

# Shetland Environmental Awards 2011

Supported by the Shetland Environment Group

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Shetland Amenity Trust

# Foreword

It is my pleasure to introduce the winners of the 2011 Shetland Environmental Awards. For 23 years, these awards have acknowledged a wide range of projects demonstrating sustainability, innovation and best practice. Each one of these projects 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. This year's award winners have again shown an outstanding commitment to our environment.

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



# DITT

For the past few years DITT Construction Ltd has focused on improving its environmental management systems. This has resulted in DITT being the only construction firm in Shetland, and one of a very few in the North of Scotland, to gain certification in both ISO 9001:2008 and ISO 14001:2004. Gaining these certifications has not, however, left DITT resting on its laurels. The company is constantly striving to improve its environmental management systems and ensure its projects are completed in the most efficient manner, minimising the impact on the environment.

A number of practical measures introduced have proven successful, including waste segregation and recycling and considerate driving techniques, as well as regular auditing of the systems and monthly reviews by senior management.



## JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

Due to its very nature, the construction industry has a poor reputation for environmental standards. Few companies come near to the standards DITT has achieved through its ISO accreditation and the additional procedures it has in place, such as the use of traditional building materials and techniques, should be recognised. The commitment from the whole company, from management motivation to implementation by staff at all levels, is a major factor in the company's environmental success and should serve as an example for others.

# Dunrossness Primary School



Over the past four years Dunrossness Primary school has transformed areas of wasteland in their school grounds into outdoor learning areas. New learning resources include an area of woodland, a nature garden with pond, a polytunnel and raised beds. Establishing, maintaining and using these areas has not only included the entire school but also the local community and external agencies, such as the RSPB, Shetland Amenity Trust and Shetland Conservation Volunteers. Initiatives carried out within these areas include the heritage tattie project, eco-action days, crofting connections project, environmental investigations and participating in the Kew Gardens Millenium Seedbank Project. The school also grows its own vegetables and carries out regular litter patrols. These environmental areas are now integrated into the ethos of the school, with inclusion in the school development plan, ongoing curriculum planning and their eco-schools action planning.



## JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

This is a well rounded project, incorporating many aspects of the environment and including all of the school, from nursery to out of school clubs, teachers and parents. Developing these areas within the schools grounds provides invaluable learning resources, and removes the need to travel off site to learn about the environment. The panel were especially impressed by the ongoing commitment to the environment, not only within the school grounds but also the wider community.

# Shetland Field Studies Group

Now in its 30th year, Shetland Field Studies Group has made a significant contribution to the understanding, conservation and enjoyment of the Shetland Environment. During this time the group have undertaken a diverse and innovative range of activities, such as organising talks, lectures and workshops, undertaking guided walks, creating and running mobile exhibitions, establishing the Shetland Field Studies Trust, undertaking practical conservation, hosting visiting groups and producing and publishing the Shetland Naturalist. Many of these activities have been recognised as best practise. The group has also worked in partnership with many other organisations, and advised on matters relating to Shetland's environment. Their activities are popular with both locals and tourists and they can tailor their guided walks to suit a group, enabling them to raise awareness at all levels.



## JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

The Shetland Field Studies Group has made significant achievements in its 30 year history. The fact that all of this is done by volunteers, with minimal funds, shows the commitment of all involved to the local environment. The volunteers, and their local knowledge, are what makes the field studies group so special and the panel would like to wish them every success with their next 30 years.

# Foula Community Electricity Scheme



With no connection available to the mainland Shetland electricity grid, all of Foula's electricity needs have to be provided within the island. For many years this provision came from individual diesel generators. As well as being expensive, noisy and relying on fossil fuels, unreliable fuel supply and maintenance provision meant electricity was not continuous. The community had a vision of a centralised electricity generation scheme with an island wide distribution network that minimised the impact to the environment and encouraged growth within the community. So far the island has installed renewable infrastructure in two phases. Phase one, completed in 2008, involved photo-voltaic and hydro generation while phase two, completed this year, involved wind power. Both phases included the installation of battery banks, to store energy generated and enable 24 hour coverage. While back up diesel generators are still in place, these renewable schemes have minimised use.



## JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

This is a great community initiative which is sustainable and looks towards the future. For a community of 30 people to raise over £1.2 million in funding and implement a scheme of this scale is quite some achievement. The panel were also impressed with the partnership working, with organisations such as RSPB and SNH, to minimise environmental impact and the wider community initiatives to increase energy awareness and reduce usage.



# Lea Gardens

Lea Gardens is much more than just a garden, it is 32 years of dedication from its owner, Rosa Stepanova, who has transformed it from croftland to the horticultural oasis it is today. The two acre site in Tresta, Bixter encompasses shelterbelts, a wetland and pond area, wild flower meadows, mixed borders, woodland and specialist habitats for over 1,500 botanical species and cultivars. Conservation of local plant species is especially important, with large areas dedicated to wild Shetland varieties. Recycling is also evident, for example borders are lined with old rope and hard landscaping features are recycled from a variety of used materials. Open to the public, Lea Gardens is popular with locals and tourists and attracts volunteers and gardening enthusiasts from all over the world. The site is also a haven for local and migratory species of fauna, increasing the biodiversity of the local area.



## JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

Lea Gardens has grown from the dedication of Rosa. There are always visitors in the gardens as it is much more than a garden, it is a place to relax and discover, meet friends and pick up tips. Most of all it is Rosa's passion, a passion which has inspired many other growers.



# Northmavine Community Development Company



Following consultation, NCDC identified a strong community desire to grow their own food; this led to the Northmavine Community Poly tunnels project. The project objectives:

- Identify local landowners/users to provide host land for the polytunnels, which they would share with 4-5 neighbours.
- Identify the best polytunnel structure to use.
- Site polytunnels in Northmavine's main townships and get up to 60 people growing, many for the first time.

NCDC reached these objectives and beyond, including:

- The design of a new polytunnel, incorporating redundant salmon cages.
- Creation of a new community network, with exchange of knowledge within and between polytunnels and excess produce distributed through the community.
- Interest in the initiative, within the local community, Shetland wide and further afield.

Many communities are now following the Northmavine template, and using their polytunnel design. The polytunnel has proved so popular NCDC has rebranded it the polycrub and has patent pending on the design. They have also set up a trading subsidiary, selling polycrub kits as part of the core business.

## JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

A good practical project with some creative solutions to Shetland's food issues and recycling of redundant salmon cages. The community focus resulted in a project which far surpassed what was anticipated and is now entering a new phase which will make it a long term sustainable social enterprise.





# Sandwick Junior High School

Sandwick Junior High 'Alive n Chicken' project allows pupils to experience keeping 6 hens, from feeding and cleaning out their house to collecting and selling eggs. Set up in 2010, pupils have been involved every step of the way, from designing and building the hen house and run, to branding the 'Alive n Chicken' hen company and designing labels for egg boxes. One of the most important learning experiences, however, is working with the hens and learning first hand about hen husbandry. Recycling features strongly, including reuse of the technical department saw dust and egg boxes from school and home. A wonderful example of recycling is the school's shredded paper. This is used as bedding and in nesting boxes, once used it is added to the schools compost which is used in the school garden and greens from this garden supplement the hens feed. The Alive n Chicken Hen company now sell eggs locally, ensuring financial sustainability, and hen husbandry is embedded in the school at primary and secondary level, ensuring ongoing project success.



## JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

This is a wonderful learning resource, reconnecting children with nature. It is also a good example of the school and community working together, as parent helpers experienced in hen husbandry have been involved throughout the project, ensuring the hens are well looked after both during term time and school holidays. The panel also really liked the branding.

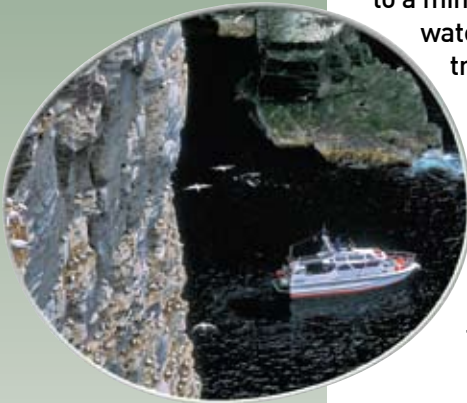


# Seabirds & Seals

For almost 20 years Seabirds and Seals have been running marine wildlife trips. However, this is not just a trip on a boat to look at birds and seals, it gives a unique view of the ecology and geology above and below the water and the interaction between them.

The knowledge of its guides means this trip goes much further than just a viewing experience it is a lesson on the geology, biology and management of one of Shetland's principal attractions. Wider issues on human impacts on the environment, such as fisheries, and global climate change are also discussed.

The guides ensure that their operation takes the greatest care in keeping disturbance to wildlife to a minimum – sustainability is the operation watchword. As well as its regular boat trips, Seabirds and Seals works with local schools and the Global Classroom project – educating our children on the importance of Shetland's natural assets. It also works with many of the local environmental agencies and, while on its summer trips and outwith the visitor season, acts as a recorder and monitor of the natural environment.



## JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

While Seabirds and Seals is very good for tourism and raising awareness of Shetland's natural environment and the challenges it faces, it is much more than this. This company goes above and beyond what it needs to make the business successful. The guides' passion for the environment shines through and the knowledge and humour injected into their commentary makes this an outstanding package.

# Our 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 VisitShetland.

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

The Shetland Amenity Trust would like to thank all of these sponsors; their support is instrumental in the award's success.



