

Community Led Local Development Leasachadh fo Stiùir na Coimhearsnachd

FOLLOW-ON TO THE LEADER PROGRAMME

With the 2023-24 CLLD year drawing to a close, it is time for an update on what has been achieved. It has been a very busy year for the Local Action Group (LAG) who oversaw three funding rounds, commissioned the setting-up of a Community Transport Network for the Outer Hebrides and is collaborating with Orkney and Shetland on a research project which will explore agricultural policy impacts on island communities. Quick thinking and a willingness to take on additional work enabled the LAG to increase their initial budget of around £267,000 to over £400,000 and therefore support a much greater number of communities and organisations. One of the big success stories is the Youth Local Action Group (YLAG) aimed at islanders aged 16-30 and funded through the main LAG. From a tentative start in 2023, this has developed into a well-established group of young people who are confident to put forward their thoughts and opinions, are developing their own projects, and increasingly engaging with local and national policy.

Small Grants Scheme

With the Small Grants Scheme, the LAG trialled out Participatory Budgeting as a new way of awarding funding. This meant that funding decisions were made by public vote rather than LAG members. Castlebay and Vatersay Community Council were delighted to be successful in obtaining funding.

Vice-Chair Katie Denehy said:
“So far the Fund has helped support an intergenerational meal, Santa dash, Garland class and Christmas tots party. Over 200 people in the community have benefitted from this Fund and we are delighted to have been voted for by the local community.”

Community Transport Network

A Community Transport Network has been established for current and prospective providers as well as other key stakeholder of Community Transport in the Outer Hebrides. In addition to peer support, expert inputs are available and areas for support identified to date are: Compliance and Best Practice; Legislation and Regulation in Community Transport; Budgetary Pressures and Moving Towards a Future Funding Model with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar; Going Digital: Using Technology for Communication, Promotion and Planning; and Collaborating with NHS Western Isles to Improve Transport to Health. Members of the Network will be given the opportunity to undertake MiDAS training free of charge. This will in turn enable them to deliver DAT training to members of their organisations and communities, which was identified as a training provision gap in a LAG-commissioned report into Community Transport in the Outer Hebrides which was undertaken in early 2023.



The Youth LAG

Aimed at islanders aged 16-30, the Youth Local Action Group aims to facilitate and represent the Islands' youth voice at local and national level by engaging with policy makers as well as taking direct action. For 2023-24 they had a budget of £16,000 available and identified the following topics as priorities to try and tackle with their actions:

Equity with the mainland
Dùthchas & Dualchas
Economic autonomy
Mental health
Acquiring skills

The Outer Hebrides Youth LAG are also collaborating with YLAGs from Orkney, the Cairngorms, Fife, Forth Valley and Lomond, and the Scottish Borders in the production of a film showcasing the impact of Youth LAGs nationally. Material created as part of their YLAG Film & Professional Development project will contribute to this.

YLAG Film & Professional Development project

The Youth LAG were keen to fund a young local artist to develop their skills and portfolio. To achieve this and due to being involved in a collaboration project with the aim of producing a film showcasing Youth LAGs nationally, they developed the Youth LAG Film & Professional Development project. This was aimed at a young film maker with a strong connection to the Islands, their culture and heritage. Ruairaidh Urpeth of Quay Digital Media was selected to take this project forward.

Youth LAG member Faìch Bihan-Gallie explains:
“Tha Buidheann-Gnìomh Òg (YLAG) Innse Gall a' toirt taic maoineachaidh ri neach-dealbh òg eileanach airson pròiseact film a choileanadh. 'S e amas a' phròiseict gun tog an neach-dealbh film goirid mun cheangail eadar eileanaich òga agus an cuid dhùthchais ann an dòigh chruthachail agus pearsanta. Tha sinn an dòil gun leasaich an neach-dealbh na sgilean aige tron obair cuideachd gus am fàs e nas misneachaile agus nas comasaiche sa bheatha phroifeiseanta agus phearsanta aige.
'S mar sin dheth, tha sinn air leth toilichte gun tèid am film a dhèanamh mu dheidhinn chroitearan òga san latha a th' ann, agus le Gàidhlig agus dùthchas nan Gàidheal an teis-meadhain gnothaichean. 'S e cothrom air leth a th' ann aire a thoirt dha beatha muinntir nan Eilean tro shùilean Gàidheil òga.
A thuilleadh air an fhilm sin, bheir an neach-dealbh dealbhan beò fa-leth dhan Buidheann-Gnìomh Òg a thèid an cleachdadh mar phàirt de dh'fhiolm nàiseanta a thogas na buidhnean òigridh uile còmhla.”

Capital Fund

In June, the Scottish Government made capital funding in addition to the original revenue-only allocation available and the Outer Hebrides CLLD LAG was successful in securing almost £95,000 of this which they put towards a Capital Fund. One of the successful applicants were Neuro Hebrides who were given funding to purchase two beach wheelchairs to enable beach access for those with limited mobility. Neuro Hebrides is presently working in partnership with Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn in Ness and Tagsa Uibhist in Benbecula to enable people across these areas (and beyond) to borrow a beach wheelchair. Details about how to book will be made available later this year.

Nicky, a Neuro Hebrides member, recently used the Beach Wheelchair from Tolsta Community Development and said:
“It's been such a long time since I've been to a beach as my legs are so wobbly, so it was wonderful to be able to use the beach wheelchair. Just to be back on the sand, to listen to the waves and feel the sea breeze on my face, was so lovely. I felt like I'd got a little bit of me back from a time when I used to be down the beach every day. Along with the very kind friends who had volunteered to give me a push, it turned out to be such a special afternoon despite the weather. I was on such a high for a long time afterwards.”



For CLLD to be community-led, we need your input. We are keen to hear from our communities about how best to support you. To get involved, please contact us, in Gaelic or English:

✉ ohclld@cne-siar.gov.uk

📱 @outerhebridesclld
@OHYLAG



Political Engagement

In November 2023, five Youth LAG members attended the Scottish Rural and Islands (Youth) Parliament in Fort William. They participated in workshops about various topics relevant to Islands and Rural Scotland, allowing them the space to share their opinions and life experiences. Mairi Gougeon, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Land Reform, came along to listen to the statements they created for each of the topics. Resulting from this, the Youth LAG received an invitation to attend a parliamentary debate about rural matters, hosted by Ms Gougeon in the Scottish Parliament on January 18th. James Muir and Catherine Thomson attended as Outer Hebrides representatives.

Catherine said:
“Sitting in the chamber and listening to the debate was surreal and improved my understanding of politics. Our statements were brought to the debate with Mairi advocating for our voices to be heard. Hopefully in the future our actions will make a difference but only time will tell! Prior to the debate we had the fantastic opportunity to meet the First Minister and his Cabinet Secretaries. It was great to have one-to-one session with MSPs to discuss topics that we are passionate about and for the First Minister to speak to us. I never thought in a million years I would ever be in this position!”



YLAG Fund

The YLAG decided to put a substantial proportion of their budget – £8,500 – towards their own fund. Applicants could apply for up to £4,000 and their proposed project had to significantly benefit young people in the Outer Hebrides as well as align with at least one of the Youth LAG's priorities to be eligible. A total of ten applications were received requesting in excess of £22,000 and after a lengthy meeting in which the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal were debated, the available funds were divided between six successful organisations.

Ross Budge, who recently joined the Outer Hebrides Youth LAG, said:
“Being involved with the YLAG is a great opportunity for young people to get involved with and experience community development. This was my first direct experience of working with government funding and it was rewarding and motivating to see how much a group of young people can accomplish in such a short time frame.”