On Employment Project (MOEP) began with lottery funding 21 years ago. The project works with those that experience barriers to employment to enable them to access volunteering, work experience and employment opportunities. These barriers could be recovering from prolonged ill-health, disability or recovering from addiction etc.

Employability Pathway

- Step 1: Referral/ Engagement
- Step 2: Barrier Removal
- Step 3: Vocational Activity
- Step 4: Employer Engagement/ Matching
- Step 5: In Work Support & Development

Barrier Removal

This can be as simple as funding a free travel programme, such as bus passes, or holding workshops on confidence building, time-keeping or group work etc. 1:1 support is tailored to the individual in question so that their particular needs and barriers are effectively addressed and the right people are matched to the right jobs. Different people and different employers need different support. MOEP works with local colleges to organise tailor-made short courses on subjects such as food hygiene or health & safety in order boost CVs and skill sets. MOEP also assist in CV writing.



Job Brokerage

MOEP work with Local Authority, Careers Scotland and Shetland employers to obtain workplace experience, develop skills and sustainable employment for their participants. They've found that smaller employers are better employers as they can work more closely with and support the individual on placement. As MOEP's reputation has grown they have found that they rarely need to approach employers as employers regularly reach out to them.

The placements themselves can be short, a few weeks, or longer, perhaps 6 months. Often they start with 3-4 hours per week and slowly build up hours as the individual gets settled into the work and their skills grow. It is MOEP policy to support the employer and individual on placement or employment for the first 6 months. They are usually not needed after this.

Like Orkney, employment opportunities in Shetland are largely centralised.

Getting feedback from those on placement and employers is essential for continued success.

Working with Employers

MOEP works with Shetland employers to create job opportunities. They can assist employers with 1:1 tailored support and can help with creating the necessary documentation for a placement. This can include; a job description, letter of understanding, volunteer agreement, risk assessment and contact details form.

Community Job Scotland and HIE were recommended as a good source for funding to cover salary costs of young people.

Other barriers to work

In addition to the barriers individuals have to work e.g. disability or recovering from prolonged ill-health there are wider difficulties. For example; transport costs, availability of accommodation and the fact that in the U.K. it is estimated that 70% of jobs are not advertised or adequately advertised. MOEP has particularly found this to be a problem in rural Shetland (i.e. not Lerwick) where most jobs are found and given by word-of-mouth.

Unst Case Study

Unst’s rapid depopulation following the removal of the RAF base on the island meant that there is lots of housing available there. Using this resource Unst offered these houses to carers. Carers live in these houses and use them as a base to go out and support the elderly in need in their area. These care networks have brought employment to Unst and also enabled older individuals to stay on the island in their own homes for longer. The support they receive is also self-directed, boosting their continued independence.

Another way Unst has attracted people to move there is by advertising the merits of the island and island life through ‘UnstFest’. This is a 1 week festival in Unst bringing hundreds of visitors from across Shetland and further afield for music and other events. Encouraging people to visit and see the benefits of Unst’s way of life can inspire people to move there and take jobs or start businesses. MOEP suggest a ‘WestFest’ for Westray.

Focus on Westray

In Westray the employment problems do not concern un-employment but rather over-employment. Whereby there are jobs but not enough people to fill them.

Meeting MOEP proved valuable in understanding how we could support individuals with barriers to employment to be able to access work. It also proved valuable in understanding how we can reduce barriers for employers to attract workers.

Thoughts;

- Access to skill development.
 - WDT Education & Training Grant has long supported Westray residents to access training opportunities by covering 50% of course fees to the value of £500.
 - WDT’s continued support of the Healthy Living Centre’s Learning Coordinator has enabled courses and workshops to be brought to Westray.
- Access to accommodation.
 - WDT is currently working on a housing project which will result in the refurbishment of Bayview into a number of flats available to rent.
 - Potential to work with 2nd home owners to better advertise their properties for long-term rent?
- Transport Costs
 - Westray has a handy bus-service. The service mainly covers transport to and from the ferry but it can be easily booked to cover other routes.
 - Potential to subsidise ferry transport to Westray to encourage commuter workers?
- Advertisement
 - How can Westray improve job advertisement? What is the best platform?
 - Potential to work closer with Careers Scotland and Employment Pathway Support based in Orkney?
 - Work closer with agricultural colleges and other education centres to organise placements/work experience?

Day 3: Shetland Arts



Shetlandarts

Set up

Shetland Arts (SA), based in Lerwick, was established in 2007 with funding from the Shetland Charitable Trust (Sullom Voe Oil Terminal funding) and Creative Scotland. They currently own and manage Mareel (music, cinema & creative industries centre) see Photo 19, Bonhonga Art Gallery and artist retreat accommodation in Scalloway. They also manage the Garrison Theatre in Lerwick.

The majority of Shetland Arts' funding goes into the cost of running and maintaining these buildings. Taking up a significant amount of time and resources. The organisation is 'barely breaking even' and is dependent on support from the Shetland Charitable Trust and Creative Scotland.

Aims

- Promoting and supporting the creation, practice, presentation and study of the Arts, at a personal and professional level.
- Improving access to the Arts for all.

Photo 19; Mareel ©Shetland Arts



- Supporting personal development and lifelong learning through the Arts.
- Promoting excellence in artistic quality and encouraging new work.
- Providing facilities to support artistic activities.
- Action areas include; youth, health & wellbeing, music, film, dance, drama, craft, visual art and new media.
- Proud to contribute to making Shetland an attractive place to live, work and invest.

Supporting local creators

Shetland Arts highlighted that the main routes of supporting local creators were; funding, education, facility provision, routes to market, and contributing to an environment for success. For example SA has a maximum grant allowance of £1500 for visual arts or craft projects but education in particular is key. SA work with Business Gateway and the University of the Highlands and Island (UHI) to deliver continuing professional development courses of varying lengths. For example courses can cover; how to do your own taxes, how to use online marketplace platforms, confidence building etc. It is also important for creators to learn how they can generate sustainable income and not rely wholly on SA or other arts grants. These funding sources should not be viewed as unending.

SA provides facilities and platforms for creators to showcase or develop their work. This can be through the theatre, cinema or art gallery they manage or the open mic nights or film festivals they organise. SA also have recording studios at Mareel which can be hired. As well as assisting creators to access Shetland and online markets SA facilitate an exhibition exchange programme whereby they swap shows with other galleries etc. to help Shetland-based creators expand their reach beyond the islands to other markets.

SA are currently working with 43 creative students in Shetland, supporting them from the start of their careers. SA teach their own courses but also support the local colleges and UHI by teaching modules and assisting with placements. Teaching approximately one third of all Shetland students.

Attracting touring exhibitions/shows

SA are hoping to develop a touring package which they can offer to creators and agents from mainland U.K. to make travelling and taking a show to Shetland more attractive. Having a pre-arranged package including a network of venues across Shetland is hoped to make the journey to Shetland more of a viable and attractive option. It is hoped that in the future Shetland and Orkney could team up to deliver such a package based on the North East Arts Touring model. SA encourage for Westray to attract shows by working closer with organisers and venues on mainland Orkney e.g. St Magnus festival or the Pickaquoy Centre.

Working with and in rural communities

SA have tried various methods to create its own rural touring model for its own work which would hopefully developed into the package described above. First they tried to utilise the availability of community halls across rural Shetland. However they found that community halls, their set up and management system, were too diverse for a 'one fits all' approach they needed. As a result this method proved very time-consuming. SA then tried to build a network of part-time event promoters in communities. However, because the job was so small the promoters were not as engaged with the work as SA would have hoped. Since they understandably prioritised other work. SA are now working with a graduate from ScotGrad to develop a new rural touring model.

SA recommended that a community cinema or a community share theatre is a good gateway development for engaging communities in arts and culture projects. Westray currently has a Community Cinema and Drama Group which WDT have supported with grants in the past.

SA recommended looking into the "Island's Deal" a money pot for the Scottish isles with 10 funding streams. One of which is 'creative islands'.

Current Shetland Arts Projects

- **Arts in Care**
 - SA provides workshops in care settings, collaborating with Annsbrae House, Supported Living & Outreach and Care Centres across Shetland to offer their clients access to a wide variety of sessions across different art forms.
- **START Bonhonga Education Programme**
 - A youth project working with 300 Shetland students from 5 schools across Fetlar, Aith, Whalsay, Sandwick and Brae. This is supported by Children & the Arts and delivered by SA in partnership with SIC Creative Links. This year's programme 'Unexpected Sites', a project about journeys – real and imaginary, culminated in an exhibition in Mareel's auditorium. Pupils started by exploring their surroundings, first by walking and drawing, then expanded these sketches and ideas into 3D work over the year for the final exhibition.
- **Shetland Youth Theatre**
 - This project has ran for over 20 years. Youth ages 11-25 take part in a diverse range of plays. The group have travelled with productions to Inverness, Dublin, London and Copenhagen in the past.
- **Community Film Project**
 - This is a free 4 day course ran by SA in Mareel's state of the art edit suite. Individuals have 1:1 support and access to equipment and facilities at Mareel to learn; film storytelling, technical training, editing and finishing. The resulting films are shown through online channels such as Facebook and Youtube. The best of the films will also be screened as trailers at Mareel's cinemas and will qualify for entry into Screenplay, Shetland Arts film festival.





Day 3: Bressay Development Ltd.

Photo 20; Bressay School- Cafe

Approximately 350-400 people live on Bressay.



Island issues

Unfortunately for Bressay, their primary school and nursery closed in 2014. Since 1876 the school had not only educated Bressay's young, it had been a focal point for the community. It was a way for islanders to come together for fundraising, social or celebratory events and a key way for new families or community members to integrate into the island. With the short 7 minute, regular and relatively cheap ferry service (especially compared to Orkney) between Bressay and Shetland's capital, Lerwick, the island has increasingly become more like a suburb of neighbouring Lerwick. The majority of the island population now either work or go to school in Lerwick, undermining the community structure in Bressay. There is limited employment opportunity now on Bressay, since most of the population spend their weekdays in Lerwick, the island can be eerily quiet during the day.

Going forward; Bressay's 'turning the tide'

In 2016 Bressay Development Ltd took on the lease of the empty school building from SIC in the hopes of returning the building to be a centre point of the island community. Bressay Development Ltd have now converted the school building into the Speldiburn café, rentable art and craft studio spaces (Photo 22), an art exhibition space (Photo 21), the Good As New Shop (second hand store), a community library, Bressay Under 5s group space and the Bressay Development Ltd's community office. There are also rooms that are rented out for £50 per session for workshops and evening classes. While an important venture, this project has proved to be a heavy burden for Bressay Development Ltd. All of its income from the café, room rent and GAN Shop are funnelled back into covering the maintenance costs of the large and old school building. Particularly the electricity bill expense. The café is currently running at a loss, a key factor being that most of the island decamps to Lerwick during the day, and so is heavily dependent on Bressay Development Ltd volunteer directors. The same is said of the GAN shop. Directors estimate that they contribute 40 hours of volunteer time into the school per week.

HIE have fully funded two (job-share) development officers to work for Bressay Development Ltd. These officers will work on future developments for Bressay and Bressay Development Ltd. This includes achieving charitable status for the group, applying for an asset transfer to take ownership of the school from SIC, developing new sources of income and working with the community to develop new projects.

Photo 21; Bressay Exhibition Room – Wool Week Exhibition



Climate Challenge Fund – Skills for sustainability

One of Bressay Development Ltd's projects was to bring workshops to the island that covered; composting and extending the growing season in Shetland. These were supplied by Transition Turriemfield and funded by the Climate Challenge Fund. From this they planned to establish a community composting project. However the project failed to take off as disagreements with other groups regarding where the compost bins should be placed derailed the project. Bressay Development Ltd had argued for the bins to be in the village, where they would be most easily accessed. Others argued for them being placed outside the village due to concerns of the potential bad smell. However people were understandably unwilling to drive out of the village with waste in their cars for the compost bins.

Another project aimed to promote cycling among the island resident with community bicycles purchased by the group. However people couldn't be inspired to take up cycling and bicycles went unused.

Island draws

The only park run in Shetland takes place in Bressay. Although the run is not organised by Bressay Development the Speldiburn café does well out of the event. The park run is a huge success and a large draw to the island.

To get to the Noss Nature Reserve visitors must pass through Bressay.

Photo 22; Bressay School studio space



“Social Enterprise Company; social heart, business head”

Set up

Originally one of three housing associations, Hjaltland Housing Association (HHA) was set up in the 1970s to assist Shetland Islands Council provide housing for an influx of Sullom Voe oil workers. By March 2021 HHA plans to have provided a total of 842 homes throughout Shetland. HHA is now a Social Enterprise Company which it describes as being a company with a ‘social heart and business head’. Originally HHA had focused on constructing houses in the outer regions and isles of Shetland, particularly the north. However, in the last 5 years has increasingly focused on Lerwick, as that is where the most demand is. HHA still works with Shetland Council in order to ascertain what the housing need is and where there is a shortage.

Construction

HHA chose to build their house with the brightly painted timber cladding, seen in Photos 24-26 rather than a rendered system. This is for several reasons. The rendered system looks old after 8 years, there is nothing to be done about it except replace it, however there is no need to do this until it has reached 30 years old. At which point it costs approximately £18,000 to redo a house. Timber clad on the other lasts longer and only needs repainting every 8 years for an estimated £2,500 per house. Therefore over the same 30 year period the houses not only look better and new throughout the 30 years, there is a saving of about £8,000 per house. While this means smaller pay-outs every 8 years rather than one large payment every 30 years HHA have found that the timber cladding lifts the quality of their housing schemes. In fact HHA won an award from the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) in 2012 for their Gröadians estate in Lerwick. HHA have found that a regular 8 years presence maintaining the houses boosts HHA’s reputation and has resulted in tenants being more house proud, and so better at maintaining the houses themselves.

Photo 23; View over Lerwick



Photo 24; © Hjaltland Housing



Photo 25; © Hjaltland Housing



Photo 26; © Hjaltland Housing



Homes for Life

SIC identified that there was a need for more housing that was suitable for the elderly. HHA decided to focus on proactive rather than just reactive responses to the needs of the elderly in their own work. This forward thinking has meant that all HHA housing built in recent years incorporate structural features essential for the elderly. For example staircases do not have bends so that they can facilitate a stair lift if needed. HHA have worked with Stirling University to ensure that housing can also be made 'dementia-friendly'. This can be structural for example being able to see the bathroom from bed or something as simple as being able to change cupboard doors to have glass fronts so their contents can be easily viewed. HHA are currently revising their construction strategy to include these changes. Another example of HHA's 'future-proofing' is that they hardwire fibre optic into all houses.

One-stop-shop

As well as a care and repair service for their own properties and tenants, HHA also support private home owners to adapt their homes on behalf of SIC. At the moment this work is largely focused on preparing homes for the return of owners who are leaving hospital or have new medical needs. HHA conduct an appraisal of the home in question to ascertain if it is suitable for the resident's medical needs. The funding they receive for this focuses on reactive care rather than on preventive measures. The aim is still to allow people to stay in their own homes as long as possible. HHA suggested WDT approach Orkney Health & Care to develop a similar project in partnership.

For example HHA have constructed properties containing 6 flats and a care unit. HHA rents out these flats for £50 per week. The care unit is provided free to the NHS to employ a carer to work from. The NHS pay for the care of the residents, a key benefit of this method is that residents are not in a care home and can maintain a level of independence while still receiving much needed care and assistance.

Housing need

HHA have now reached a pace of constructing between 30-40 houses annually in recent years. Of their total housing stock they estimate they have an annual 10% turnover. This is largely due to the high turnover of 1 bedroom homes. The tenants of these properties tend to be younger and more likely to move on to another place, work or move in with a partner later, requiring more space. 1 bedroom properties tend to be seen as temporary homes.

HHA work closely with Shetland Islands Council to ascertain housing need and availability. For this SIC's Local Development Plan and Local Housing Strategy are key. If a need is highlighted in either of these documents HHA will likely be able to receive external funding from SIC or government schemes to build these properties. The Island Housing Fund is also a key source of funding. Currently the demand highlighted by SIC is for family homes in and around Lerwick. Approximately half of HHA's properties are now in and around Lerwick.

Allocation

All though HHA works closely with SIC the way they allocate housing is different. In the assessment of application, HHA operate a groups points scheme, which gives priority to those in greatest housing need. There are 7 point groups;

1. Sub-standard accommodation, including mobile homes
2. Sharing amenities
3. Social needs
4. Overcrowded or under-occupying
5. Insecure tenancies
6. Medical
7. Support

Applicants are eligible to be awarded points from within any of the point groups, as long as they meet the relevant criteria. Applicants must also be able to prove a local connection to be eligible to rent a property. This could be a job or family connection. If no such connection exists the applicant will be interviewed to ascertain their intentions on moving to the area. A copy of their letting policy is attached to this report. HHA designs a new letting plan annually as part of its business plan.

HHA must be careful not to take over from SIC. In recent years they have found that people were moving out of council houses and into HHA properties as they were better quality houses priced at the same rate of social rent. HHA do not want SIC to stop providing council housing as a result.

If a house has been standing empty for a long time with HHA unable to find a tenant they may sell the house. They believe this is the best option for the local community, better to sell the house and have it used rather than keeping it empty. A charity cannot sell property for less than its market value but a trading subsidiary can.

Interest

HHA indicated interest in being a project development partner with WDT but didn't want to 'step on anyone's toes' if there was someone else operating similarly in Orkney. HHA could assist with strategic support and formulating a local lettings policy for example.

HHA highlighted that care need to be taken when renovating old buildings as they may have protected status. Organisations in Fair Isle were highlighted as an example. Efforts to renovate old lighthouse buildings were proving difficult due to their protected status and National Trust rules.



Day 3: Shetland Amenity Trust

Set Up

Shetland Amenity Trust (SAT) was set up to conserve and enhance Shetland's heritage. It is funded by the Shetland Charitable Trust.

Archaeology

Shetland Amenity Trust (SAT) provides a county archaeology service on behalf of Shetland Islands Council. Employing an Archaeologist, and Assistant Archaeologist. Key tasks involve; establishing and maintaining the Shetland Sites and Monuments Record which contains over 8,000 sites, providing archaeological advice, securing the protection of sites and supporting SIC in its relevant statutory duties. One of these sites is Old Scatness, a broch and Viking age village, in Sumburgh. Old Scatness is one of SAT's most popular sites, however they noted that visitor numbers drastically drop when there is no active digging at the sight. The site is only open May – August. SAT stressed that active digging is essential to attract interest.

Natural Heritage

SAT manage a range of environmental enhancement initiatives in order to conserve the natural heritage of Shetland. These include;

- Coordination of Da Voar Redd Up, the UK's largest community-led spring clean.
- Coordination of Dunna Chuck Bruck, Shetland's overarching environmental awareness initiative.
- Delivering environmental workshops for Schools and Youth Groups.
- Providing an environmental improvement service, removing scrap vehicles & agricultural machinery for recycling.
- Recycling, including aluminium and steel cans and prime building materials.
- Hosting and facilitating the biannual Shetland Environmental Awards.
- Management of Carbon Reduction Shetland.

SAT also are responsible for maintaining Shetland Biological Records Centre, Geopark Shetland and the July Shetland Nature Festival.

Shetland Museum and Archives

With the support of the Shetland Charitable Trust and Shetland Islands Council, the Museum and Archives opened in 2007. Offering free entry to over 83,000 visitors per year since. Although funding has been cut in recent difficult financial times, SAT still maintains a free entry policy 7 days a week.

The Museum and Archives have a strong partnership with National Museums Scotland and The British Museum allowing them to loan high profile pieces such as the Lewis Chessmen.

The layout of the Museum leads visitors on winding paths past various exhibits, making the space seem larger than it is. Exhibits include artefacts, replicas and interactive displays, covering a range of Shetland history. From ancient times to Sullom Voe Oil.

The Museum café is a popular lunch spot.

WDT made contacts that will hopefully prove useful to WDT, Westray Heritage Centre and Links of Noltland in future.

Photo 24; View from Shetland Museum



Thank you to all the organisations who agreed to meet with us and share their knowledge and experience. Contact details are available from the office.

Thank you to the Westray Development Trust's volunteer Directors who took time off work to travel to Shetland.

We were pleased to welcome Imogen Sawyer of Sanday Development Trust on our trip, thank you for your contribution in our meetings.



Shetland *arts*



A Charitable Trust set up to conserve and enhance Shetland's heritage

SHETLAND
AMENITY TRUST

