

Weel Bressa, Whit News?

We need you! Are you interested in community activities? Do you have ideas for a thriving and resilient Bressay? We are looking for new committee members. We meet monthly, and welcome members even if they can only commit their time to the meetings, as it's important to hear as many island voices as possible to direct our projects. Please do contact us if you're interested.

Look up www.bressay.org, email info@bressay.org, or call 01595 820 706.

Our Development Officers, Heather and Aimee, are always happy to hear your comments, questions and suggestions about any of the projects in this issue, or any other ideas.

Weel Bressa, Whit tink you? An update

As we said in our last newsletter, we'll soon be asking you to tell us about your life on Bressay. Along with Bressay Community Council, we'll be consulting you to ensure that we serve your needs as best we can. We'd like to identify issues facing island residents, identify what facilities and amenities residents need and would like, and to prioritise our work. There will be several parts to our consultation;

A paper survey - included in this newsletter. Please fill it in and let us know what you think of life on your island. You can hand the finished survey in to Speldiburn or the Mail Shop by **April 28th**. Or please just email us with your thoughts.

Interviews with as many organisations and businesses on the island as we can. If you'd like to take part, get in touch.

Open afternoon at Speldiburn. Sunday 19th March. 2-4 pm. A chance for everyone to identify and celebrate our island's strengths. There will be art activities for bairns and Community Council Members and BDL directors will be around to chat. The cafe will be open for tea and homebakes.

Lighthouse open day. Look out for a date in April. Visit the lighthouse and tell us your views on its future. We'll show examples of other community and privately owned lighthouses and are keen to hear your ideas too. We'll also use this day to listen to your opinions on housing in Bressay - see inside for more details.

A focus group/discussion session, to ensure BDL's values continue to align with the island's needs. It will be an enjoyable couple of hours, with refreshments provided. The date will be advertised soon. Please let us know if you'd like to take part in this.

SURF Award win

Bressay Development Ltd won the Community Regeneration Category at the annual SURF Awards, for the re-purposing of the school into the Speldiburn Community Hub. SURF (Scotland's Regeneration Forum) aims to improve the lives and opportunities of residents in Scotland's disadvantaged communities. The award recognises best practice and innovation.

In October, judges spent time at Speldiburn with staff and volunteers. They had a strong sense of Speldiburn being run for the community by the community, and thought that we had broad appeal and made the most of the space. Aimee and Heather accepted the award on behalf of everyone involved in Speldiburn's development. Through SURF, BDL will also be helping others to benefit from the lessons we have learned on our journey.



A Merry Time!

December was full of festive fun. The popular Over 60s lunch made a welcome return and Speldiburn also served delicious Christmas Lunches over two days. The bairns were also entertained with events at the hall and Speldiburn. More pictures on the back cover!

There's lots more coming up in Bressay. See inside for details.



Above: Full of cheer at the Over 60s Christmas Meal. Bressay Hall volunteers provided a 3-course meal and James Leask, Norman Goudie and friends provided the music.



What's On

BRESSAY HALL.

Badminton. Monday evenings from 7pm. Equipment is provided, or feel free to bring your own. No need to book.

Bowls. Tuesday evenings from 7.15pm. All equipment is provided. No need to book.

Cards - 500. Wednesday evenings, 7.15pm.

Sports Club Sunday Teas. 2 - 5pm, Sunday 9th April. Raffle. Homebake and raffle donations very welcome!

Annual Plant Sale. Sunday 28th May, 3-5pm. In aid of refugees. So save plants, cuttings and garden bric a brac, and sew extra seeds. Homebakes and volunteers welcome - save the date in your diaries for Sunday teas and a natter in the hall!

SPELDIBURN

Wednesday Social Afternoons, until the end of March. Wednesdays, 2- 4pm, Big Room, Speldiburn. Activities and/or chat, free tea and tab nabs, Good As New Shop open with books free to borrow.

Lifts available from the Red Cross 01595 695498. Please get in touch for more details.

Upcoming Workshops at Speldiburn. To book, contact info@bressay.org or call Speldiburn 820706 :

- **Meditation Workshop with Katrina Christie.** 2-4pm. Sunday 16th April.
£5 per person. Tea, coffee and biscuits included. Please bring blanket/mat, water, notepad, pen.
To book, phone Katrina on 07747735521 or shetlandspirit@gmail.com.
- **Knitting: Helen Robertson Fizzy Fair Isle,** 1-7pm. 22nd & 23rd April. **FREE.**
Learn Helen's way of getting three colours in a row, but only using 1 or 2 at a time. All yarn provided. You can choose to attend one or both days. Please bring a packed lunch. Tea, coffee and cake available.
- **Art: Expressive wildflowers in a container with Heather Christie.** 1.30 - 4.30pm. Sunday 11th June.
£20 including refreshments and basic materials. Pencils, charcoals, acrylics, brushes and paper provided or bring your favourite art materials. Use any medium you like or experiment with something new. Suitable for all levels.

Do you have an idea for a workshop? Please do get in touch if you'd like to hire a room for your session, as we're always looking to host workshops at Speldiburn!

Cafe and Good As New Shop Winter opening hours.

Friday 11am- 3pm, Saturday from 9.30 - 11am for Park Run Breakfasts only.

BRESSAY UNDER 5s. Friday mornings from 10.30 to 12.30am. £2 per family, all welcome.

PARKRUN Every Saturday! New meeting place outside the Heritage Centre. Turn up around 9.15am for a 9.30am start.

Bressay Stone Masons and Quarries

Bressay History Group has begun a new project exploring Bressay's quarries and the men who worked them. Bressay is famous for providing the building and roofing stone to Lerwick and beyond. Bressay's stone masons also seem to have been in high demand for work in Lerwick during the 19th and early 20th century. An account dated September 1831, from Joseph Irvine, Merchant, Lerwick, bought of Gilbert Laurenson, shipped on board the sloop Brisk, two thousand slate for account of the Revd John Bryden, Sandsting. James Laurenson at Midgarth in 1841 was Gilbert's son and also a stone mason.

Alongside the slate quarries on the hillsides at Aith, there was a commercial quarry at the Bard, skew quarry on the banks east of Aith, a flag quarry below the Ord and a clay quarry at the Wirlie. There are small but significant quarries near Gardie and in the Silver Valley. Small quarries can be found near to almost every croft house, the stone being quarried as near to site as possible. Bernard took on to survey the house and quarry at the Lower Daal, proving that the quarry (directly north of the house) is large enough to provide all the stone required.

Bressay History Group would welcome any information on masons, quarries and related stories.

Right: John Scott standing in the Skew quarry at the Brecks of Aith. The most recent quarrying here took place when the Shetland Amenity Trust built the new Museum. Skew stones were cut and pulled down the slope to be taken by boat back to Lerwick.



Bressay Community Woodland

We have received our RSPB Nature of Scotland Award!

Last year, the Bressay Community Woodland Project won the Forest and Woodland category at these prestigious awards, in recognition for supporting wildlife and bringing the community together.

The woodland group are planning more planting days this year for the far end of the woodland site, on **25th & 26th March**. Watch this space for more information. We were delighted to have the community's help last year and hope you will help us again in 2023. So save the dates, and come and help us create this unique and important legacy for Bressay.



Happy 5th Birthday Park Run!

Parkrunners celebrated this huge milestone with a selection of cakes made for their annual bakeoff. They thanked Kate Wills and Hannah Bateson for 5 years of sterling work as Park Run Directors and welcomed Mairi Thomson and Wendy Borill into the roles. Our thanks to everyone who makes this weekly event an enduring success and which helps keep Bressay on the map.

Views at the lighthouse

Have a look around the lighthouse - let us know your views on the future of the lighthouse and on housing on Bressay.

Bressay Lighthouse

BDL have been asked by Shetland Amenity Trust to look at possibilities for community ownership of the lighthouse as part of their process of selling the site.

Owning, running and maintaining a 'listed' site can be costly, and its refurbishment is a massive undertaking. It needs a good and viable business plan, probably different from Shetland's current lighthouses. A new trust would need to be set up with members from across the community, hopefully including those with some relevant experience. Alternatively, the lighthouse could be sold to a private buyer with a commercially viable plan. Both routes could potentially provide employment on the island.

Shetland Amenity Trust will open the lighthouse for an afternoon for us so that we can show people round and listen to their views. We'll provide examples of other community and privately owned lighthouses. We'd love to hear from you if you have ideas on the day, or get in touch with us here.

Danadays



c.1933. The family of John H. Sanderson, assistant keeper from 1931-35 at Bressay Lighthouse. There were 6 siblings altogether. The 3 eldest were born in Orkney, and the next 2 here in Bressay. A 6th child was born at John's next station, Bell Rock. John himself was a 'lighthouse baby', born at Hoy, and his father Matthew was Principal Keeper at Bressay 1906-09. *Courtesy of Fiona and Shiona Sanderson, who would love to find out more about their Bressay connections - please contact us if you can help.*

Thank you Ali and Alison!



We were recently sorry to say goodbye to Ali, Speldiburn's amazing cook. We've thoroughly enjoyed her delicious cooking, amazing homebakes and boundless energy. Thank you for such hard work in the cafe, and for always having a cheery hello. Although she has left us, she has not gone far. We wish her the best of luck with her new enterprise, the Mail Shop.

We'd also like to say a huge thank you to Alison Reid, who is moving on from the shop and post office. She originally worked there for her mum Ann and step-dad Bryan, and then ran the Mail Shop and Post Office herself, ensuring 14 years of continuity to this much needed service. She will be missed and we wish her well on her new adventures.

Housing

What are your thoughts on housing in Bressay? What have your experiences been of finding somewhere to live here? Do you know anyone who wants to live here but can't find housing that meets their needs? Is where you currently live suitable for your needs? There is vacant council land at Fullaburn that has been looked at in the past - is that still a good place for new community led housing?

We'd love to hear your views - whether you are in your own home or a rented one, whether you are a current permanent resident or are someone who would like to settle here but hasn't found the right place. Your views count whether you are thinking of leaving or have been on a waiting list for a house for a long time. We'll be collating thoughts about housing need and thinking about the best way forward.

Lighthouse & housing views
Look around the lighthouse
Date and time to be announced soon!

The Bean Shop Coffee • Art & Craft • GAN Shop • Wi-Fi



Serving light lunches,
tasty soup and fantastic
homemade cakes!



- Winter Hours -

FRIDAY 11.00 - 3.00

SATURDAY PARK RUN 9.30 - 11.00

Good As New Shop Open during cafe hours

Please just ask in the cafe or the office if you'd like a look.

Outwith cafe hours, please arrange a time with us by email or phone.

2.00
to
4.00

**Winter Wednesdays
Social Afternoons**

Free
drinks
and
tabnabs

We are working with the Red Cross to provide transport, to encourage anyone who would not otherwise attend. Please contact the Red Cross directly on 01595 695498.

We need you!

Speldiburn's regular activities and events only happen because of the dedicated work of volunteers - everyone from the directors to the Good As New Shop staff. We thank everyone for their hard work - but we need more hands on deck! If you're interested in becoming a director or helping at GAN, please do contact us or pop in and have a chat, even if you can only give limited time.

We are also looking for new members of the cafe staff team!

Speldiburn Cafe needs a passionate and capable cook, with good baking skills, an interest in local food, and good planning and stock management skills. May - Oct 5/6 days per week. £12/hr.

We are also looking for extra staff to help serve. Get in touch for more details.

Winter fun for all!

Here are just some of the photos from Bressay's festive events at the Hall and Speldiburn. Thank you to everyone who made these events happen in the busy lead up to Christmas, and congratulations on making each occasion so full of festive fun!

Clockwise from the top: The Over 60s Christmas lunch volunteers. Cookie decorating at Speldiburn: Pip Mason, River Tulloch, Ella Tulloch, Benji Wills and Patty Mason. Bressay Bairns waiting eagerly for gifts from Santie at the Bairns Christmas Party. Speldiburn Cafe staff all set for serving Christmas dinners - Joanie, Ali, Dolly, Ava, Sky and Andrew.



Bressay Up Helly Aa returns!

After two years, BUHA was back! Jarl Ian Harkness, Thorir Hund, and his squad were brilliant, and a fantastic night of squads, music and dancing was enjoyed at the Hall. Congratulations to everyone involved for a brilliant day, and for a fantastic £1,306 raised for Cancer Research UK at the beard shaving.

Speldiburn was delighted to host the Jarl Squad's breakfast, and you can still see our display of photos from past years for another few weeks. Thank you to Robyn Harkness for letting us share these photos.



Are you a budding photographer, artist or crafter?

We are currently putting together a summer programme for the Speldiburn exhibition space. Contact us for a chat.
In partnership with Shetland Arts, we can offer use of a selection of frames.

Share a skill

If you have a skill, why not bring it to our Winter Wednesday Social Afternoons? You could even share your craft or other practical or creative skills in a workshop? Get in touch.