



# Island of Hoy Development Trust

Revenge, Naval Hall, Longhope, Orkney, KW16 3PG  
Telephone 01856 701356

## Report from the Chair on activities undertaken in the financial year ending March 2019

**Community Fund:** Funds from the Turbine again provided support to various groups and organisations on the island. Grants were awarded to several groups for the employment of crucial staff to keep their heritage centres operational. The advice and financial support awarded to the Longhope Lifeboat Museum enabled them to engage a key fundraising person and part-time custodian. As a consequence of our support they went on to raise over £50,000 for essential maintenance to the old Lifeboat station (now museum) prior to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Longhope Lifeboat disaster in March 2019. Funds were also awarded to various community groups including the Haey Hope Club, Hoy Hounds, North Walls Community Centre, the Hoy Centre and Skaldic.

The Training and Learning Fund (TLF) has continued to be popular and grants have been awarded to individuals for driving lessons, open university courses, training for HGV and VHF licences, courses to qualify as a nail technician, a yacht master day skipper and a certification in open water diving, amongst other things. The Event support fund was also utilised, benefitting those groups trying to provide transport and accommodation for visiting artists and musicians.

**Community Hall:** The Trust continues to develop the strategy for the management of the hall. New members have joined the committee and some progress has been made with the review of health and safety policies and procedures. Hall usage remains constant with the various community organisations and clubs continuing to make good use of the facilities.

**Community Bus:** The bus service continues to deliver a regular timetabled schedule and has seen steady use by residents and visitors alike. Passenger numbers remain stable with principal users being those holding concessionary passes. Financial support to maintain the bus service continues to derive from ticket purchases for journeys, from Transport Scotland's Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), Orkney Islands Council's Community Transport Grant Scheme (CTGS) fund, plus important subsidies from the Trust's own finances.

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The Trust continued to investigate replacing the vehicles with a greener option, i.e. a wholly electric vehicle, to reduce running costs and carbon emissions. Towards the end of 2018, the Trust began discussing a collaboration with Community Energy Scotland as part of the ReFLEX initiative, a project aimed at the use of renewable energy and backed by UKRI through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund. This project may help to provide electric vehicles and the infrastructure necessary to support them.

**Youth, Leisure and Heritage:** Developing our Heritage initiative, Legacies of Conflict, still remains important to the Trust but beyond providing financial support to the temporary Scapa Flow exhibition at Lyness, this project has not progressed significantly in the last year.

The Hoy Hoolie was held again during this period and was extremely successful, with much community support and many volunteers from the community helping to make the weekend a great success.

With the Orkney Islands Council (OIC) no longer able to maintain and develop the playpark at Longhope, a community group decided to attempt to take over its management and development. The group has become a sub-group of the Trust, with the Chair of the group being a Trust director. The initial aim of the project is to engage with OIC and negotiate the potential for this asset to be taken over by the community. Fundraising activities have already been undertaken.

**Enhancing Health & Wellbeing:** The Trust is participating in a project supported by the Scottish Government Aspiring Communities Fund and in collaboration with four other Development Trusts, Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO) and Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE). Funding was achieved at the end of 2018 and this enabled a Wellbeing co-ordinator for the island to be employed in March 2019. The project is initially funded until 31st March 2020 and will focus on developing local initiatives that reduce the barriers for older people accessing beneficial services.

**Digital Connectivity:** The IoHDT's 2018 community wide survey showed that over 50% of respondents were fairly or very dissatisfied with the current digital service on Hoy. Other feedback highlighted how important good digital connections were to the sustainability of the island and the need to stem the growing problem of digital exclusion. The Trust continues to liaise with the Community Council and relevant external stakeholders, but little progress has been made and the Government initiative Reaching 100% (R100) seems to have stalled somewhat.

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**Community Engagement and Development plan:** In March 2018, the Trust launched a community survey created with the support of the Scottish Community Development Centre, with the aim of finding out what the local community felt about living in Hoy and Walls. The Trust went on to hold several sessions to feedback results and to garner any further thoughts. Subsequently several focus groups were held with representatives from community groups, the Community Council, IoHDT, Orkney Islands Council, Voluntary Action Orkney, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Island councillors. The aim of these meetings was to start discussions around the key priorities identified by the community and to agree the next steps in creating a Community Action Plan. The IoHDT recognised that the delivery of the communities' priorities was beyond the scope and responsibility of a single organisation, hence the need for a co-ordinated and integrated approach with other island organisations working together to achieve the community's aspirations. Work on the community action plan continues.

**Trust Structure:** The Trust continues to review its operations to improve the effectiveness of the organisation. In February 2019, the Trust instigated a review of its current staffing structure to ensure that it was robust and could meet the needs of the organisation both now and in the future. The results of this will enable the Trust to identify gaps and restructure in order to deliver projects more effectively.

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