

COMMUNITY*
LAND SCOTLAND

COMMUNITY LANDOWNERS
CORONAVIRUS RESPONSES

Urras Sgìre Oighreachd Bharabhais Community Company
(Barvas Estate Trust)



After many years of trying to communicate with the private landowners [Urras Sgìre Oighreachd Bharabhais](#) (USOB) - Barvas Estate Trust - purchased approximately 14,000 hectares of croft land and a hatchery in April 2016. Barvas Estate Trust's aims are to manage the community land and assets for the benefit of the community and general public, improving the conditions of life of the community, community development and education about the environment, culture and heritage. The Estate has a population of c.1,500.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown the Trust has been engaged in activities to benefit the local community they serve.

Prescription Delivery Service

During the COVID-19 pandemic Barvas Estate Trust has been helping with the delivery of prescriptions for a local GP surgery. They obtained a small grant from Community Land Scotland to help with the mileage costs of delivering these. This delivery service has been really appreciated with some local residents (particularly the elderly that find it difficult, even during normal circumstances, to find a lift to collect their prescription) saying that they now get their prescriptions quicker than before when they had to pick them up themselves and also some say it is appreciated as they don't have to find transport to the surgery to pick them up as they don't drive.

Ivan says, "the GP surgery approached USOB to cover part of their estate and volunteers came forward and are using their own vehicles. There is the potential of continuing the service once the crisis has passed and it is something the Trust is going to look into. It is also an opportunity to reduce carbon emissions as it will just be one vehicle making multiple deliveries. It could be possible to use an electric vehicle to further reduce emissions from this vital service."



Food Bank

The Trust has also got involved with the local Youth Club parents and Community Hall in setting up and running the local food bank. This has been well received with lots of donations of food and the ability to help those in need. As the consequences of the pandemic will be with the community for some time the Trust has secured funding (from the Wellbeing Fund) to move into premises that will be suitable to continue the good work that the food bank provides. Ivan says, "the service is well used and will continue for as long as it is needed. We all know each other which can be a negative if you want to approach the food bank for the first time. However, many folk have said, after the first time it becomes easier. There is a sense of trust with everyone knowing each other – we know people in and outside of work and there is a sense of wanting to support each other."

Funding

In terms of funding, Ivan said that the Trust has applied to private institutions and foundations as it has been easier, with less rigorous applications and turnaround time quicker especially in these times of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Community

Ivan says, "the community has rallied – there has been an amazing community response. Previously it seemed that the community was becoming more isolated from each other. We all used to have a chat but that had disappeared. The crisis has meant folk are looking out for each other – a return to the old ways. Some people, that maybe didn't know their neighbours before, now do."





FOOD BANK
BARVAS AND BRUE COMMUNITY CENTRE
Commencing Tuesday 12th May 2020
The Food Bank will be Open
Tuesdays 3:15—4pm
Fridays 3:15—4pm



You can contribute and leave food at the centre at the above times.
 Access can be gained via the side door to the left of the entrance and someone will be available to assist you.

The kinds of items that you can donate are:-

Cereal	Tinned Meat	Sugar
Tinned Soup	Tinned Fish	Pasta or Rice
Tinned beans	Tinned Fruit	Tea bags
Tinned Tomatoes	Tinned rice pudding or custard	Long Life Juice
Tinned vegetables (2 dif- ferent types)	Biscuits	Long Life Milk
Jar of sauce	Chocolate	Spread (eg jam, honey, peanut butter)

Please ensure the items are non-perishable, in date and well wrapped.

For those who require items from the food bank... The items will be delivered and dropped off at your...

Concern

In terms of the crisis going forward, there have been only eight cases in the area so far and none of those people went to hospital. The whole community is worried about what will happen when tourism starts again. However as Ivan states, “the community will work together to get out of this crisis as and when / or not it occurs”.

The tourism-based industry of the area has suffered greatly with many businesses losing the Easter / summer market and facing the prospect of going another winter season on reserves.

Community Company

In terms of the organisation itself, USOB has one employee but to ensure they are supported there are regular zoom meetings with the Board to keep up morale. In the future the Trust will be looking to continue with their development, which may change as priorities change, and so benefit the community as best they can. Prior to COVID-19, the Trust carried out an energy efficiency project to help the community come out of fuel poverty. This project also raised awareness in the community about the environment and its protection through using less electricity. The Trust is also in the process of finalising an Asset Transfer of land from the local authority which will enable them to develop without having to remove further land from crofting.

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www.communitylandscotland.org.uk