



SGOIL AN IOCHDAIR AGUS A CHOIMHEARSNACHD
COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2005-2006

In June 2005, we became a charity limited by guarantee. We were on the brink of starting several major projects, and had an ambitious list of aims for the year ahead. As a reminder, we set ourselves the following objectives:

1. Developing a website to keep people informed about our activities.
2. Raising the rest of the money for the school playing fields and playground.
3. Installing cycle racks
4. Upgrading the access between Liniclate and Griminish
5. Reprinting the updated walk leaflet
6. Transferring the Campbell/MacPherson memorial funds to the care of the families concerned.
7. Maintaining our list of possible projects and ideas, in order to identify our own future activities, and to support other groups working in the area.

We have done well to achieve all of these objectives over the year, and more!
Before we go into these areas in more detail, we should summarise our main aims, so that we can understand how our activities support those aims.

Just to recap, we exist for the following reasons:

1. To promote interest and participation in sport, and related recreation in the catchment area of Lochdar school, especially in the interests of education, social welfare and health.
2. To assist in the coordination of various sports clubs and recreational organisations operating in the catchment area of Lochdar school, both generally and in relation to specific projects.
3. To examine the available sports and recreation facilities in the Lochdar area as against current and anticipated need and to make applications to the local council, local enterprise company and any other appropriate body in this connection.
4. To liaise with the councils sports development staff in furtherance of these objects.
5. To raise funds for such charitable purposes as the association may deem appropriate.

These aims are stated in the articles and objectives of our limited charitable company; Sgoil an Lochdar Agus a' Choimhearsnachd is a guarantee company without share capital, recognised as a Charity, Company number: SC285959
Charity number: SC032387

Our first three trustees were the first three subscribers to the new company, and are now our chairwoman, vice-chairman, and treasurer. They are, respectively, Mrs Mairi Bremner, (Chairwoman), Mr Howard Warner (vice-chairman) and Mrs Norma MacIntyre, (Treasurer). Over the year, the secretary, Dr Kate Dawson, has undertaken the running of the activities of the company.

The Website

In the first part of 2006, we were successful in applying to BNSF for training and part funding for our website. We met the balance of the funding ourselves. We commissioned a local company, Nice Wee Sites, to set up the website. Since then, it has been maintained by the Secretary.

It has been very useful in explaining to people what it is that we do, why, when and where. In particular, we have used it to keep our funders informed of our activities and progress. It is also a good platform for celebrating and sharing our successes.

Please visit www.iochdar.co.uk to see what we have achieved.

Raising funds for the playing fields project

Not only have we raised all the funds for this project, it is nearly complete. The project target total seemed to be bigger each time we looked, as more and more detail was applied. Most of the meetings of the trustees during the year were chiefly to maintain the progress with this project. By June 2006, our financial year-end, we had secured £76,000 already, and with undertakings from other organisations, we had enough to start the project shortly afterwards.

The total project cost comes to £224,000.00. This will pay for a ball court, play equipment for younger children, a teenage shelter and play equipment for older children, an out-door teaching area, and tree-planting. Once the project is completed, the school will be able to develop the out-door teaching area with pupils. The area that has been planted with trees will need to be allowed to establish itself. In the future, we propose to add an adventure and activity trail through the trees.

We awarded the contract to CnES commercial operations unit; they were the most cost-effective choice, and were also the most willing to be flexible when it came to the community doing some of the work in-kind. This enabled us to keep our funding target down, and we were able to secure all the funding more easily.

The estimated completion date will be the end of February 2007. At present, most of the groundwork has been done, and some of the equipment has already been installed.

Installing cycle racks

We applied for, and were awarded, £2,500 towards installing cycle racks. During the year, we have identified a suitable contractor, purchased the racks, and received planning permission. The final steps, of installing the racks and reviewing their use, have yet to be taken. If the racks are popular, we could apply for more small grants and install them in other areas.

Upgrading the access between Liniclate and Griminish

The challenge of upgrading the route between Griminish and Liniclate has been taken up by the council's countryside access officer, Rhodri Evans, who added this route to his portfolio of access projects. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar was successful in obtaining European funding to develop a footpath network with a project called the Western Isles Countryside access program.

The footpath has been drained, and now has a fine gravel surface. It was completed during October 2006, just in time for the terrible weather.

Reprinting the updated walk leaflet

In May 2006, we received funding of nearly £500 from the Paths to Health project. This money funded a reprint of our walk leaflet. The text was amended and updated at the same time. The Paths to Health project involves the Western Isles Health Board and Comhairle nan Eileanan Siar.

The memorial fund

During December 2005 a total of £8,574.94 was passed on to the trustees of the Campbell/MacPherson memorial fund. We also passed on any correspondence that we had received. The money passed on included some that had been sent to the school.

Maintaining a list of future projects

Not only have we maintained a list of potential projects, complete with any preparatory work, we have shown the value of this approach. First of all, this list is now available to anyone on our website.

The availability of the list has led to two positive benefits in the last year. First of all, Rhod Evans was able to identify our footpath as one with community support, suitable for development under his project. Secondly, another of our potential projects, the upgrade of the Lochdar Football pitch, has attracted the attention of the council's pitch review a few years ago. Now the Uist football association is able to make use of our material to reassess the need for upgraded pitches.

Other activities through the year

During the year, the footpath between Bualdubh and the old road has been kept clear, with the verges being strimmed.

We have also maintained links with other groups. This has included informal meetings with members of other groups, invitations to our meetings, and offers to attend their meetings. The following groups are members of our organisation:

- Lochdar Junior Youth Club
- Croileagan an Lochdair
- Lochboisdale Amenity trust
- Creagorry Residents' Association
- Lochdar School Board
- Curracag

In addition, we have maintained links with:

- Griminish Residents Association
- Lochdar Saints

- Sgoil an Lochdar
- SUBAS (South Uist and Benbecula Annual Show)
- Storas Uibhist

We are also members of the Uists and Barra sports council.

The year ahead

1. How do we keep user groups involved in our activities?
2. Cycle rack project; phase 1 of this has not yet been completed, so we have yet to see whether it has been successful.
3. One of our strengths has been our ability to identify suitable projects as opportunities arise. We have done this by keeping a list of potential projects, ready for development, either by ourselves or by other organisations. We will continue to keep a list of possible projects.
4. After the playing fields, the football pitch and facilities. The Uist Football Association is about to undertake a pitch review, and would like our help with this.
5. Development strategy for the next five years.

Conclusion

After only one year, we have met our objectives and more. We are about to see the completion of our biggest and most ambitious project to date. In the background, the stage is set to start to work with the hall committee and the local football association to realise another part of the original vision, an upgrade to the football pitch at the Hall.

We also need to think about how we direct our activities in the longer term. We have been so effective at meeting our aims, we need to make sure that we continue to identify suitable objectives for the future, so that we do not run out of steam.