

Volunteer Centre Western Isles

# Newsletter



## Merry Christmas

### Harris Disabled group receive award



On the 15<sup>th</sup> July Harris Disabled Group became the 11th island organisation to achieve their WAVE award for organisation standards.

Terri Davies manager of the Volunteer Centre Western Isles presented the award to Kirsty Cathy on behalf of Harris Disabled group at a celebration lunch at the Tarbert Community Hall. "I was thrilled to be able to present HDG with their wave award. They are such a hard working group of volunteers who truly deserve some recognition for what they do. Since the group began in 1976 they have raised over £64,000 which has all been used to buy equipment and support the disabled and elderly in Harris. I have enjoyed working with the committee members on their journey towards gaining this award and wish them all the best for the future."





## MV Awards—Stornoway

Bethany McCuaig has recently turned 16; she has wasted no time in clocking up hours for her Millennium Volunteer Award. She has been volunteering with the Red Cross during the holidays and at the weekends. Bethany is pictured here receiving her MV 50 Hour Award.

Laura MacLennan has been volunteering with Alzheimer Scotland for almost a year. She has been offering her time at weekends in the Solas Day Centre in Stornoway. During this time she has earned her 50 and 100 Hour MV Award.



## Uist

Congratulation and well done to Shona MacIntyre on achieving her 50 and 100 hour MV certificate. Shona has been volunteering with St Peters Youth Club in South Uist, and has assisted in a number of events and youth training.

Congratulations also to Claire Maclellan who achieved her 50 hour MV award. Claire is also a volunteer at the St Peters Youth Club, and has assisted in a number of events, including a Gaidhlig week where she taught highland dancing.



And finally well done to Natalie Matheson who has completed her 25, 50 and 100 WAVE under 16 awards. Natalie exceeded her award by 50 hours, which demonstrates her commitments and contribution to volunteering. Natalie also assisted at the St Peters Youth Club. She has attended Youth Training workshops and a number of events and activities in her role. Natalie will continue to volunteer, and is keen to take on the MV award in December.



## MADD – Hills Project

This year for Make A Difference Day the Volunteer Centre in Stornoway teamed up with the Hills Project to make a difference in the Plasterfield community. The bulb planting took place on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov 2011 at two locations in Plasterfield. Mixed Daffodil bulbs were donated by Councillor Angus McCormack and planted by the Hills Project in the hope that they will flower next spring. The group braved the blustery conditions and really enjoyed making a difference in the community.

The Hills Project is designed to support adults with additional learning needs. They do this by teaching social and employability skills to help their clients integrate into the community and prepare for work. Part of this involves planting and growing their own vegetables, some are sold to the public with the remainder being used to teach the importance of healthy eating, cooking and in the broader sense, healthy living.

As a reward the Volunteer Centre Western Isles and the Lewis Sports Centre have combined to provide facility membership and new sports clothing to support the Hills Project and their healthy living priorities.

The Volunteer Centre would like to thank Alec Murray, Patricia Mackinnon, David Fulger, Brandon Macdonald, Niall Macdonald, Steven Michelle, John Maclean and George White from the Hills Project. The Volunteer Centre sincerely appreciates the support of Councillor Angus McCormack and Tony Wade from the Lewis Sports Centre.



## RELAY TO ROYAL RECOGNITION FOR SPORSNIS

Vision, dedication, energy and delivery are hallmarks that characterise volunteer activity in North Lewis. Our history records an array of achievements that have enriched lives by making and meeting challenges in this remote corner of the realm. Recognition for these remarkable feats goes beyond our shores. We have an illustrious endorsement.

To mark her Golden Jubilee in 2002, an annual Queen's Award for Voluntary Services was created, to give official recognition for the benefits these services bring to others. In 2011 this prestigious award was presented to **Spòrsnis** in Ness. This is the second organisation in North Lewis to win this award. In 2004 GAIN, who created, maintain and organise activities for the Eorpie Leisure Park, were the first recipients.



The story of Spòrsnis is remarkable. It takes the form of a relay incorporated into a marathon! A prolonged gestation, from conception to final delivery, spanned a period of 13 years. The timescale increased. The commitment to complete Expanded Suppliers failed. Alternatives were secured. The costs increased. The grants and donations accelerated. As challenges emerged, the project team addressed then conquered them. The vision endured. The dedication paid off. 7 July 2008 witnessed the doors opening on a £2.1 million, state of the art, sports & leisure facility adjacent to Lionel School. People from across the whole age spectrum participate. Distance is no barrier. They travel from miles. There are very few time constraints as the centre is open 70 hours per week, courtesy of paid and volunteer staff. This wonderful facility is complimented by the incredible people who made it possible. People like: A.J.Gillies a Niseach, living in Canada, who quietly donated two amounts of £10,000 before his identity was revealed. Carola Bell who was a driving force in maintaining momentum and securing completion of the project. Lynne Harris, who first contacted the Volunteer Centre in January 2006 looking for volunteering opportunities and went on, with Dave & their children, to play a vital role in the development of Sporsnis. Calum Iain Macleod who developed a unique vision for North Lewis, gaining local and global support, and created a formidable team to transform that vision into reality. Each individual involved in Sporsnis, carried the torch of a shared belief and, as in a running relay, completed their bit of the course magnificently. The outcome is a stunning tribute to their dedication and a valuable legacy for generations to come. No wonder Councillor Iain Mackay recommended them for the Queen's award for extraordinary service. The global recognition is well deserved.

An inscribed commemorative crystal and a certificate signed by the Queen, was presented by the Lord Lieutenant of the Western Isles, Alexander Matheson OBE to Chairman Calum Iain Macleod on 22 Sept. 2011 in a ceremony hosted by the Spòrsnis committee and staff. An appreciative audience in Spòrsnis hall witnessed the award ceremony.

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### Community Groups Invited to Take Part in Olympic Torch Relay in Stornoway

The Western Isles Olympic Torch Relay Community Task Force are inviting community groups in the Western Isles to express an interest in taking part in the Olympic Torch Relay in Stornoway on Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2012. The Task Force are keen that organisations such as voluntary groups and youth clubs should have the opportunity to be involved in the Olympic Torch Relay event in Stornoway, helping with the organisation and management of the day's events.

The Olympic Torch Relay will be in Stornoway on the early morning of Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2012. The Torch will be carried by 32 Torchbearers on a designated route around Stornoway. The Task Force are also inviting suggestions from groups who might be interested in organising events and activities along the Olympic Torch route.

Groups interested in taking part should contact Marina Macleod at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar: [marinamacleod@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:marinamacleod@cne-siar.gov.uk)





1st Battalion Army Cadets



Joan Morrison VC Ness



Martin Scott RSPB

### Volunteers sharing their skills in Ness



Wilma, Dolag & Maisie Bakers

## M.A.D.D 2011 Make a Difference Day



Maggie Smith & Eric Lochs Drama

Mairi Morrison Spinning



Anne Sobey Chocolate demo



Mary McCormack & Margaret Crochet



Helga Grewe - Tea/Cake serving



## Fergus Fitzpatric Volunteer Story

Fergus came into the Volunteer Centre in July 2011. He had found himself recently unemployed and was very keen to find some volunteering to keep him active. I identified the Staran Project as the initiative that best matched his skills, experience and time he was looking to give. Fergus started volunteering with the Staran Project and quickly established himself as a valuable volunteer. He has since been offered full time employment with the organisation. I'm delighted for Fergus, his drive and commitment have helped highlight one of the many benefits of volunteering. – Roy Macphail – Volunteer Development Worker.



### Why did you start volunteering?

"I was unemployed and beginning to feel like I would never get to use my work expertise again. After I volunteered that all changed, I started to feel part of society again, it gave me focus to my day and I was contributing to the community."

### What did you do as a volunteer and did you enjoy it?

"I cut grass, helped clean up some areas of the community, I got to meet new people whilst gaining new experiences and learning new skills. I worked as part of a team to help improve the gardens of people who may not be able to do this for themselves."

### Has volunteering made a difference in your life?

"Yes! It has given me opportunities I would not otherwise have got. I'm used to being busy and unemployment had left a huge gap in my life and affected my self esteem. Through volunteering I have been offered full time employment so for me it has been a huge success."

### Has the Volunteer Centre Helped with your volunteering?

"From day one there was a very positive vibe, I met with Roy and we discussed my options, I made my choice and the rest is history. I'd like to say a big thank you to Roy and the Volunteer Centre in Stornoway as they do a fantastic job, I won't forget how I was helped."

Boyd Mackenzie is the Manager at the Staran Project; he said "we are always pleased at Staran to give people a chance to find a way back into work. When the Volunteer Centre contacted us about Fergie to see if we could give him some voluntary work we were delighted to help. Within a couple of days it was abundantly clear that Fergie was someone who was used to hard graft and someone who any employer would love to have in their staff. We immediately offered Fergie a job and he has proved to be an invaluable member of the work force. He is a real "Celtic Warrior". He has proved yet again how important voluntary work is in many respects and especially in allowing someone to show an employer what he or she can do."



## NOW OPEN: £80m Community First programme

Community First is an £80m government-funded programme that will run for four years, until March 2015. It will help communities come together through new and existing community groups, to identify their strengths and local priorities, plan for their future and become more resilient.

To find out more about Community First, how to get involved and if area(s) that you are active in are eligible for funds, <http://www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/community-first> .



## KeyStone Awards

The KeyStone Awards were launched at the Village Halls Networking event in Birnam. SCVO is now seeking interested organisations to work with their Rural Team to support their delivery. While the awards are aimed primarily at rural village halls, they could also be relevant to urban community buildings.

KeyStone was developed by SCVO in collaboration with several rural Interfaces. It looks at all aspects of running a community building and includes sections on governance, managing money, managing people, working with users, managing resources and legislation and regulation. Checklists and extensive resources are provided for each section.

We very much hope that you will wish to get involved with delivering KeyStone in your area, and will consider becoming or appointing a KeyStone mentor. For more information about what is involved in the role. Please contact Sandra Hogg ([sandra.hogg@scvo.org.uk](mailto:sandra.hogg@scvo.org.uk)) to express your interest and for further information at <http://bit.ly/r8bt98>

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**Community Ownership Scheme** Scottish Government have recently brought in legislation to allow easier transfer of public assets to community ownership at less than market value.

To assist communities and public sector bodies the Community Ownership Support Service (COSS) has been established and being delivered by Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS), and seeks to assist public bodies, particularly Local Authorities, to develop robust asset transfer strategies with best value in mind.

The DTAS also offer direct support to community groups interested in taking on assets. The DTAS have developed a dedicated website for public bodies and communities [www.dtascommunityownership.org.uk](http://www.dtascommunityownership.org.uk) The Community Empowerment Action Plan (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/engage/empowerment>) shows that ownership of an asset can empower communities and help regeneration. It can also help local authorities to deliver services more effectively.

The local contact for COSS and DTAS is Diane Campbell, Advisor Community Ownership Support Service. Development Trust Association Scotland, Tel: 0131 225 2080, Direct: 01854 613737, Mobile Number 0774 043 8837 [diane@dtascot.org.uk](mailto:diane@dtascot.org.uk). She is happy to be contacted by any community group.

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## Office of Scottish Charity Regulator launches its first Public Focus Strategy

On 3 October 2011 OSCR launched a consultation on its new Public Focus Strategy, and is keen to hear from beneficiaries of charities and those who use charity services, now or in the future. This strategy aims to develop and improve on how OSCR involve users in their scrutiny functions. The strategy and further information can be viewed at [www.oscr.org.uk](http://www.oscr.org.uk) and comments are invited until 23 December 2011.



**Don't forget to visit our websites between newsletters for more information:**

The Volunteer Centre is a member of the Co-Cheangal Innse Gall partnership and you can find links to consultations, reports and information we have been asked to share with the wider third sector in the Western Isles on the CCIG website:

**[www.c-cig.org.uk/8.html](http://www.c-cig.org.uk/8.html)**

Make sure you visit this website and the Volunteer Centre website regularly so as not to miss out on something important.