

Shetland Environmental Awards 2014

heritage
Shetland
culture

Supported by the Shetland Environment Group



Shetland Amenity Trust

Foreword

It is my pleasure to introduce the winners of the 2014 Shetland Environmental Awards. For 26 years, these awards have acknowledged a wide range of projects demonstrating sustainability, innovation and best practice. Including the 2014 winners, 186 projects have been acknowledged with a Shetland Environmental Award. Each one of these has contributed to Shetland's rich and diverse environment – an environment we all cherish and wish to preserve for the future.

The awards have always been truly inclusive, attracting nominations for a wide variety of projects from all sectors of the community and this year is no exception. The 12 winning projects range from small initiatives achieved on a shoestring to a project which has raised millions of pounds.

On behalf of the Shetland Amenity Trust, I would like to thank the Shetland Environment Group for its continued support of the awards as well as the award sponsors, details of which you will find in the back of the booklet.

Finally, I would like to pass on my personal congratulations to all this year's winners - I hope you enjoy today's event, are proud of your award and what you have achieved.

Brian P Gregson
Chairman
Shetland Amenity Trust & Shetland Environment Group

Aith Junior High School

As part of Aith Junior High School's eco-programme, pupils look after the school and surrounding area, with a motto of 'Making Aith Better for Us and Others'. Through this positive citizenship they gain a sense of responsibility and pride for their efforts. Activities include recycling paper and cans; planting a variety of flowers, trees and vegetables; maintaining the playground and a community garden; making bird boxes from salvaged timber; installing hedgehog shelters; and conducting mini Redd Ups.

Through their Redd Ups the children became aware of marine litter and decided to find out more. They researched online and contacted local and national organisations to get to grips with marine litter across Britain, the problems caused and what can be done.

The more they discovered, the more they wanted to take action. With the help of a parent volunteer, the children wrote and created a film to raise awareness of marine litter issues. They also narrated the film, promoting the Shetland dialect. During development the school heard of a European wide film competition, which they decided to enter. Their film was selected for the UK shortlist, which they promoted widely in the local community and social media to gather 'views' and 'likes', which counted toward the judging process. Through this the film has collected over 3,600 views and came second in the UK.

Marine litter is a cause the children feel very strongly about and their work is continuing with new projects. By participating in the European competition the children realised just how far they could send their message. It empowered and helped them to realise that we can all make a difference, age is no barrier.

The film can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6CvjSvUJHU>.



JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

From carrying out local environmental projects, the children have identified a global issue and decided to address it. The stop-motion animation created gets its serious message across in an entertaining and informative way.



Bressay Primary School

In early 2012 the P1-7 class at Bressay Primary School walked to the Green Lily memorial cairn at Grutwick in Bressay. They were so fascinated by the story of the ship they began to research other wrecks around Bressay and write their own interpretations of the stories behind them. This led to the idea of the children developing a trail around the island, to share the stories with residents and visitors.

The project focused on 9 wrecks, each one the responsibility of a different pupil. Research was undertaken through the Bressay History Group, Shetland Museum and Archives and meetings with Coastguard members. The 9 stories were then edited onto 6 panels located around the island.

The children secured support for the project from a range of local and national organisations as well as fundraising events. They raised £3,000 to create and install the interpretive panels, print a trail leaflet and promote and launch the trail. Some money was also retained and passed to the Bressay History Group, which is responsible for the ongoing promotion and maintenance of the trail.

The Rescues and Wrecks Trail provides a new attraction on Bressay and encourages locals and visitors to both visit and explore the island. The theme of the trail is also very different from anything in any other part of Shetland. Given that the Bressay Primary School was closed in July 2014, this project has provided a lasting legacy for which it will be remembered.

JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

We think this trail is a first of its kind and congratulate the pupils for a unique idea. The trail encourages people to visit and explore an island they may not have been to before. With the school now closed, we think this is a very fitting lasting legacy and really like that they have both considered and ensured ongoing promotion and maintenance.

Brucehall Extra Care Community Garden



This Community Garden is part of Brucehall Extra Care in Unst, which provides 24 hour support for those who want to live independently but need the reassurance of someone on hand to assist if required. Tenants are encouraged to feel part of the community and visitors are always popping in. A Tenants Association, set up in 2010, established a plan to make the community extra special. As a direct result of this a weather vane and flag poles were erected, chickens and guinea pigs arrived, recycling routes established and the erection of a polytunnel is ongoing. The Community Garden was officially opened on 21st June 2014.

The garden has transformed a bare grassy slope into a safe outdoor area for tenants and visitors to enjoy, and provided an outdoor venue for the Brucehall Dominoes League. Raised flower beds allow tenants to assist with weeding and planting, smooth paths are perfect for wheelchairs or walking aids and seating means everyone can enjoy a good yarn amongst the myriad of plants. Aromatic and sensory plants add to the experience, especially for folk with failing eyesight. The garden has also created a new habitat which attracts birds, bumble bees, butterflies and hedgehogs.

As a result of this initiative Brucehall tenants entered a number of categories in the Unst Show, winning first prize for their garden flowers and parsley forest and a second for their eggs, against very stiff competition!

What's next for Brucehall? Along with the planned polytunnel project, beehives and even a pig have been mentioned. Meanwhile staff and tenants are busy harvesting and making things such as mint sauce and lavender bags.

JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

A wonderful community project which has created a well utilised area for tenants, visitors and wildlife and developed an outdoor space for many generations to enjoy.





Burravoe Pier Trust

With its caravan park, marina and camp site becoming more popular the Burravoe Pier Trust wanted to improve the facilities on offer to visitors and locals. One of its main aspirations was to

erect a building which would offer toilet, shower and washing facilities.

They sourced funding for the project with a mix of grants, fundraising and a legacy gift; received material donations, including a boat which became the roof of the building; and many volunteers gave up time to help. The result is a high quality facility where users have toilets, showers, washing and basic kitchen facilities, including a washing machine, tumble drier, microwave and kettle. There are also black water caravan waste disposal and refuse collection points.

The boat used as the roof for the building was originally a lifeboat on the SS Canberra, which had been taken to Shetland several years earlier and been in Foula, Walls and Yell before being donated to the project and finding a new life as an integral part of this building.

The site and facilities are very well used, with 243 visitors in 2014 alone, made up of 72 from Shetland, 142 from other parts of the UK and 29 from other countries worldwide. This new building is very much appreciated by both these visitors and locals who use the pier, especially at a time when the local authority is closing public toilets.

The toilet block and surrounding area are kept clean and tidy by a rota of local volunteers. Money left in an honesty box is used to buy cleaning products, toilet roll and hand soap, with any remaining used to help maintain the building and surrounding area.

JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

This voluntary group has improved their local community and created high quality facilities to attract visitors to their area. With the local authority closing public toilets, this is an example other local communities could follow.



Foula Primary School and Community

Initiated by Foula Primary School Eco-Council, this project brought the School and Community together to create a shared polycrub (polytunnel). The project was strongly supported by the island's residents, demonstrated with the attendance of over half the community throughout the construction phase, and also roped in visitors to the island.

Pupils designed, planned and helped construct the internal plots of the polycrub, dividing the space between the school and community. Construction was completed over a number of days, with community volunteers providing their skills, time and tools in abundance. Pupils also worked in partnership with Sound Primary School pupils, discussing the construction and produce grown in the Sound polycrub.

Ten of the seventeen households in Foula requested a plot in the polycrub. Seed swapping days have been held, experimental seed varieties investigated and experience shared on ideal growing conditions, success rates, growing apparatus, etc. Community members share produce, including traditional and exotic varieties. School pupils have also created a "Community Herb Garden", which they tend.

Pupils are involved in producing, planning and cooking a weekly school meal using school grown produce, creating meals from "ground to plate". They are also responsible for tending school plots on a daily basis, even during the holidays!

The polycrub is not just a learning space but a social place for folk to meet, discuss and encourage each other. Produce grown ranges from tomatoes, peas and peppers, to lemon grass, peaches and apples. Foula Primary has been approached by other Shetland schools for advice on funding, sustainable school grounds development and community projects.

JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

Great to see a small community come together on this pupil led project and it shows what can be achieved working together. The result is not just fresh produce for the island but reduced food miles, increased learning opportunities and a social space for all ages. We particularly like that the pupils create meals from their produce.



Frankie's Fish & Chips



Frankie's Fish & Chips is a commercial fish and chip shop located in Brae which aims to make a substantial contribution to the sustainability of fish stocks by selling 98% Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) accredited species and marketing this in an effort to encourage other commercial operators and consumers to behave in the same manner. They also endeavour to ensure every aspect of the business has a minimal impact, including waste minimisation, litter removal, biodegradable packaging, energy saving lighting, high efficiency frying range and a staff cycle to work scheme.

Through their practices, they have secured MSC Chain of Custody for the four main species of fish and shellfish sold (haddock, mussels, scallops and brown crab) a three-star rating from the Sustainable Restaurant Association and a 4.5 star blue fish sustainability rating from Fish2Fork.

They work in close partnership with the fishing and aquaculture industries in Shetland, both through their suppliers and industry organisations, and have established a partnership with Promote Shetland to market Shetland's high quality seafood.

Launched in June 2014, Frankie's Fish Course is a new initiative highlighting the importance of sustainability to our next generation, by educating local school children about the different types of fish caught around our shores. As part of this, pupils are asked to draw sustainably caught or harvested types of fish and shellfish which Frankie's post on their website and digital screens in the shop.

Through their practices they hope to generate a greater understanding of the reasons why sustainability is so important to the fishing and aquaculture industries, and help to ensure these industries will continue to employ people directly and indirectly for generations to come.

JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

Frankie's Fish & Chips really has made the environment a core part of their operation and are an example of best practice in the industry. We particularly like their efforts to educate others, including the next generation.



Highlands Garden

Highlands Garden is the culmination of many years of hard work and dedication by Sarah Jane Grace Kay to transform an acre of land on a steep slope in East Voe, Scalloway, into something special. With very little budget she has created a unique garden, which now attracts visitors and photographers.

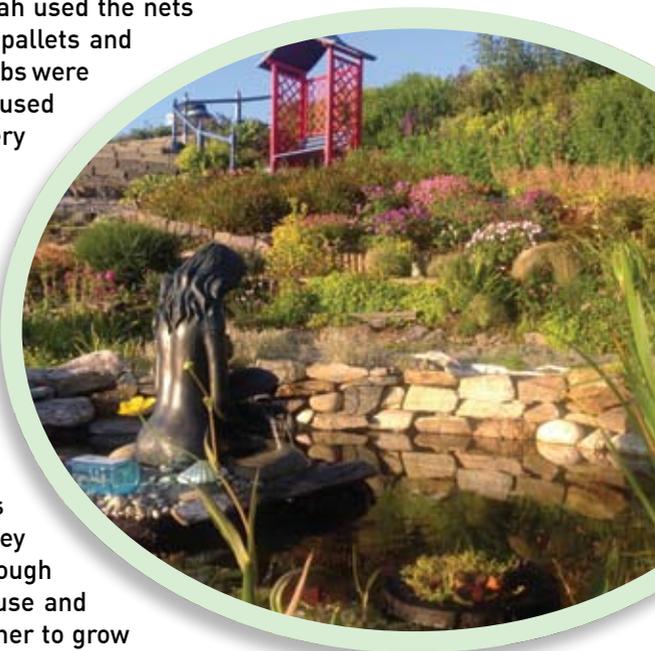
Started in May 2008, Sarah has salvaged, reclaimed and recycled items wherever possible, including tyres, pallets, nets, carpets, paint and kerbstones. The nets, tyres and pallets were particularly useful for the steepest parts of the garden, where Sarah used the nets to retain soil and suspend the pallets and tyres to use as planters. The kerbs were also a great find, scavenged and used to make a pond which is now very popular with frogs.

The garden has been open to the public for 3 years through the national garden scheme, Scotland's Gardens, which raises funds for charity. The garden hosts a wide variety of plants and is an inspiration for others, who Sarah is always happy to help develop their own projects. Sarah sells plants from the garden to raise money to develop the site and, through this, has purchased a greenhouse and a 'polycrub', which will enable her to grow exotics and fruit.

The garden attracts all types of wildlife, encouraged by bird and hedgehog houses, bee hotels, ponds and specially selected plants. Sarah's efforts have been recognised, with features in both The Scotland on Sunday and Scotland for Gardeners.

JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

Sarah has shown a real determination and commitment to transform this challenging terrain from waste ground to a wonderful community resource with little budget. She has given thought to providing habitats for wildlife and how she will sustain and develop the garden. Through features in national publications she has also raised the profile of Shetland.





Nesting Primary School

Having identified that plastic bottle tops cannot be recycled in the conventional manner, Nesting Primary School pupils set about finding a way to reuse them. The idea they came up with is both creative and educational - utilising them within the school as maths resources and art materials. As a result the school has produced many colourful and attractive creations, including large murals, rainbow bridges and Christmas decorations.

The school gathers tops from all over Shetland and has already utilised thousands. The items created have not only decorated the school and reduced waste, but also been installed in other areas, including a Fair Isle mural in permanent place at the Böd of Gremista Textile Museum, Lerwick, and an attractive fence next to the new caravan site in Nesting. As the main materials are free, and the school raised external funding for the plywood and screws required for the murals, the project has also made substantial budget savings.

Many of the murals celebrate Shetland's culture, for example the Fair Isle pattern murals made utilise patterns which are of historical significance to Shetland. This gives the opportunity for the children to learn the stories behind the patterns while recreating them in recycled materials. The school continues to build panels and has shared their idea with other schools nationally.

JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

This original idea is a simple and effective way of dealing with a waste product which cannot currently be recycled. The school has been very resourceful and made substantial budget savings, while also creating art which raises awareness of recycling in a positive and innovative way.



Ollaberry Primary School

Following a visit to the Shetland Museum, where a leatherback turtle caught the children's imagination, and a visit to the beach, where pupils were upset by the marine litter, Ollaberry Primary School undertook a project about the effects of marine litter, especially on leatherback turtles.

The children conducted a beach litter survey, which included the P4-7 pupils using canoes to survey hard-to-access beaches. The most prevalent type of litter was plastic so the children focused on this, and they found that single use shopping bags can be mistaken by turtles for their favourite food, jelly fish.

With reducing single use plastic bags their aim; they used clothes from their rag bag scheme to make and sell reusable bags, and created an animated film to raise awareness of the impacts of marine litter, especially discarded plastic bags on Leatherback Turtles.

Pupils were well supported: community members volunteered time and expertise to help record and edit the film; a local business offered work experience and an opportunity to promote and sell their reusable bags; and a local musician composed, performed and donated a piece of original music for the film.

The film used information from the litter survey and research into endangered species. The artwork was produced using packaging rubbish from the local business and other recycled/scrap materials. The pupils wrote and performed the script and storyboards as a team, resulting in a film they felt was 100% their project.

They hope the film will make people think about the impact of littering both on land and at sea and concluded that if children in other places are equally determined to take action, eventually a far-reaching impact will be achieved.

The film can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=keRWlwdrVHM> and photo-diary about the project at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2zA1pv8caM>

JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

Well thought out and researched, this project obviously highly engaged all pupils and created an original and informative film wholly from their ideas.





Shetland Tannery Ltd

Located in Ollaberry, the Shetland Tannery produces high quality sheepskins, cowhides, goatskins and cow horns.

The business developed from a light bulb moment regarding what happened to the skins and hides at Lerwick Slaughterhouse. Natalie Cairns-Ratter, the tannery director, found nobody in Shetland had a licence to process the by-products and these items were sent south. She liaised with Animal Health and set up Shetland Tannery in November 2012.

Natalie works with the local slaughterhouse and crofters to source skins, hides and horns. Currently processing 5-10 sheepskins a week, she is working with the Slaughterhouse to buy all their 3000 sheepskins and 200 cowhides per year, and aspires to deal in skins and hides as well as creating products.

Current products include rugs, cushions, slippers and headbands, and they are working on men's and children's slippers as well as ladies sheepskin boots. Another product under development is salmon skin leather, something which is not currently produced in the UK but is very valuable as it is the second toughest leather in the world. They are very excited about this, as Shetland has a large salmon industry.



The Tannery has a strong trade with Shetland Jarl squads, which has helped to build their market and reputation in Shetland. They have recently opened their workshop to the public, for evenings, weekends and by appointment, and have plans to develop tannery tours and leather making master classes.

Although a relatively new business, Shetland Tannery has already been recognised for its efforts, with a short list for this year's British Farming Awards.

JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

Natalie saw an opportunity to reduce waste and, in a relatively short time, created a range of high quality products within Shetland and built a good local market. Being aware that tannery processes may sometimes harm the environment, Natalie has also ensured her practices are environmentally aware.

Sound Primary School



When the former janitor's house and garden was reinstated to the school estate pupils were keen to develop the area. The Eco Club and Pupil Council sought the views of their peers and created a plan, including a polytunnel, outside growing space and a desire to improve the grassy area in front of the garden.

Pupils created a garden design and worked with parents and a local building contractor to clear the site and reclaim slabs and stone chips uncovered. A polytunnel was sourced; help enlisted from the Moving On Project for construction and school staff created raised and non-raised beds incorporating recycled metal railings. £1,200 was secured from the Sounds Choices initiative to buy bulbs and parents and grandparents helped the P5 classes plant these in the grassy area in front of the garden.

The school has a strong link with Crofting Connections, which supplies materials to help children appreciate and learn to sustain heritage varieties, and gained a Level 3 Schools Gardening Award from Royal Horticultural Society, with a prize of 50 winter vegetables. These were planted in the polytunnel and garden to see which did better - generating lots of discussion amongst the children. The canteen uses the produce grown by the school wherever possible. The pupils enjoy eating what they have grown and have an increased awareness of food miles.

Since developing the project the school has inspired the wider community and other schools to grow their own and there is an increase in wildlife in the garden. The Eco Club organises composting, utilising school waste, and Primary 1 organise Farmer's Markets to raise money to buy seeds, making planting sustainable.

JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS



The school has vastly improved this area and created all weather learning spaces. This project has multiple links to the curriculum for excellence, connects pupils with field to fork concepts and involves the wider community.

Sumburgh Head Lighthouse, Visitor Centre & Nature Reserve



Following an extensive restoration and development project, led by the Shetland Amenity Trust, Sumburgh Head Lighthouse, Visitor Centre and Nature Reserve is a world class attraction for the whole family. Visitors can explore the history and natural heritage of Sumburgh Head from the early geological beginnings and Iron Age settlers through to the Lighthouse Keepers and Second World War Defences. Indoor and outdoor interactive and interpretive displays also highlight the plethora of bird and marine life.

The project sensitively restored the A grade listed Lighthouse Buildings, improved visitor access to the site, enhanced wildlife habitats and visual amenity, installed interpretive signage at various sites and added a new education room and visitor facilities. Seasonal indoor amenities developed, include a visitor centre and shop, public toilets, cloakroom, marine life interpretive centre, fully restored engine room and restored smiddy.

Real consideration was given to environmental sustainability during the project design and there was substantial reuse of original materials, including windows, doors and brass fittings. A Ground Source Heat Pump and Photo Voltaic panels were installed to provide underfloor heating and electricity and any unused electricity is fed back into the National Grid.

Shetland Amenity Trust worked in partnership with a number of local and national agencies and groups during design and development, and continues to work in close partnership with the Northern Lighthouse Board and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to operate the visitor attraction element of the site.

Visitor ticket and shop sales, income from self-catering and bunk house accommodation and hire of meeting and event spaces, will help ensure the sustainability of the site. The facilities will also be used to provide events and activities for the local community and businesses.

JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

This project has vastly improved the visitor experience at this RSPB nature reserve. The work undertaken has been to a very high standard and showcases both the environmental and historical significance of the site.



Judging Panel

The awards are managed by the Shetland Amenity Trust and judged by the Shetland Environment Group, a multi-agency group, set up to advise and assist the Trust in fulfilling its environmental objectives.

Partners represented in the Shetland Environment Group are: Shetland Islands Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Shetland Bird Club, VisitScotland, Shetland Civic Society and the Association of Community Councils.

Award Sponsors

The awards are sponsored by many members of the Shetland Environment Group, namely the Shetland Civic Society, Scottish Natural Heritage, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Shetland Islands Council and VisitScotland.

The awards presentation event is sponsored by the Total Laggan-Tormore Project.



The Shetland Amenity Trust would like to thank the Shetland Environment Group and all Award Sponsors; their support is instrumental in the award's success.