

ISLAND SUSTAINABILITY IN CHALLENGING TIMES



A DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR STRONSAY 2011



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



The Scottish
Government



Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean



The Island

Stronsay, set in the outer North Isles of Orkney, is seven miles long and six miles across. Most houses are scattered across the island.

Whitehall village, which boasts the most homes in one location, benefits from a large safe harbour from where our ferries arrive and depart. It also provides moorings for our small fishing fleet and visiting sailors. Papa Stronsay lies just north of Stronsay and is home to Golgotha Monastery and the Monks who live there.

Our beautiful island is green and fertile, surrounded by rocky coastline and wonderful sandy beaches. With its abundance of wildlife and stunning vistas it is treasured by those lucky enough to live here and by visitors, who often don't want to leave.

Population

Stronsay has a population of approximately 360 people. The last demographic study by Hall Aitken indicated a higher than average population below age 19, but a significantly lower than average number aged 20-40. Over 40's make up the majority. The population numbers have remained fairly stable over the last ten years. The more senior age group has been increasing partly due to an influx of retired people wanting to live in a beautiful location, but also because some younger residents have left for higher education and better careers prospects due to the lack of job opportunities available to them on the island.

A primary aim of the Development Trust is to gather feedback from residents and our partners and to put into place a Development Plan that begins to address sustainability issues.

The Stronsay Development Trust

The Stronsay Development Trust was established in 2004 as a company limited by guarantee and became a registered Scottish Charity in 2007.

The Trust Aims and Objectives:

- To manage community land and associated assets for the benefit of the community and the public in general.
- To provide facilities for recreation and other leisure time occupation available to the public at large.
- To advance education and in particular to promote opportunities for learning for the benefit of the general public.
- To advance education through promotion of the arts.
- To preserve, restore and improve the environment (both the natural and the built heritage).
- To provide or assist in the provision of housing.
- To relieve poverty among the residents of the community.
- To promote training with particular reference to skills this will assist the participants in obtaining paid employment.
- To encourage, stimulate and support volunteering.
- To promote and protect the wellbeing and physical health of the residents of the community.

The Trust appreciates support both financially and practically from our partners:
Highlands and Islands Enterprise, LEADER, Community Energy Scotland, Orkney Island Council and Lottery funders.

A summary of progress within these aims and objectives

Since 2004 the Trust has worked hard to turn good ideas into reality and has been guided by the Development Plans of 2004 and 2007 which reflected resident's priorities.

All employment opportunities and projects have relied on grant funding. The achievements listed below also include the community wind turbine and enterprise zone projects which are well underway.

- The creation of a children's recreation area in Whitehall village.
- Production of the free monthly newsletter 'The Limpet' to all households.
- The appointment of a Local Development Officer.
- The appointment of a Community Development Officer to widen the LDO role.
- The funding and production of a range of information leaflets on Stronsay.
- A two year appointment of a Powerdown Officer.
- Affordable Warmth Project.
- Green Island Project and the Construction of a Community Greenhouse.
- Children's Community Art Project.
- Community wind turbine.
- A feasibility study into an Enterprise Zone and Haulage purchase.
- The appointment of a Turbine Development Officer.
- The appointment of a Company Secretary.
- Formation of Stronsay Renewable Energy Ltd, a trading subsidiary and social enterprise wholly owned by the Trust.

Consultation

This development plan is based on information obtained from surveys and consultations drawn directly from the community and our partners.

1. Relevant research

The 'Orkney Population Change Study' by Hall Aitken 2009, sponsored by Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE), confirmed many of the concerns raised locally regarding population change. Many outer isles rely on in-migrants to sustain their populations. Stronsay has been identified as having nearly 50% in-migrants, with more than half of those moving to the island not being in paid employment. The report analysis has identified Stronsay as 'becoming threatened' due to a low proportion of children, high reliance on in-migration with below average economic activity.

The main drivers of population change are:

- Employment and economic opportunities
- Education
- Housing availability and affordability
- Transport costs and convenience

Hall Aitken found that enterprise was a fairly common option for younger people wishing to stay in or return to Orkney – particularly in the Outer Isles. Several issues emerged about starting or sustaining businesses:

- There were too few younger people entering the agriculture and fishing sectors – with succession for farms a big issue.
- There are too few affordable start-up units/ workshops.
- The costs of transport and fuel were a major disincentive to business start-ups.

2. The Stronsay Community Survey Report 2010

This report painted a mixed picture of confidence in the future of Stronsay with over 50% of respondents optimistic about the future yet 16% of respondents were thinking about leaving, a trend that needs reversing.

Island residents were asked by this survey to outline the most important developments or changes they would like to see over the coming years in Stronsay. The main ones were:

- More employment opportunities on the island.
- Housing, including sheltered housing for the elderly.
- More tourist infrastructure, including a marina.
- Improved ferry timetables.
- Public transport on the island.

3. Regeneration Team, Orkney Islands Council 2011

The Stronsay Road show was held on the 20th April 2011 and found the following:

Hard to let Social Tenancies: Although there is a small list for social housing, 2 council properties remain vacant.

Private Sector Housing: A number of properties are currently on the market including the former police house, currently owned by the Council.

Condition of Stock: There are a number of larger old houses on the island that are in a poor state of repair.

The team found that Stronsay has a low demand for housing although agreed that without vacant affordable housing it is less likely that families will be attracted to move here. Their interviews established a greater need for sheltered housing.

4. Community feedback from projects, events, meetings and surveys since 2010

These are the main 'wish list' improvements that Stronsay residents would like, however all this cannot necessarily be achieved by the trust.

Business units for rent- start ups and expanding business.

A Heritage Centre.

A community bus.

Sports Hall.

Compost production.

Maintenance and improvement to the advertised walks.

Jobs for young people.

Improvement of access and preservation of Archaeological sites.

Signposts to stop visitor's dogs being off lead in wildlife breeding areas.

Self catering holiday lets.

Island Ranger.

Youth drop-in centre.

Recycling centre.

More co-ordinated facilities for visitors

Training provided for skills, short and long courses.

A Camping site.

More encouragement to operate B&Bs.

We need to remember that change needs to be sensitive to the environment because these are also well held views:

I like the island as it is and I don't want change.

Don't spoil the island.

In August 2010 we consulted the community about the enterprise zone, approx 90% of respondents were in favour of the project.

In July 2011 we held an open meeting to allow the community to comment on the action plan part of this plan. 18 members of the community attended and endorsed the plan and we took note of their comments and suggestions.

The Stronsay Development Trust's planned strategy of taking into account the views of local residents, the Trust's elected Board members, other community groups and the findings of survey analysis has evolved into the present Development Plan.



Architect's drawing of the enterprise zone seen from the entrance

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011.

1. ECONOMY

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
To build a Community Turbine in order to provide a revenue stream for the next 20 years to be used for Community projects.	Complete pre-development studies, write business plan and obtain planning permission. Apply for funding Big Lottery Fund, Community Energy Scotland and HIE.	2008 - 2012	Grant funding secured 2010.
Form a subsidiary company to oversee financing, build and running of Community Turbine.	Stronsay Renewable Energy Ltd registered 2009 To appoint Board of Directors.	2010 - 2031	Fully functioning from Sept 2010

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
Appoint Turbine Development Officer to liaise with contractors, project management team and legal representatives.	HIE funding secured 2010 for two years. Recruit and commence employment of TDO.	2010-2012	TDO in place September 2010.
Investigate the viability of community purchase of light haulage company and construction of Enterprise Zone (EZ) consisting of 6 rental units plus office/training area.	Funding secured for feasibility study 2010. Consult the community by meetings, newsletters and notices.	April 2010 - 2011. Building completion summer 2013.	Feasibility Study completed April 2011. EZ units deemed viable. Light Haulage purchase deemed not viable. Planning permission granted by OIC June 2011.
Once EZ approved and funding commenced, SDT to form subsidiary company to run EZ and secure tenants.	CDO to market units locally and farther afield and report back to SDT. Part funding secured via Big Lottery Fund as Outcome 3 of Turbine project. (Growing Community Assets)**	From 2011-onwards. Social enterprise company to be formed Autumn 2011.	Early interest from locals and wave and tidal companies.
Reduce fuel poverty by upgrading Community Hall. Reduce energy costs by insulation and air source heating installation.	CDO assist Community Association to draw up costings. Part funding secured via Big Lottery Fund as Outcome 2 of Turbine project. (Growing Community Assets)**	July 2011- July 2012.	Meeting between CDO and Stronsay Community Association.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
Form a tourism project group in order to build on the positive effects of BBC Autumn Watch and island leaflets distribution.	SDT/CDO to enrol volunteers to form group to study ways to improve island tourism	Jan 2012-onwards.	
Train Two islanders in latest insulation solutions for solid walled homes.	Find suitable course. Identify candidates wishing to increase skill sets. Funding secured from Big Lottery Fund as part of Outcome 2 of the Turbine Project. (Growing Community Assets)**	Early 2012.	CDO in contact with industry training bodies.

2. ISLAND INFRASTRUCTURE.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
SDT to strengthen links and relations between itself and other community groups.	SDT/CDO to arrange annual conference of Stronsay community group Committees.	November 2011 then annually	
Ensure that any decisions regarding Stronsay's infrastructure are known to SDT.	SDT Board to contact Community Council, OIC, Orkney Ferries, Loganair and NHS to ensure we are kept informed and comment if required.	June 2011 onwards.	

3. HOUSING.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
Investigate the identified need for a sheltered housing scheme.	SDT/CDO to undertake feasibility study into sheltered housing scheme costs and need.	From April 2013	
Investigate the possibility of funding a Gateway House.	SDT/CDO to undertake a feasibility study into the need and benefits of providing a 'try out' house for families wishing to move onto the island.	From April 2013	

4. YOUTH, CULTURE, HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
Investigate the feasibility of a Heritage Centre for the display of island History and artefacts.	SDT/CDO to investigate and report on need and cost and sustainability. Seek appropriate accommodation	From October 2013.	
Define the role and responsibilities and Appoint an Island Ranger.	SDT/CDO to seek funding to establish this important role and recruit Ranger.	From April 2012	
Advise and support local groups with projects linked to Culture and Heritage.	CDO to assist with funding applications from local groups.	From June 2011	
Create a Youth Drop-in Centre.	CDO to assist and encourage 13-17 year olds to form a committee to run and supervise their own common room type provision.	From October 2011-summer 2013.	

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
Consider the viability of a Recycling Centre for farming, fishing, and household goods.	CDO to identify potential sites. Investigate costs and report to SDT Board.	From April 2013	
		From June 2011	
Optimise use of community buildings	SDT to explore possibility of the Sea Sports shed being transferred to the community	From June 2011	

5. GOVERNANCE OF THE TRUST

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
Design & publish a process for claiming and awarding grant funding from the wind turbine revenue.	Learn from best practice Liaise with other development trusts Draft process and consult	By June 2012	Two directors attended seminar 13/14 June 2011
Work towards PQASSO quality standard Enhance processes and financial reporting	New Admin and high level finance P/T post to be funded by HIE/LEADER	From October 2011	
Improve communications	Make better use of 'The Limpet' for communication with residents Hold at least one open meeting per year Enhance the SDT website Launch SREL website Invite feedback	From Oct 2011	

Notes.

** The Lottery Grant (Growing Community Assets) is dependent on being used for the outcomes below as conditions of the award:

Outcome 2. To create a sustainable community with improved employment opportunities for up to 6 people by 2013, who will be trained to manage and install various technologies proposed to provide affordable warmth.

Outcome 3. To create a sustainable enterprise zone providing business, employment, social and training opportunities, by 2013.

(Outcome 1. was to build a turbine but this is no longer lottery funded)

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