

Weel Bressa, Whit News?

Bressay Development update

BDL AGM. Thank you to everyone who attended our AGM, or sent comments/messages of support. BDL have gained two new directors - Malcolm Innes and Heather Christie, who have jointly taken on the role of Vice Chair. Stuart Barton is our new Chair, Sheila Tulloch continues as treasurer and Beatrice Lowe as Secretary.

Malcolmson Architects have been appointed to re-imagine Speldiburn - inside and out!

We are delighted to welcome Ali Mason as our new Speldiburn Cook. Ali will be running the cafe this year with continued help from Claire Davenport.

Claire Davenport has also begun a 3-month post with BDL in which she will undertake a green audit of Speldiburn and research and share local examples of environmentally friendly heating, gardening and transport ideas.

BDL met with Hazel Sutherland (Shetland Amenity Trust Interim Chief Executive) to hear about the Trust's plans for Bressay Lighthouse. The Lighthouse complex will be offered up for sale and is likely to go out for expressions of interest in April. The SAT Trustees are keen that the site can continue to provide a role within our community. We have been exploring possible usage and funding options, should Bressay folk like this to become a community owned asset, and the possibility of renting the site from the SAT.

BDL are exploring options for an island wide housing survey using help from the Island Housing Fund

Planting days at the Bressay Community Woodland will be held in March, and everyone is invited along to an open day on the 20th of February. See page 3 for more details!

Welcome to our 1st newsletter for 2022. Please feel free to get in touch with any photos, stories and what's on that you'd like to see in our next issue. Have a view or question regarding any of the projects we've mentioned? Drop along Speldiburn, call Chris on 07748 926454, or email us at info@bressay.org

Changes at Speldiburn



Work has begun on a new health clinic at Speldiburn. Our former library, or the now aptly named GP room, is being transformed into a clinic with separate waiting area. The pilot project is part of a new model of health care designed to improve Bressay's health service which began with the 'Caring For Bressay' project, a joint partnership between the NHS and Bressay Community Council.



Christmas at Speldiburn; Mariette Lowe, stall holders and visitors at our Christmas Market on the 5th of December and volunteer Beverly Paton helping at our Speldiburn Christmas lunch which took place on the 18th and 19th of December.

What's ons

Drumming Workshops with percussionist Renzo Spiteri. The free sessions are open to all but must be booked at www.curiouspilgrims.com
Saturday 19th Feb / Sunday 27th Feb / Sunday 6th March / Sunday 13th March.

Wire Knitting lampshade workshop with Helen Robertson. This workshop is free. To book a place email info@bressay.org or call Rebecca on 820706. Saturday 5th March and Sunday 6th March.

500 is back on in the Bressay Hall, Wednesday evenings at 7.15

Speldiburn Cafe is open 11.00 - 3.00 on Fridays and from 11.30 - 3.00 on Saturdays - Parkrun breakfasts from 9.30. Speldiburn GAN Shop is open 12.30 - 2.30 Fridays and Saturdays.

Happy birthday Bressay Parkrun

Bressay Parkrun celebrated its 4th birthday on the 20th of January. 37 folk braved the elements to do the weekly, timed run from the Maryfield, via Ham, to Speldiburn. The birthday cake competition proved a great success! Well done to all involved.



Regular Parkrun volunteer Noel Kelly busy with the hot rolls so popular at this time of year.

4G WI-Fi Trial

BDL is grateful to all those who submitted responses to the 2021 broadband survey. As such, we were made aware of a number of locations within Bressay that suffer from consistently poor internet speeds.

Liaison with Shetland Telecom and Shetland Broadband has confirmed that, unfortunately, the installation of fibreoptic high-speed broadband is not anticipated in the near future. Network coverage maps of areas with existing poor connectivity in Bressay implied O2 may have the ability to provide an improved service.

BDL have subsequently purchased and tested throughout the island a stand alone O2 SIM card and 4G mobile router. This is now available for a weekly hire, free of charge, over the next three months by Bressay residents. Those interested in trying out the 4G mobile router will be asked to sign a terms of use form and are invited to contact Chris on c_thomasdyer@hotmail.com to arrange. This will be undertaken on a first come, first served basis.

If you go down to the woods today...

The east side of Bressay is beginning to look a little different at the start of an ambitious new woodland planting project adjacent to the Brough Loch that all are welcome to get involved with over the coming year. You may have noticed Brough resident Lyle Tulloch hard at work in all weathers installing excellent fencing, rabbit wiring and a boardwalk to the loch side for all to access the site and enjoy.

Tree planting in the Bressay Community Woodland will commence this Spring and in advance of the first shovel going into the ground, Bressay Development Ltd is welcoming everyone, regardless of experience, to attend an information day at Speldiburn on Sunday 20th February, between 2-4pm.

There will be the opportunity to learn more about the project from Directors and members of Bressay Development alongside a tree sale, images and short films about the gardens and woodland areas of Bressay, demonstrations and insights into the wildlife of the east side of Bressay. The café will also be open for tea and homebakes. Anyone interested in getting involved in any aspect of the project, or who'd like to be registered for a 1 hour tree planting slot can contact us through info@bressay.org or calling Chris Dyer on 07748 926454.

Over the next three years, 3000 trees comprising species native to Shetland, including rowan, downy birch and common alder, will be planted and the impact of rewilding and excluding sheep grazing monitored through annual quadrant vegetation surveys coordinated by Christine Skene of the RSPB. Beautifully illustrated interpretation panels have been produced by members of the Bressay Development Woodland subgroup, led by talented Bressay illustrator Heather Christie. A ruinous planticrub will also be rebuilt as a seating area and viewing platform, showcasing the important traditional Shetland vernacular architecture.

Planting of the first one thousand tree saplings will take place over the last two weekends in March (19th, 20th & 26th, 27th) with all welcome and no prior experience required. The trees are part-funded by the Woodland Trust and provided by Shetland Amenity Trust Woodland Team whilst wider project funding comes from the Suez Communities Trust.



Lyle Tulloch, has completed the fencing work and here he is finishing off the new boardwalk. It's now an easy and clean walk to the loch side. Such a beautiful spot on a fine day.

Bee friendly gardening in Bressay

Fun Facts

There are 270 species of bees. Some variants are incredibly resilient and can be found just 1000km from the North Pole

The largest bee is the Patagonian flying mouse which can grow up to 4cm long.

Over 100 species have been identified in Scotland

Bees have remarkable adaptations such as temporarily disconnecting their wings to shake and gain heat.

They also hibernate in north facing areas in the winter so they can have an even longer lie in.

In their most productive times, they need to drink nectar at least every 40 minutes and if you see one struggling either give it some water mixed with sugar or place it on the nearest flower.



Flowering currants provide colour and an early nectar source



Trees, like this willow, can provide a surprisingly useful nectar feeding station.

Bressay History Group

Bressay History Group have begun researching and designing new displays for our 2022 summer season. One of our new exhibitions will celebrate our wonderful Shetland cow, once so necessary to crofters here in Bressay. We are seeking an old fashioned milk kin and butter making items to add to our display. If you are able to lend us these, or other items, including photographs, please let us know, get in touch with Barbara, Bernard or Marion, or email us at bressayheritage@btinternet.com

Here and there you might spy a few nascent daffodil shoots after a milder winter, average temperatures ranging from 4°C to 6°C. Pretty as they are, daffodils don't attract many insects including bees.

But luckily Bressay resident John Bateson has provided a great deal of assistance to BDL on how to attract these key pollinators to expand both flower and vegetable crops in the Shetland climate. We will publish various articles in the forthcoming editions of 'Weel Bressa' on what kinds of bees to look out for, which flowers are the most attractive to bees and what kind of other measures can be taken to protect both bees and flowers.

A keen naturalist John came to study the furry pollinators ten years ago as a result of his interest in permaculture; in recent years he has noticed several varieties appearing including the Buff-tailed bumblebee and the Early Bumblebee. John has charted these sightings to the Shetland Biological Records Centre to ensure accurate data on populations.

His knowledge equally extends to the havoc wrought by pesticides some of which have now re-entered the UK after Brexit. Pesticides, such as Neonicotinoids, affect the navigation skills of bees needed for their safe return to their nests. The chemical was banned for agricultural use in the EU in September 2020 after a staggering 40% decline in bee populations over the winter of 2018-2019.

He warns there may be a host of unforeseen consequences as pesticides return, such as knock-on effects on production levels of food crops that necessitate healthy bee populations for their growth. According to the Scottish Wildlife Trust, one in every three bites of food depends on bees. John cites a practice in the United States whereby monoculture crops such as almond tree plantations employing portable hives have noticed sudden unexpected bee losses. These events are a stark signal that ecosystems don't always benefit from human intervention.

John is also a believer in a wilder garden to ensure ample flowering time. It may seem controversial but John recommends leaving some parts unmown to encourage later flowering plants such as Orchids to appear. In addition, he has noticed that each flowering and permaculture season can have very different yields. Read our next newsletter for advice on a range of flowers that have attracted bees to the Bateson Hunchibanks garden.

Knowes Croft & Garden Vegetables

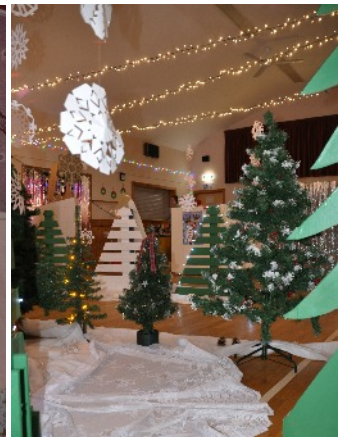
Would you be interested in signing up to a veg box scheme? I will be running a trial veg box scheme from May to December and I'm looking for folk who'd be keen to receive a weekly supply of ultra fresh, seasonal, veg, herbs and salad, grown at the Knowes without pesticides or herbicides. If you'd like to take part please call Beatrice on 820 773 or email bealowe2@yahoo.co.uk.





A Magical Winter Wonderland

The Bressay Under 5's group transformed Bressay Hall into a winter wonderland just in time for Christmas. With Covid putting a stop to the bairns' party for a second year running, the walk through wonderland was designed to allow folk to meander through the Hall or take the option to stop a while for tea and homebakes. Small games along the way entertained the bairns with the final stop Santie's fabulous grotto! A huge congratulations needs to go to the organisers and their helpers for creating such a beautiful and enjoyable event. Truly magical!



Freya Paton. Benji Wills and his sisters Eliza and Anna meet Santie. Charlie Christie-Henry with Mum Amanda MaCartney. The organisers - Karen, Beverley, Gemma and Nicole. Cousins Cameron and Layla pose for a photo with santie and their Auntie Becky (elf for the day).



Ella and Magnus Tulloch pose with a friendly snowman. Orla Anderson with her big brother Nathan. Marsie Harkness with mum Chloe Hanson. Pals Ruby, River, Mariette and Willow. Santie's peerie helpers - Dani Manson and Mariette Lowe. Beryl Williamson.