

AGM Report for 2013-2014



Introduction from Chair

This is the annual report for the year which ended in April 2014, but so much has happened since we have put in an update below. Most of these new developments have relied on our excellent staff who have worked really hard since An Cridhe opened, and we are most grateful to them. We are also very grateful to the directors, members of Development Coll and those volunteers who have helped to make the events go smoothly. Without this input from the community this would not truly be An Cridhe, the heart of the community.



Lavinia Maclean-Bristol

Achievements and Performance

The financial year 2013/2014 was the first full year of trading for An Cridhe and Coll Bunkhouse since opening in 2012. Operation of the two buildings therefore was the overall priority of the organisation with significant resources committed to business development, especially relating to Coll Bunkhouse.



Undoubtedly the greatest success of DC during the year under review is the impact An Cridhe (AC) has had on the island. The

number of people using the gym, attending events, using the sports facilities, has risen considerably, and AC has been used again and again as a focal point for social events, concerts, theatre, the annual panto, and festivals.

“The initial buzz and interest in the gym at An Cridhe has continued through to 2014, helped by the support of local organisations and fundraising, allowing us to have a gym which now has an excellent selection of equipment for the space and the size of the population. A number of local sports clubs continue to thrive and the primary school children have school PE

lessons in the hall. In addition to all this activity, the hall is proving very popular for hire by families and small groups of people including visitors in order to play sports, especially during bad weather. The community of Coll should take great pride in the level of sport and fitness activities that are enjoyed throughout the year.” Carol Flett

Particular effort was made to develop activities which utilised the combined facilities of An Cridhe and Coll Bunkhouse. This approach proved highly successful, with music and wildlife events being held for the first time at An Cridhe.



Music to Our Ears

In June 2013 An Cridhe and Coll Bunkhouse hosted Music Coll, a residential programme for highly talented young chamber musicians, organised by The Tunnell Trust for Young Musicians. A nine day residency took place using Coll Bunkhouse as accommodation and An Cridhe as rehearsal space, culminating in three days of chamber music performances to a paying audience. The event proved to be a great success and the Trust committed to returning in 2014.



'For 10 days all four groups rehearsed and received tuition from our five tutors for at least six hours each day. At the end of the event we hosted three public recitals at An Cridhe on Coll which were extraordinarily well received. We also hosted a young persons' concert and workshop with over 35 youngsters enjoying a fantastic afternoon of music from the Atéa Quintet and the Maxwell Quartet.'
Jonathan Tunnell

Wildlife Exploration Hosted From Coll

In August 2013 we hosted ‘Coll of the Sharks’ in partnership with Basking Shark Scotland. The three day event comprised of marine tours around the island with opportunities to dive with the sharks and incorporated an evening reception at An Cridhe with presentations from wildlife experts. Diving tours and accommodation were at full capacity over the weekend and approximately 100 people attended the presentations.



In April 2014 the island once again hosted another wildlife event, this time in the form of the Coll Bird Festival. This was developed and led by An Cridhe but was operated in partnership with RSPB Scotland, the Scottish Ornithologists’ Club and the British Trust for Ornithology. A series of activities took place, including guided walks, boat trips to the neighbouring island of Lunga and presentations in An Cridhe. Once again, the event proved to be a great success and will take place again in April 2015.

Staffing Structure and Sustainability

Significant attention was also directed to the staffing structure of An Cridhe and Coll Bunkhouse in order to continue progressing towards the point where the two buildings are self-sustaining. Revenue funding from the Big Lottery drew to a close in January 2014 and it was important to ensure continuity by balancing the staffing needs of the organisation with the financial constraints.

With the help of business coach Jim Bennett (SKS Associates), an interim approach was developed for February to April 2014 and a new staffing structure was identified for the following financial year, starting May 2014. This reduced the costs associated with management in order to invest further in operations. As a result, in May 2014 the Development Manager hours were reduced from 35 to 21 per week, Operations Manager hours were reduced from 40 to 20 per week at a lower rate of pay, a separate finance role was created at seven hours per week and two new part-time positions of Operations Assistant were created amounting to 32 hours per week in peak season and 10 hours per week.



Keeping up Communication

A news bulletin of what is going on at An Cridhe to encourage the community to visit and attend the various activities is sent out by email and it is symptomatic that this has to be done fortnightly to accommodate everything that goes on. This bulletin is emailed to a very wide audience, not just the members, and helps to ensure the building is used as much as possible and events are well attended.

Active steps were taken during the year to ensure that DC was as open as possible with its activities and achievements. A new website was planned and launched at the beginning of 2014, with the help of Ross Evans who used his graphic and website skills together with George McConnachie to produce a dramatic and elegant new website. This took some time to complete and keeping it up to date is an on going project.



Other DC Work

Local development work for other DC projects was constrained by the fact that the organisation did not have resources to carry out any paid activities in this regard. Since the funding for Local Development Officer posts finished in 2012, DC has had to rely on the voluntary activity of Directors in order to progress with the priorities outlined in the Growth Plan in 2010/2011.

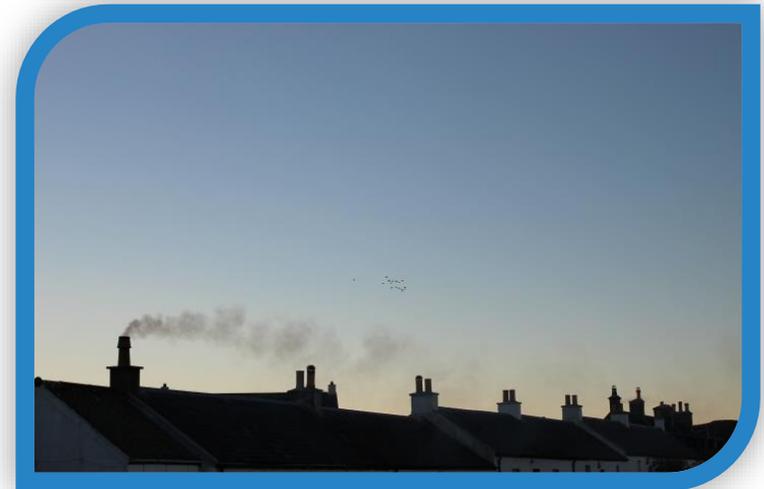
The two areas which the organisation was able to progress were in relation to housing and mobile phone coverage on the island. Two distinct projects were developed in this regard in order to make the most of opportunities arising and to pursue the priorities identified by the local community.

Housing

An initial public meeting was held in November with the aim to re-establish interest in forwarding an affordable housing project. A community housing group was formed by interested locals and was led by Director Seonaid Maclean Bristol and supported by Rural Housing Scotland (RHS). RHS had innovative project called 'Our Island Homes' which was an architectural competition that aimed to design housing for an island location to be built for under £100,000. This project stimulated further interest in moving the project forward, and in January it was agreed to research suitable land for housing.

'More social housing is well over due - there hasn't been a social house built since the eighties. There's a dire need.' **An Islander.**

To this end all landowners on the island was approached asking if they were interested in making land available. The housing group agreed in March to seek financial support in order to be able to put in an application to the Scottish Land Fund. The ultimate aim of the project will be the creation of new affordable homes on Coll, and in the year under review good progress was made despite a lack of resources. (See update at end for further progress that has been made this year)



Mobile Phone Coverage

Mobile coverage on the island has long been an issue and action was highlighted by the community in the survey in 2010 as a priority. An opportunity to progress this presented itself in 2013 when the Scottish Government approached DC regarding a pilot project to improve communications in rural areas. Siting and building of a mobile phone mast was pursued actively throughout the year under review, and by the time this year ended a suitable site was identified by the Scottish Government (and its partners, Mono Consultants and Vodafone) and negotiations with the landowner were well under way.

The business model put forward by the Scottish Government was for DC to act as the local stewards and administrators of the project, with the total build cost of the mast provided by the government and the technology supplied by Vodafone at their own cost. DC were most fortunate that the landowners, Alex and Seonaid Maclean-Bristol, were willing to allow the site to be rented to DC on a yearly rental of £1.

A budget of £165,000 has been provided by the Scottish Government to complete the project and it will be assessed as a potential sustainable commercial model to support the delivery of mobile infrastructure into remote rural areas in future. It was hoped that the mast would be commissioned during the late summer of 2014.



Mobile Phone Coverage Contd.

As owners of the mast, DC will be responsible for its maintenance and the electricity costs. Electricity costs will be covered in the short term by various organisations benefiting from the mobile service. In time other organisations may want to use our mast for their communications which may cancel the need for finding funders to cover these costs. (See update at end for further progress that has been made this year)

'We started speaking to DC back in early 2013 and the project has gradually taken shape based on the idea of funding the deployment of a standard mobile telecoms mast to encourage a mobile operator to provide its services on Coll. This funding has acted as a catalyst for Vodafone to support the project and we have been fortunate to have the cooperation of a local landowner to site the mast in a suitable location. Planning approval has now been granted and we are in the process of finalising a sustainable operational model with DC before commencing the mast deployment at the start of summer 2014.' **Derek Graham, Scottish Futures Trusts**

Other Activities at An Cridhe

The major fund raising activity for the island is the annual half marathon, in which most of the island are involved in one way or another. This event, run by an independent committee, raises around £5,000 every year which goes to good causes around the island. An Cridhe proves to be an excellent venue for the occasion hosting nearly 300 participants. The positive feedback received from the runners demonstrates what a popular and successful event this continues to be.

'A huge thank you to everyone involved in organising the Coll half marathon. It was a fantastic event and incredibly well organised. The attentiveness, friendliness and helpfulness of all involved was excellent.' **Jessica & Ben**



Update for 2014-2015 - What has been happening and looking forward

Much has happened since the year end. Below you can find an update on our on-going projects, mobile phones and housing, since our last year end. In addition there is information on activities and events relating to An Cridhe.

Mobile Phone Project Update 2014-2015

Construction of the mobile phone mast was mostly completed in October 2014. This is the first project of its kind in Scotland and it is using cutting edge technology never tried and tested before which has caused delay in establishing the link between the mast as Glengorm on Mull and Coll.

Contractors visited Coll on Wednesday 14th January to install the dish, commission the site and enable the transmission link to Mull. The signal is expected to go 'live' before the end of January. For further updates please see www.developmentcoll.org/mobile-coverage/.

We remain extremely grateful to Vodaphone, Mono Consultants and the Scottish Government for enabling us to be a front runner in installing 4G mobile phone coverage in rural Scottish areas.

Housing Project Update 2014-2015

We now have five landowners who have responded in full with an offer of sale. We have approached Argyll and Bute Council to ascertain how Coll is placed within their Strategic Investment Plan (SHIP) for 2015-2018. The Council have confirmed we are within the investment plan for two houses on Coll. At the moment, with no up to date housing needs assessment, the Council would not commit to more than two houses. For this reason we engaged with the Council to send out the recent housing needs survey, with DC designing the survey and Argyll and Bute Council undertaking the results processing in order to retain confidentiality.

Argyll and Bute informed us that they no longer support communities with funding from the SHIP unless they are working in partnership with a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). For that reason we contacted active RSLs within the Argyll and Bute area. Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) were the only ones to respond and register an interest to work with us. The housing sub-group has met with ACHA to discuss in general terms a partnership approach. The outcome from the meeting was very positive with ACHA giving some real examples where they have worked with communities to provide social housing and they explained to us how they had engaged with the community on such issues as design and local lettings policy. As a point of interest DC would not be involved in the lettings or management of housing: this would be managed by the RSL.

It is the intention of DC to apply for funding to purchase land plots via the Scottish Land Fund (SLF). Highlands and Islands Enterprise is the agent employed by the Scottish Land Fund to liaise with communities to make these applications. We have communicated with HIE and there is agreement to support our application. DC has also been successful in securing money from Robertson Trust and Investing in Ideas to provide funding for aspects of the project that will allow us to make an application to SLF.

Moving the project forward we anticipate the following next steps

- Results and an understanding of housing demand from the Housing Needs Survey (in progress).

- Options appraisal of Land offered – including site survey, valuation, planning permission. This will be undertaken by ACHA and will be based on a range of criteria relating to the suitability of the land offered.
- Feasibility / Business Plan. Again, ACHA will use the options appraisal to shortlist up to three sites and then assess the feasibility of the project and identify a preferred location.
- Community Consultation. As part of the feasibility study, ACHA and DC will be looking for input from the community on the suitability of the shortlisted sites and to give local residents an opportunity to discuss and feedback on the options.
- Legal Agreement with Registered Social Landlord. Development Coll is not looking to become a Registered Social Landlord or to manage property for rent on Coll. Therefore an appropriate partnership arrangement with an RSL such as ACHA is required. This will mean that the RSL will be responsible for allocation of housing, not DC.
- Application to Scottish Land Fund. The final application and Business Plan will be submitted to SLF around June 2015

An Cridhe Surveys 2014

We are most grateful to everyone who took part in our surveys in 2014 for your valuable feedback. The results have been collated and we will feed this information back to the community prior to the AGM, along with a summary of any changes in pricing, facilities, operations etc. based on the feedback we have received. In the meantime here are some of the highlights on the usage of AnCridhe.

- 87 meetings have been held by 17 different groups/politicians/agencies
- 12 educational or training courses have been hosted in the multi room. This includes Argyll College delivering Spanish, the council delivering civil contingency training and a local resident delivering piano lessons.
- 33 different clubs and groups have used An Cridhe over the year. Activities include sport, performance art and social events
- Over 40 different service providers (i.e. running an event for business rather than a club/group listed above) have used An Cridhe's facilities over the year. Events include sporting classes; Argyll College courses, hairdressing services or theatre shows

- An Cridhe facilities have been used for one or more activities for over 340 days in the year. This equates to usage occurring on over 95% of days available.
- 13 coffee mornings have been held
- Kids Club have organised 62 activities over the year
- 16 performance arts events have occurred over the year
- 73 different people have used the gym over the year
- 59 full time residents used the gym. Based on an estimate of 160 eligible adult users, this equates to 37% of the resident population using the gym
- Excluding Gym use, AC facilities have been used over 540 times for a sporting activity

Events in 2015

Please see the list of confirmed events taking place at An Cridhe throughout 2015 at the end of the brochure. We hope to add more events in the coming months and we are always open to suggestions for future events.

The An Cridhe website is currently being updated in order to make it more user-friendly. The intention is for the website to offer an up to date listing of special events such as theatre, cinema, music etc. and also of regular exercise classes, groups and activities taking place from week to week.

The easiest way to keep up to date with all the events at An Cridhe is to sign up to our email mailing list. If you haven't already signed up and would like to, or you know anyone else who would like to, then please email info@cridhe.co.uk.

Keeping the Community up to date on DC activities

This was one of the priorities in the growth plan in 2010/11: some people in the community felt they did not know enough about DCs activities and on-going projects. We have worked very hard on this over the past year with the updated website, monthly meetings, fortnightly bulletins and the notice board. All Coll residents who are not yet members are most welcome to join.

We are looking forward to another exciting year and hope in the near future to make a start on our plan to establish community priorities for 2015.

Lavinia Maclean-Bristol

Lavinia Maclean-Bristol
Chair
Director Development Coll

Retired and Current Directors

Name	Appointed	Resigned
Seonaid Maclean-Bristol	May 2007	January 2015
Lavinia Maclean-Bristol	April 2006	
John Fraser	July 2007	
Dr Juliette Summers (co-opted)	October 2012	
Nic Smith	December 2012	
Jennifer Royston	January 2014	August 2014
Huw Roberts	February 2014	January 2015
Louis Romeo	February 2013	November 2013
Jennifer Ann Byram	September 2012	December 2013
Sophie Woods	September 2013	December 2013
Jean Peddie	October 2012	July 2013
Arlene Casey (co-opted)	November 2014	
Carol Flett (co-opted)	November 2014	
Margaret Wheeler-James (co-opted)	October 2014	

Events in 2015

Please see below for a list of planned events in 2015, with more still to come. You can keep fully up to date with what's happening at An Cridhe by joining our mailing list – just email info@ancridhe.co.uk to sign up.

14 th /15 th February	Coll & The Cosmos – Stargazing Activities
2 nd March	Theatre – Love 2.0
14 th /15 th March	Coll & The Cosmos – Stargazing Activities
24 th -27 th March	Creative Coll – Painting Holiday
4 th April	Easter Concert
11 th /12 th April	Coll & The Cosmos – Stargazing Activities
18 th /19 th April	Coll & The Cosmos – Stargazing Activities
24 th April	Theatre – Head in the Clouds
3 rd /4 th /5 th July	Music Coll 2015 – Chamber Music Festival (tbc)
11 th July	An Cridhe Ceilidh
24 th July	Fishing Dance
6 th August	Coll Show
7 th August	Coll Show Dance
15 th August	Coll Half-Marathon and Ceilidh
19 th August	Theatre – War of the Buttons
29 th August	Live Music – Wingin' It

Do you have an idea for an event that you'd like to help organise? Then please get in touch!