**Unst Partnership - Chairman’s Report, April 2020 - March 2021**

**Summary**

The year began poorly with the second-hand shop closed until August due to Covid. We furloughed our one member of staff, paying the additional 20% salary through our funds, and received Grant Support from the SIC/HIE Rural Support Fund and the Corra Foundation to keep going. We began trading in August but closed again after Christmas for Jan-February before opening again in March.

The Skip scheme continued through this period and attracted about 50 members who signed up for the year. We needed some subsidy from the shop for this scheme, along with grant aid from Unst Community Council’s “Viking” fund.

Directors wanted to expand our service in what is quite a small second-hand shop. We succeeded in getting grant aid from the Crown Estate to cover the costs of a Development Officer, Peter Sandison, and a feasibility study for a new Recycling Centre nearby at Hagdale, by Malcolmson Architects. We purchased the land from the Unst Show Committee with a SIC Community Development Fund grant. This will be one of the main projects for 2021 and into the future.

**Secondhand Shop**

The shop traded well despite the closure periods with numbers visiting and overall spend continuing to do well. In our third year of trading, income from the Shop from April 2020 until March 2021 was £9,066 with 2,173 people through the door, a great success in the circumstances as we were closed for 6 of those 12 months. Congratulations to all involved, particularly our Shop Manager Kathleen Johnson.

Over the course of three years, including online sales through our Facebook page, the shop has taken in approximately £1250 per month which, along with our other activities, allows us to be sustainable. We continue to sell locally made jams, marmalade and chutneys and Traidcraft items. We have also received regular donations of bannocks and plants to sell. Community support continued well when we did eventually open.

**Community Skip scheme**

The Community Skip schemecontinued to be well supportedin 2020-21 with seven Skip Saturdays taking place and over 50 residents taking out an annual Skip Membership at £45, and around 20 “occasional users” paying £20 a time. It costs over £700 for Skip Hire each Saturday and this would not have been possible without the support of the community. It still makes a loss which we subsidise from our Reserves and through grant aid.

Many thanks to Garriock Bros. Ltd, who bring our skips; and to the Shetland Amenity Trust who take the metal and white goods away. We would also like to acknowledge the work of the local volunteers who have turned out to support the Directors at these events and to Sandisons Unst Ltd. for allowing us to use the Pierhead area for drop-off.

**Other Projects**

### We continue to write the “Isles Views” Shetland Times column and it has brought in a useful additional income stream. The “Unst Walkers are Welcome” website continues, with information on walks in Unst and Fetlar. We did not produce a paper copy of our tourist map but did put an online version on the “Unst Partnership” website.

### Other income is obtained through our 6Kw Wind Turbine, trailer hire, photocopying & printing.

**Broadband**

The R100 Broadband for Public Buildings scheme was delayed but did eventually get laid in the summer of 2020. The link-up date for public buildings was to be Christmas 2020, with the eventual roll out of private links to that network from 2021 onwards. However, domestic users are still waiting to hear if they are going to be connected. Even if they are, it is still a few years off as an under sea cable has to be laid across Yell and Bluemull Sounds. 4G mobile phone reception is now available in some parts of the island.

**Shetland Space Centre**

The Space Centre project was held up for a time due to the pandemic, with pre-Planning and online public consultation in May 2020 and further consultation planned in October 2020. Planning permission has still not been granted and may take until November 2021.

**NTS properties**

Work on the house at Halligarth has been abandoned but the NTS have agreed to pay a contract for grass-cutting in the woods and surrounding area. They have also arranged with a local contractor to make Halligarth safe as well as to check on Roselea, the house to the north, and Houlland up near Loch of Cliff.

NTS also have outline plans for a visitor centre in the grounds of Halligarth, with more details being advertised in summer 2021.

**CV-19 Anchor Organisation**

As the pandemic worsened in March 2020, UP applied to HIE to become the Community Anchor organisation for Unst, in conjunction with Unst Community Council. We put in a bid for funding Food Orders for those in need (using donations to a Food bank no longer being practical) and for a Community Newsletter to keep residents informed of any changes in Health Centre operations and shop openings, etc. The Fund came to over £7000 and was designed to run from April – August/September 2020. The fund later extended to include electricity vouchers for those working with Keycard payment and for petrol costs to the volunteers delivering NHS prescriptions.

We have received further funding from Foundation Scotland, the SIC, Shetland Charitable Trust, local donations and some of our own funds to keep this going through 2021.

**Unst Recycling Centre**

Directors took an important step towards a Recycling Centre in Unst, reaching an agreement with the Unst Show Committee to purchase land at Hagdale for this building with grant assistance from the SIC Community Development Fund. We also received grant aid from the SIC’s Crown Estate Fund (*now Coastal Communities Fund*) to cover the costs of a Development Officer (Peter Sandison) for one year and the costs of a Feasibility Study by Malcolmson Architects for the building.

We plan to put out a survey to all Unst residents in April 2021 to gauge local support for the project, which would be likely to include a car park, laundry, wood store, compound for scrap items, polycrub, raised beds etc. This project will form much of our work in the next few years.

### As usual, our thanks to all our Directors this year and to Bridgette Thomason and the staff at Bon Accord Accountancy for assisting with our payroll and compiling our annual accounts.

### *Gordon Thomson, Chairman and Directors 2020-21*