



**Working at the  
heart of our  
communities  
since 1997**

**Volunteer Centre  
Western Isles  
Annual Report 2010-11**



“To know that you are helping others is a real feel good factor, and if like me you have been out of work for a while it is great to ease yourself back in to some structure and routine that is not reliant on you.”  
Rosie May

Members of the Stornoway Ladies Lifeboat Guild help to secure funds for the life saving RNLI.

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“The volunteer centre was like the cavalry striding over a mountain, we thought we could never get the volunteers to help in such short notice”

Mr Hogg, 10k organiser

Duke of Edinburgh participants from Harris on their expedition. As part of the award participants volunteer with an organisation of their choice.

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## Mission Statement, Vision and Our Services

### **Mission Statement:**

To actively encourage, support and promote volunteering throughout the Western Isles

### **Vision:**

Our Vision is of a community where everyone volunteers. Where volunteering is recognised as integral to the health, wealth and vitality of the Outer Hebrides. Where the Volunteer Centre Western Isles provides a high quality localised service that supports the growth of volunteering in all islands, in every community, in each home, to any individual.

### **Our Services:**

- We offer free, confidential support to individuals wanting to volunteer and groups/organisations of all sizes who involve volunteers.
- We provide a brokerage service; matching volunteers to volunteer roles in hundreds of organisations.
- We have staff working in our rural communities supporting community events that are often run entirely by volunteers.
- We facilitate a number of awards that recognise the achievements of volunteers and the commitment of organisations to providing the best experience to their volunteers.
- We are constantly working to raise the profile of volunteering as a positive force, not only with prospective volunteers but with policy makers and community leaders.
- We gather statistics and carry out research into volunteering in the Western Isles which we share with local and national government.





Last October over 60 local volunteers got together to raise money for Marie Curie Cancer Care. The group organised a sponsored walk from Castlebay to Northbay around, 7 miles.

“Since I retired from full time teaching, working at Save the Children has given a structure to my week.”

Chrissie  
Macleay

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## Message from the Chair

This has been a year of change and I am pleased to say that the Volunteer Centre continues to support the work of the volunteers in the Outer Hebrides. The new interface; Co-Cheangal Innse Gall (a partnership between VCWI, HVS, VH, OHSEP and VABV) has now been established. This has taken a great deal of staff time over the last year and I would like to thank all involved in the process as it has been, very much, a team effort.

We look forward to working with our interface partners to deliver support to local organisations and assist them with the challenges that they meet as they work in their communities.

Our recent research estimates that volunteers in the Outer Hebrides contribute 966,240 volunteer hours a year. This would cost over £5,500,000 to replace with paid workers. With 2011 being the European Year of Volunteering, people all over Europe will be celebrating the contribution volunteers make to their communities and we are looking forward to joining in with our own festivities.

It is pleasing that the Volunteer Centre has achieved the EFQM Committed to Excellence Award. I am proud to be involved with an organisation that provides a high quality service to the Outer Hebrides and promotes the volunteering ethos within our communities. This can only be done with the hard work done by our staff and I would like to thank them all as they are the heartbeat of our organisation.

*Kenneth M Murray*





**“The Volunteer Centre  
helped me to decide  
what sort of volunteering  
would suit me best.”**

**An anonymous  
Samaritans  
Volunteer**

**Participants of the Harris  
Women’s Day organised by the  
VCWI in partnership with  
Community Education.**

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## Manager's thoughts

No –one would deny that the world is changing and changing fast. At such times, it is all too tempting to dig your heels in and cling to the old safe ways. But when we learn to surf those waves of change, rather than stubbornly clinging to the mast of a sinking ship, we can discover the excitement and satisfaction of rising to new challenges and embracing change. One enduring thing in life is the human spirit, and the urge to grow.

For many, a key way of growing is volunteering: trying out new things, meeting new people, establishing new patterns in life. In the last year, we gave support to a diverse range of organisations in the community, strengthening our links with them. Many more people have come to the Volunteer Centre looking for volunteering opportunities, with all the potential that brings. We have helped more young people than before gain accreditation with the WAVE under 16 awards and the MV awards. We have encouraged a host of people to support community events throughout the islands – to have that sense of connectedness and community spirit.

The VC itself entered a new partnership with colleagues from the other voluntary sector support organisations in the islands, to create the third sector interface, Co-Cheangal Innse Gall. Co-Cheangal Innse Gall means 'Linking the Islands', we believe that the better we link with others, the better we work together and the stronger our communities become on all levels. At the heart of the Volunteer Centre work is the network of relationships we have with our communities. We trust that reading this annual report will give you a sense of those connections and the strength and passion about volunteering that we support in these special islands.





Staff of the Volunteer Centre  
on a recent trip to Barra for  
a team meeting

We are a  
registered charity  
working throughout the  
Western Isles with  
offices in Stornoway,  
Ness, Tarbert,  
Balivanich  
and Northbay.

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## Staff and Board Members

Our board is made up of people from a variety of backgrounds who have an interest in volunteering and includes representation from each of the island communities we work in.

### Board:

Kenneth M Murray (Chair)	Councillor
Jessie Macneil (Vice Chair)	VABV
Anne Campbell (Treasurer)	Volunteer
Tina Burgess (Secretary )	Health promotion
Sharon Reid	Community Education
Katie Macleod	HVS
Donald John Macdonald	Community Education
Norrie Macdonald	Advocacy Western Isles
Iain Campbell	Active Schools
Angela Macdonald	Red Cross

### Staff:

Kirsty Macdonald	Manager (jobshare)
Terri Davies	Manager (jobshare)
Karen Mackinnon	Barra Development Worker
Claire Scott	Uist Development Worker
Ethel McNally	Harris Development Worker
Joan Morrison	North Lewis Development Worker
Roy Macphail	Lewis Development Worker
Angelique Macdonald	Administrator
Emma Campbell	Researcher





“I now know how easy it is to get involved with volunteering and it isn't as difficult or as much pressure as I first thought.”

Rebecca.

Emma, one of the volunteers cleaning up Daliburgh Beach.

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## What we do:

### Promoting and supporting young people to volunteer

2010-11 saw us increase the number of young people receiving awards for their volunteering again. In particular there has been a keen interest in our own WAVE Award for under 16's. A total of 33 new young people signed up to do the WAVE award and we were thrilled to present 48 Wave and 23 MV awards to young people at our prestigious ceremony in Stornoway in June.

Our Volunteers' Week promotional campaign, the Faces of Volunteering attracted huge attention from young people and the awards ceremony was held at the College in Stornoway and was planned to be young person friendly – with real success.

Our youth development work has continued in the Southern Isles too with a further 19 MV Awards achieved in Uist and Barra this year. Our Uist worker helped to organise a Make a Difference Day project for the South Uist Youth Development Group. 18 young people from the group volunteered their time to decorate a local derelict building with a mural.

Our staff have been working with the local schools in Uist and Barra supporting the Youth Achievement Awards, MV, WAVE and a number of volunteering projects like the Daliburgh beach clean up and the Barra Youth Cafe/Youth Council volunteers dance.

In Harris we have continued to work with the schools to support the students through their Duke of Edinburgh Award. 2010-11 saw 2 participants receive their Gold Award at Holyrood.





**“Volunteering has given me a sense of purpose and the confidence I gained is fantastic. I would definitely recommend it!”**

**Donna Macdonald**

**Scott Macleod a local driving instructor who volunteered his time and expertise to undertake whatever project we could dream up!**

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## What we do:

### Making sure anyone can volunteer if they want to

People wanting to volunteer drop in to our Cromwell Street office to see what's on offer. This year staff in Stornoway met with 77 potential volunteers to discuss volunteering options. Over the year our offices dealt with over 900 enquiries from volunteers of all ages.

By sitting down and talking to potential volunteers about their motivations and expectations we are able to match them to an organisation and volunteer role that meets their needs. People want to volunteer for a variety of reasons and need varying levels of support to do so: getting the match right is important for a long and happy relationship.

One volunteer to walk through our doors this year was Scott Macleod, a local driving instructor. Scott wanted to offer a driving experience to those who may not otherwise have that opportunity. We contacted the Hills Project and arranged for 2 of their students to undertake a 6 week driving experience every Friday, based at Stornoway Airport. "I really enjoyed working with the guys and was delighted to give them this opportunity. It made me really happy to see how much they were getting out of it". said Scott.

We do a lot of work publicising the benefits of volunteering to the volunteer and encouraging people to volunteer who may never have considered it before. In 2010-11 we attended numerous events to promote volunteering. We also held our own celebrations to mark Volunteers Week, International Volunteers Day, International Womens Day and Make a Difference Day.





“I had no idea the VC could assist so much with these kinds of events. It made the organising so much easier” Eriskay committee member talking about the Eriskay Beach Clean Up.

The main event of the summer in Barra is Barrafest Music festival. The two day event relies heavily on volunteers. The Volunteer Centre on Barra recruited and managed 40 volunteers for the festival.

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## What we do:

### Making sure anyone can volunteer if they want to

Staff in our North Lewis, Harris, Uist and Barra offices tend to be more focused on supporting events in their communities which are often run entirely by volunteers.

One-off events still prove to be a big attraction, particularly in the summer. During 2010-11 we referred 398 volunteers to one day or short term volunteering opportunities such as Feis Barraigh and Barra Bonfire night, Mini Highland Games and BHF skipping challenge in Uist, Harris Half Marathon and Women's Day, Ness Senior Citizens Christmas lunch and Summer Fair.

Making people aware of what they can do and how to get involved is a big part of our development work. A recent survey found that 80% of people currently not volunteering said they would if only someone asked, so we try to do as much asking as possible.

There has been an excellent response to VC events in the islands this year including South Uist Youth Development Group painting a mural for Make a Difference Day and a number schools and communities carried out community and beach clean ups.

Over the year the Volunteer Centre Staff supported 89 community events such as BarraFest, Science Festival in Stornoway and Uist, Uist Primary School Rugby Tournament, Matheson Monument clean up, North Lewis Gala and Ness Funeral Teas.





"I really enjoyed my experience during the volunteer work I did as I gained friends for life across the world, and it felt really good to have helped others as much as I did."

Fay Macleod

Ness Senior Citizens Club on their recent outing to the Castle Grounds

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## What we do:

### Supporting organisations to look after their volunteers

In 2010-11 we dealt with 717 enquiries from organisations for support. Most often groups want help finding new volunteers but enquiries vary greatly from help writing policies, promoting an event, passing out information to others, advice on accessing disclosures or training in volunteer management.

One way we help groups find new volunteers is through our website which includes a local news page and a latest opportunities page. In 2010-11 our website received 22,206 unique visits a 16% increase on the previous year's figures.

Groups can also advertise on the VolunteerScotland website by registering their opportunities with us and this year we were able to register 181 new opportunities.

In 2010 we started a new pilot project. The Volunteer Management Project aims to develop a toolkit/package that will enable us to provide a full Volunteer Management Programme to organisations. We are currently piloting this with the Western Isles Sensory Centre, enabling them to take advantage of the expertise of volunteers in their new resource centre and enhance their range of services in their new facility for people with sensory needs in the Western Isles.

We hope the pilot will establish the feasibility of the VCWI providing a volunteer management facility to other organisations in the future.





**"Its great  
having the support from  
VC and being able to say  
thank you to our volunteers."**

**Marion Matheson  
– South Uist Youth  
Development  
Group**

**South Uist Youth Development  
Group getting busy for Make a  
Difference Day.**

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## What we do:

Measuring and promoting the value and impact of volunteering

We find that when you speak to someone about their volunteering the value and impact is evident straight away. What we try to do is make sure the stories are told.

Throughout this report we have included comments from real volunteers which we believe are much more motivational than facts and figures. However we have been busy recording statistics some of which can be found below.

In our most recent survey of local volunteer involving organisations, 92.5% said that volunteering had increased their confidence or had improved the self esteem of their volunteers; 81.5% said that volunteering had improved the physical or mental health of their volunteers; over 55% said that volunteering had led to or assisted their volunteers to find paid employment.

Our staff have continued to work with MP's, councillors and community leaders to promote volunteering as a positive force and we are pleased to see volunteering now represented in the Western Isles Single Outcome Agreement.





Volunteers Week 2010 saw a host of volunteers and organisations recognised at our Volunteer Awards Ceremony



**“Just to keep doing what you already do so well and that is of enormous help to voluntary organisations locally!” An anonymous response to our annual survey of local volunteer involving organisations.**

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## What we do:

Provide a high quality, locally accessible service

The quality of the services we provide is extremely important to the Volunteer Centre and this year we were thrilled to achieve our European Foundation for Quality Management “Committed to Excellence Award”.

All our work is planned monitored and evaluated following the “Learning Evaluation and Planning - LEAP” method.

We recognise that people are the most important part of any organisation and the quality of our staff and volunteers will have a direct reflection on the quality of our organisation. This is why we place so much value on training and support for our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to serving our communities in ways that best suit their needs and are pleased to be able to operate rural offices in Barra, Uist, Harris and North Lewis.

### Contact us:

Stornoway:	95 Cromwell Street.	01851 700366
North Lewis:	Dell Hall, Ness.	01851 810353
Harris:	Old Hostel, Tarbert.	01859 502575
Uist:	East Camp, Balivanich.	01870 602604
Barra:	Am Bothan, Northbay.	01871 890775

Further information about our services, latest requests for volunteers and local volunteering news can be accessed through our website:

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





**“Whilst waiting to get a job it’s good to volunteer as it will show future employers motivation. It’s also good to help others.”**

**Belinda Richards**

Service users and staff at Alzheimer Scotland, Dun Eisdian and Dun Berisay were entertained by students from the Nicolson Institute as part of Make a Difference Day 2010.

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## What we do:

Working in partnership to provide a third sector interface for the Western Isles

We are pleased to be part of the new third sector interface for the Western Isles. Being part of Co-Cheangal Innse Gall has already increased our involvement in the community planning process and strengthened our working relationships with the other third sector intermediaries; OHSEP, Voluntary Action Barra and Vatersay, Volunteering Hebrides and Harris Voluntary Service.

Co-Cheangal Innse Gall is a partnership and was formed by the third sector intermediaries on the 10th November 2010. One of the primary functions of Co-Cheangal will be to build the relationship between the third sector, the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership and other key partners.

Co-Cheangal will report on the work of its partners to the Scottish Government. Providing a collective picture of the development work undertaken in the fields of volunteering, social enterprise and voluntary organisations.

The Volunteer Centre's role in the encouragement, development and support of volunteering will be unchanged by existence of the new partnership and we remain an independent local charity.

The encouragement, development and support of social enterprise, and social entrepreneurs will be delivered by OHSEP and the encouragement, development and support of voluntary organisations will continue to be delivered by VABV, HVS and VH in their respective geographical areas.

For more information please visit our website;  
[www.c-cig.org.uk](http://www.c-cig.org.uk) or email [chair@c-cig.org.uk](mailto:chair@c-cig.org.uk)



**Co-Cheangal  
Innse Gall**

**Linking the Outer Hebrides**



**“It’s a fantastic experience and one of the best decisions I made was to volunteer! I’d highly recommend it, it’s a great laugh, lots of fun and you get a good feeling from doing it.”**  
**Richard Cooke**

**Jack Nelson achieved his 25, 50 and 100 hour WAVE award for volunteering with Alzheimer Scotland**

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## Finances:

### VOLUNTEER CENTRE WESTERN ISLES BALANCE SHEET At 31 March 2011

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.3.11 Total funds £
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash at bank and in hand	66,446	9,340	75,786
<b>Creditors</b>			
Amounts falling due within one year	(747)	-	-
<b>Net current assets</b>	<b>65,699</b>	<b>9,340</b>	<b>75,039</b>
<b>Total assets less current Liabilities</b>	<b>65,699</b>	<b>9,340</b>	<b>75,039</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>65,699</b>	<b>9,340</b>	<b>75,039</b>
<b>Funds</b>			
Unrestricted funds			65,699
Restricted funds			9,340
<b>Total Funds</b>			<b>75,039</b>





“(through volunteering) I have gained new skills that I didn't have before and improved the ones I already have.” Ruaraidh Stewart



“I haven't long been on the island and (volunteering's) been a great opportunity to get to know other people...”  
Fiona Hamer



“..volunteering brings people with similar interests together, so it doubles the fun.”  
Lizzie Rogers

“(Volunteering) keeps you in the loop and using your skills ...” Alison Ross



“(Volunteering) was a pretty amazing experience and very rewarding. I would definitely recommend it to anyone!” Angela Macaskill

“..it helped to have a reference (from my volunteering) when getting a job as an Au Pair in the USA”.  
Eleanor Mackenzie



“When I moved up here 27 years ago I didn't know many people and volunteering gave me the chance to have new experiences and meet new people.”  
Barbara Ziehm



## Volunteer Centre Western Isles

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Registered Office: 95 Cromwell Street, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, HS1 2DG  
Company no.SC371733 Scottish Charity No. SCO27472