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Building our future across the Highlands and Islands

October 2015



UnstFest community participants, July 2015

## COMMUNITY-LED GROWTH / FÀS COIMHEARSNACHD

Community groups from across the Highlands and Islands are working with HIE to take forward their own local development plans. Some are buying local assets or investing in community services. Some are looking to attract more visitors or improve digital connectivity. And some are taking forward ambitious renewable energy projects.

As the Government's economic development agency for the region, we recognise that economic and community development goes hand in hand in creating a wealthier and fairer society. This is why we have strengthening communities as one of four strategic priorities.

Underpinning this is Community Account Management (CAM), an approach where, working in partnership with local authorities and other public agencies, we engaged with selected communities to provide support for them to identify and realise their aspirations. This has evolved into Community Capacity Building, where we invest in a range of

support for communities taking part in CAM, communities at a critical stage in the achievement of significant revenue streams, and communities or social enterprises making a significant advancement in their overall resilience.

Through CCB, we aim to invest in between 60 and 80 communities and social enterprises across the Highlands and Islands. Communities are controlling and driving their own development, with HIE on hand providing support. Match funding for the programme comes from a range of sources, notably the Scottish Government's Strengthening Communities Programme and the communities themselves.

This publication gives a flavour of the variety of work our investments are supporting. A list of current programme participants and links to further information can be found on the last page.



## SUPPORT FOR... BUYING ASSETS

HIE can provide advice, support and small amounts of funding, as well as supporting applications to the Scottish Land Fund.



Pontoons at Kyle

### PONTOON DEVELOPMENT

The Kyle and Lochalsh Community Trust, identifying an opportunity for development, took over the ownership and management of the pontoons and associated shore facilities from Highland Council in April 2014. The trust provides berthing facilities for both visitors to Kyle and commercial boat operators in the centre of the village. Plans are afoot to

develop the pontoons to provide increased capacity allowing the public to make the most of the facilities and magnificent scenery that Kyle and the surrounding area have to offer. This development is part of a wider plan for Kyle and the surrounding area. Recognising the potential, HIE is providing funding for a Development Officer along with wider support.



### WOODLAND PROJECTS

Early in 2015, Lochcarron Community Development Company acquired the 93ha landlocked Kirkton Woodlands from the Forestry Commission, using £149,500 awarded by the Scottish Land Fund. With excellent [OMIT] support from their Local Development Officer, funded through CCB, the trust established a vehicular access linking the woodland to the A896. The project was designed by local people to generate opportunities to establish new housing, woodland crofts and woodfuel provision, as well as supporting environmental, educational and cultural initiatives.

HIE's development manager Pam Noble said, "The community has made real progress.

The opening of the road is a significant achievement that opens up opportunities for further community and private enterprise activities which in turn will help ensure a sustainable future."

Timber is now being extracted on a regular basis and a pilot woodfuel project is about to get underway.

In buying and developing their woodlands, Lochcarron were following in the footsteps of other HIE supported communities undertaking similar projects, including Kilfinnan Community Forest Company and Colintrave and Glendaruel Development Trust.

### CROFT LAND AND HATCHERIES

Two communities in the Outer Hebrides, Great Bernera and Barvas, recently secured funding from the Scottish Land Fund to buy assets. In Barvas, Urras Sgìre Oighreachd Bharabhais Community Company is buying croft land and the salmon hatcheries from the Barvas Estate; and on Great Bernera, Great Bernera Community Development Trust are buying the estate. In both instances, HIE staff have been supporting the Trusts, including through CCB funding to ensure that the asset can be developed for the benefit of the whole community.

School pupils at the Barvas Hatchery



## SUPPORT FOR... COMMUNITY SERVICES

HIE can help community groups to invest in community services, which are often prioritised within the community's development plan.

### WEBSITES KEEPING COMMUNITIES UP-TO-SPEED

Recognising the importance of keeping the community informed and engaged, communities are upgrading existing websites or launching new ones. These provide residents and visitors with fingertip access to up-to-date information on local events, services, projects and relevant resources. Some have also developed online business directories which provide a handy one-stop-

shop for local services, and in particular the local services now being managed by the Development Trust, such as the pontoons in Morvern and Kyle, and 'The Smugglers Hostel' run by Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust. All websites are listed at the back of this publication.



Transport for Tongue bus serving the North Coast Connections Kyle Centre

### COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Community Transport is also recognised as an important service in our remote communities. In July 2014 a brand new community minibus for Ulva Ferry began operating a scheduled service between Calgary and Salen on Mull. The need for community transport was highlighted as the second highest priority for development in the area as there had been no public transport available since the demise of the Post Bus more than a decade ago. Run in partnership between the Ulva School Community Association (USCA) and the Mull and Iona Community Trust (MICT), the

minibus - an environmentally friendly diesel/electric hybrid - provides an affordable and accessible community transport service to the residents of the Ulva Ferry area.

Transport4Tongue is a community service linking Melness, Skerray and Tongue with Durness, and with the railway station in Lairg and Inverness. Transport4Tongue operates as a stand-alone company, but was supported by the local development officer from Melness, Tongue and Skerray.

### DIGITAL KNOW-HOW

Forres Area Community Trust launched Forres Online in 2015, a new digital inclusion programme of interactive classes and drop-in sessions for the public. Developed in partnership with ReBoot and Living It Up, the project is part of a Scotland wide initiative with funding being distributed through the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations.

Unst Partnership has run a series of social media advice sessions for local businesses, and Applecross offer digital workshops as part of their AppleNet scheme.

### 24/7 FUEL PUMPS

Several of our communities have recognised the importance of fuel provision to their local area, and have taken matters into their own hands, owning and managing fuel pumps. South Islay Development owns and operates the Port Ellen filling station, while both Morvern and Applecross have fuel pumps operated on an automated payment system that allows them to supply fuel at any time of the day or night.



Glendale Highland Market

## EVENTS AND SUPPORT

Several communities, using the CCB approach, are taking forward a wide range of community events. These include Lochcarron Community Development Company which has scheduled a range of community training and volunteering opportunities, linked to the woodland, to run throughout the Autumn and Winter, part funded by Highland Highlife.

Forres Area Community Trust are sourcing funds to conduct a feasibility study for the development of a Skate Park, and the planning of a Young Person's Event to encourage idea sharing, networking and to showcase what is happening in the local area.

In Coigach, the LDO has been able to offer assistance to the community with identifying potential crofts, and on Raasay crofters have secured financial backing for venison processing.

## SUPPORTING MARKETS AND FOOD PRODUCTION

Producers in Glendale were celebrating in July 2015 after a successful launch of produce and outdoor stalls complimenting the newly rebranded Glendale Highland Market. This community-led pilot project had been identified by the people of Glendale as a way of supporting the rural and agricultural development of the area. The Glendale Trust raised £15,000 which included capital grant funding from HIE to purchase stalls and undertake evaluation.

Local food production has also been supported in Morvern, with the development of community allotments, and in Ullapool, where the Edible Ullapool project provided advice and support to local food producers, including training in food legislation. In Northmavine on Shetland, a desire to promote local food production led to the development of the innovative 'polycrub' - a polytunnel made using recycled pipes and walkways from fish farms. These were so successful that production of polycrubs has been turned into a business, generating revenue for the community.



Opening ceremony for the Helmsdale and District Development Trust social housing project, 2014

## SOCIAL HOUSING

Housing is another priority for many of our communities. Helmsdale and District Development Trust has worked with the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust and Albyn Housing Association to raise the funding to build 4 homes for rental, which were completed and occupied in April 2015. The properties are the first social housing built in Helmsdale in 35 years. In the Ulva Ferry area on Mull, there are plans

to build two 3-bedroomed social houses, and whilst significant funding has been awarded towards the project from the Scottish Land Fund and Argyll and Bute Council, the community has also launched an innovative crowd funding campaign where supporters can buy a virtual brick for the houses.

On Rum, the community owns and manages the majority of the housing stock. However, in

recognition of the need to attract new residents to the island, the Isle of Rum Community Trust, with support from Planning Aid Scotland, has recently published an innovative Community Land Use Plan, designed to reverse population decline on the Isle of Rum, which has been approved by the Highland Council as supplementary planning guidance.

## SUPPORT FOR... BOOSTING TOURISM

With support through CCB, communities can further enhance their resources' appeal to visitors.



Belmont House

### NEW TOURISM STRATEGIES

Funding applications can be an onerous exercise but, with the benefit of increased capacity and experience, communities are in a better position to secure extra finance. Unst Partnership appointed ex-broadcaster Tom Morton in 2015 as their Tourism Development Officer, after receiving Coastal Communities Funding in January. Tom had previously worked closely with Promote Shetland and edited the monthly magazine Shetland Life.

Tom spent the summer working on a number of new strategies which hope to build on year-round Unst tourism. This has included the development of two, new "out of season" Tourism packages. Three of Unst's community enterprises, Belmont House, Unst Heritage Centre and Unst Partnership have collaborated to present two luxury masterclass weekends, attracting visitors to Unst to learn the island's unique fine lace knitting techniques, whilst staying in the luxury of the community owned Belmont House, a restored Georgian mansion. The second package is a literature weekend. The Tourism Development officer worked with the Unstfest committee to further promote their annual festival which saw even more visitors this year. A new tourist map detailing Unst attractions and tourism providers was created and has fled off the shelves. Unst is being filmed from July until October 15 for BBC's "Island Parish" series 2016; also on "Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands" series in 2015/16.



Jonathan Ford, Ranger for Papa Westray

### NATURE TOURS AND HERITAGE CENTRES

In a number of our communities, the links between natural resources and tourism are recognised, and to support this, communities have appointed a number of new Rangers, including Jonathan Ford for Papa Westray. Jonathan's post is part of a Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) project which included money for a new minibus for the year-round Peedie Papay Tour which Jonathan runs. The tour takes in the Knap of Howar, St Boniface Kirk and the hogsback grave, North Hill, the beaches of North Wick and South Wick with accompanying seals and a brisk walk around Mull Head.

Also at Papa Westray, Nouster Arts, Crafts & Heritage Centre is being established to provide a valuable community and tourism resource by creating a permanent venue for island culture, heritage and art exhibitions and events, a multi-media heritage archive, studio/workshops for local creative enterprises and facilities for boats and yachts. Although far from being complete, the centre held its first event in June 2015, when the former Kelp Store hosted "Slide Too Far", an exciting trombone quartet visiting Papay as part of the St Magnus International Festival.



### COMMUNITY BUNKHOUSE

A new community-owned bunkhouse on the Isle of Rum began its first summer season in 2015. The energy-efficient facility is close to the community-run campsite and camping pods with privately-run B&Bs and self-catering accommodation nearby. The new-look accommodation is owned and run by islanders with profits ploughed back into local projects.

The project came about as a result of SNH having to take the decision to close existing hostel accommodation within Kinloch Castle.

Jed Cossar, the community bunkhouse manager, said: "Thanks to a huge amount of hard work by directors and staff of the Isle of

Rum Community Trust, Rum Enterprise and other community members pulling together, the vision of a community run bunkhouse has come to fruition on Rum. Tremendous thanks too to our funders, the Big Lottery and Highlands and Islands Enterprise for having faith in this project. As a result of this support, the bunkhouse has been built to high environmental specifications using sustainable materials and is the first purpose built visitor accommodation on Rum. It is highly insulated and boasts solar thermal panels, a pellet boiler and log burner, and sleeps up to 20 people in high quality self-catering accommodation with spectacular views across Loch Scresort."

## SUPPORT FOR... BETTER CONNECTIONS

Digital connectivity is key to our communities, and it is essential that all parts of Scotland are able to access high quality broadband as this is the foundation for continued economic growth and building stronger communities. Community Broadband Scotland works to support those communities who will not benefit from the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB) programme by providing advice, expertise and funding which will assist local people in designing, owning and managing their own, often innovative, projects.



### INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY BROADBAND

The success of community broadband in Applecross, through Applenet, which was based on the model used by the Small Isles and Knoydart (Hebnet) has been such that the community is already looking at innovating further to make the system more resilient.

The original system relies on a link to BT backhaul on Skye. Whilst this was satisfactory for the original 110 customers, the availability

of faster broadband has led to increased demand, both from residents and from seasonal visitors to the area. Working through West Highland Access Network (WHAN), a Community Interest Company formed by a number of communities clustered around the West Coast (Eigg, Rum, Knoydart, Glenelg and Arnisdale, Achmore, Sleat and Applecross).

Working together, WHAN has been funded by CBS to undertake a research project with Edinburgh University looking at providing access to a fibre connection in Mallaig. This will increase the capacity available to pass on to customers, and help to ensure communities are more able to cope with the seasonal demand from visitors.

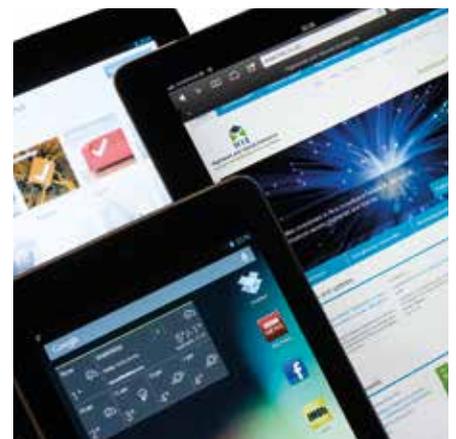


(L-R) Moray Finch GigaPlus Argyll, Zoe Laird CBS Director and Campbell Cameron CBS local advisor

### SUPERFAST BROADBAND IN ARGYLL

Several of the communities we support in Argyll have come together, initially under the leadership of Mull and Iona Community Trust, to create the community owned GigaPlus Argyll, which, in conjunction with Community Broadband Scotland, will develop a ground-

breaking, community led superfast broadband project. GigaPlus Argyll will provide superfast broadband to the communities of Colonsay, Mull, Iona, Ulva, Jura, Lismore, Islay, Luing and the peninsula of Craignish.



### LET'S GET DIGITAL

Tiree Community Development Trust was successful in its application to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) for funding a 6 week Digital Intern or 'Business Growth Graduate Internship' summer placement through their 'Let's Get Digital' programme.

## SUPPORT FOR... RENEWABLE ENERGY

HIE has been involved in leading and supporting the growth of the community energy sector in Scotland since 2002. Our region is recognised as a leader in community energy innovation. Many communities are trailblazing innovative developments, leading their communities through a transition to a strong, low carbon economy.

HIE works in partnership with others to ensure the support and conditions are correct for communities across the area to provide a clear route for the development of their community energy project. Supporting policy and sector development, HIE participates on the panels of the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) and Renewable Energy Investment Fund (REIF), and is a member of the Scottish Community Energy Coalition.

### SUPPORT AVAILABLE

- Launched in early 2015, the Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme (LCITP) is a new working partnership between the Scottish Government, HIE, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Futures Trust and sector specialists to offer a range of support mechanisms.
- The second round of the Scottish Government's Local Energy Challenge Fund was launched in March 2015 and awarded 23 projects with development and feasibility support. The Challenge Fund is part of the Scottish Government's flagship Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) delivered by Local Energy Scotland, and is supported by the LCITP.
- Due to start in Autumn 2015, HI-SHARES is a new pilot programme of accelerated support to facilitate social enterprise and community investment in commercially owned renewable energy developments. The service will support 40 Highlands and Islands communities and social enterprises to realise an income stream through investment in commercially owned renewable energy.
- HIE's Community Benefit Investment Guide is available on HIE's website.

## EXPLORING SOLAR

Renewable energy continues to be researched for possible income generating projects by the Forres Area Community Trust (FACT) and the wider community, with wind and solar options being investigated. FACT has started to seek public opinion about researching into the possibility of establishing a solar energy farm in the area. Research into a potential suitable site continues and once identified FACT can then apply for funds to research the viability of the project.



## GREEN FETLAR

The island of Fetlar is aiming to be as green as it can. Fetlar Developments Ltd (FDL) owns an electric minibus. This is used as an island transport and also for local runs to the neighbouring island of Yell to the health centre, dentist and other services. Longer term, plans are well underway to install 2 turbines which will power a small district heating scheme and the minibus's electrical charge point. Fetlar Developments Ltd will also earn a small income from the development, to assist its longer term sustainability.

Thanks to funds from Local Energy Scotland, Shetland Islands Council and HIE, a new building doubling as a control systems building

and garage/charge point for the minibus has been erected. Once the turbines are in place, the district heating scheme will be connected and will supply the primary school (replacing oil boilers). On top of all this the owner of the land where the turbine will be sited will be taking no rent for the development; instead he will make use of the locally generated heat supply.

FDL has established Fetlar Wind, a trading subsidiary through which to raise the capital via a community share issue to purchase the turbines. It's taken a lot of planning, hard work and time to get to this stage, but FDL are hopeful to see the project fully realised soon.

## RAASAY DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Raasay Development Trust has secured £46,000 funding for pre-planning phases and have appointed a consultant who has started

work on the design and content. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency has approved the proposed scheme, and in September

full planning permission was received from Highland Council.



## WIND AND HYDRO

In Coigach, there are ambitious plans for two renewables projects, a wind turbine owned and operated by the community, and a hydro scheme to be operated in partnership with the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

The wind turbine project is being progressed by Coigach Wind Power, and was awarded planning permission in March 2014. HIE is supporting the project through funding for

the appointment of a specialist contractor to project manage the design; financing; procurement; construction; commissioning and handover operation of the turbine, which is expected to generate up to 900kW.

Ben Mor Hydro is a joint venture between Coigach Community Development Company, and the landowners of the Ben Mor Estate, the Scottish Wildlife Trust. It aims to build

a 425kW hydro scheme, and again HIE is supporting the project through funding for the employment of a specialist to progress the project.

Both projects have benefited from support through CARES, and both posts are being part funded by Scottish and Southern Energy, through their Sustainable Development Fund.

# AREA OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION:

[www.hie.co.uk/regional-information/area-information](http://www.hie.co.uk/regional-information/area-information)

As of September 2015

## ARGYLL AND ISLANDS

Bute Community Land Company  
Campbelltown Community Business  
Colonsay Community Development Company  
Colintraive and Glendaruel Development Trust  
Mid-Argyll Chamber of Commerce  
South Islay Development  
South West Mull and Iona Development Trust  
Stramash  
Tiree Community Development Trust  
Ulva Ferry (Mull and Iona Community Trust)

[www.buteforest.com](http://www.buteforest.com)  
[www.weepictures.co.uk](http://www.weepictures.co.uk)  
[www.colonsay.org.uk](http://www.colonsay.org.uk)  
[www.cgdt.org](http://www.cgdt.org)  
  
[www.facebook.com/southislaydevelopment](https://www.facebook.com/southislaydevelopment)  
[www.swmid.co.uk](http://www.swmid.co.uk)  
[www.stramash.org.uk](http://www.stramash.org.uk)  
[www.tireetrust.org.uk](http://www.tireetrust.org.uk)  
[www.mict.co.uk/ulva-ferry-community-development](http://www.mict.co.uk/ulva-ferry-community-development)

## CAITHNESS AND SUTHERLAND

Durness Development Group  
Helmsdale and District Development Trust  
Melness and Tongue Community Development Trust  
Scourie Community Development Company

[www.developingdurness.org](http://www.developingdurness.org)  
[www.helmsdale.org/hddg.php](http://www.helmsdale.org/hddg.php)  
[www.kyleoftongue.org.uk](http://www.kyleoftongue.org.uk)  
[www.scourie.co.uk](http://www.scourie.co.uk)

## INNER MORAY FIRTH

Calman Trust  
Albyn Enterprises  
Calbyn SCIO  
Highlands & Islands Business Finance Ltd.  
Seaboard Memorial Hall  
Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust

[www.calman.org](http://www.calman.org)  
[www.albynhousing.org.uk](http://www.albynhousing.org.uk)  
  
[www.hibf.co.uk](http://www.hibf.co.uk)  
[www.seaboardvillages.com](http://www.seaboardvillages.com)  
[www.tgdt.org.uk](http://www.tgdt.org.uk)

## INNSE GALL

Barvas Estate  
Coimhearsnachd Bharraidh agus Bhatarsaigh  
Great Bernera Community Development Trust  
Harris Development Ltd  
Muaitheabhal Community Windfarm Trust (Pairc and Kinloch)  
Machrihanish Airbase Community Company  
North Uist Development Company  
Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (Galson Estate)  
West Harris Trust

[www.isleofbarra.com](http://www.isleofbarra.com)  
  
[www.harrisdevelopment.co.uk](http://www.harrisdevelopment.co.uk)  
[www.muaitheabhal.org.uk](http://www.muaitheabhal.org.uk)  
[www.machrihanish.org](http://www.machrihanish.org)  
[www.isleofnorthuist.com](http://www.isleofnorthuist.com)  
[www.galsontrust.com](http://www.galsontrust.com)  
[www.westharristrust.org](http://www.westharristrust.org)

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**LOCHABER, SKYE AND WESTER ROSS**

Applecross Community Company  
Ben Mor Hydro Limited

[www.applecrosscommunitycompany.org](http://www.applecrosscommunitycompany.org)  
[www.ccdcompany.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/ben-mor-hydro-ltd-information-meetings/](http://www.ccdcompany.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/ben-mor-hydro-ltd-information-meetings/)  
[www.ccdcompany.wordpress.com](http://www.ccdcompany.wordpress.com)  
[www.coigachwindpower.wordpress.com](http://www.coigachwindpower.wordpress.com)  
[www.isleofrum.com](http://www.isleofrum.com)  
[www.kilfinancommunityforest.co.uk](http://www.kilfinancommunityforest.co.uk)  
[www.kilfinancommunityforest.co.uk](http://www.kilfinancommunityforest.co.uk)  
[www.kinlochleven.co.uk](http://www.kinlochleven.co.uk)  
[www.knoydart-foundation.com](http://www.knoydart-foundation.com)  
[www.kyleandlochalsh.org.uk](http://www.kyleandlochalsh.org.uk)  
[www.lochcarroncommunity.wordpress.com](http://www.lochcarroncommunity.wordpress.com)  
[www.morvern.org](http://www.morvern.org)  
[www.mict.co.uk](http://www.mict.co.uk)  
[www.raasay.com](http://www.raasay.com)  
[www.staffin-trust.co.uk](http://www.staffin-trust.co.uk)  
[www.theglendaletrust.org](http://www.theglendaletrust.org)  
[www.ullapoolcommunity.org](http://www.ullapoolcommunity.org)

Coigach Community Development Company  
Coigach Wind Power Limited  
Isle of Rum Community Trust  
Kilfinan Community Forest Company  
Kilfinan CFC Hydro Project  
Kinlochleven Community Trust  
Knoydart Foundation  
Kyle and Lochalsh Community Trust  
Lochcarron Community Development Company  
Morvern Community Development Company  
Mull and Iona Community Trust  
Raasay Community Association  
Staffin Community Trust  
The Glendale Trust  
Ullapool Community Trust

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**MORAY**

Forres Area Community Trust  
Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust

[www.forresarea.org](http://www.forresarea.org)  
[www.tgdt.org.uk](http://www.tgdt.org.uk)

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**ORKNEY**

Island of Hoy Development Trust  
Papay Development Trust  
Sanday Development Trust  
VAO Orkney - Birsay Heritage Trust

[www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/iohdt](http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/iohdt)  
[www.papawestray.co.uk](http://www.papawestray.co.uk)  
[www.sanday.co.uk](http://www.sanday.co.uk)  
[www.birsay.org.uk](http://www.birsay.org.uk)

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**SHETLAND**

Fetlar Community Association  
Northmavine Community Development Company  
Unst Partnership Ltd.

[www.fetlar.org](http://www.fetlar.org)  
[www.northmavine.com](http://www.northmavine.com)  
[www.unst.org](http://www.unst.org)