**Unst Partnership - Chairman’s Report 2018-19**

It has been an eventful year for the Partnership with the purchase of Unit 1, our office, under the Community Asset Transfer scheme and the opening of our second-hand shop in September, with a paid staff member. Unit 1 purchase, the development of the shop and the paid member of staff were funded through a Scottish Land Fund grant.

**Secondhand Shop**

HIE agreed to sell the premises that we rented from them in June and the transaction was completed in November. In the meantime, we had received grant for the purchase of Unit 1 and funding for a Development Officer for one year through a Scottish Land Fund grant. We advertised this post and appointed Kathleen Johnson in September, when the shop began trading. We open two afternoons a week, Thursday and Saturday, and are open on Monday evenings to take in, clean and put out stock for that week.

Response from the community has been excellent and we have a brisk turnover of goods, including household items, furniture, books and Cds/DVDs etc. We do not stock clothes or shoes as our space is limited. We engaged a local man to PAT test electrical goods. We also sell Fair Trade goods and act as an agent for a local jam/chutney enterprise.

Our income has exceeded the expectations of our Business Plan. In September 2019 we will have traded for the full year and we will then have a Participatory Budget event where local voluntary groups make a pitch for project funding. We anticipate having a sum in the region of £300 to distribute.

**Community Skip scheme**

We held a successful Community Skip schemein 2018-19 with six Skip Saturdays taking place and over 50 residents taking out an annual Skip Membership at £45, (a reduced price on last year due to shop funding) and around 20 “occasional users” paying £20 a time. It costs over £600 for each Saturday and this would not have been possible without the support of the community and a grant of £300 from Unst Community Council. With the Shetland Amenity Trust taking metal and white goods, we effectively have three skips. They continue to be well-filled and so far we have not had to turn anyone away.

The new 2019-20 Skip season is already underway and again we have nearly 50 people signed up. We would like to acknowledge our thanks to the local volunteers who have turned out to support the Directors at these events.

**Other Projects**

### We continue to write the “Isles Views” Shetland Times column and it has brought in a useful additional income stream. It also helps to highlight local events such as the Up Helly Aas in Uyeasound and Norwick and some charity events.

### Other income is obtained through our 6Kw Wind Turbine, which continues to work well. We derive a small income from trailer hire, photocopying & printing and our three Community polytunnels, although the running and maintenance costs of these require a small amount of subsidy provided by the shop. A new fence has been put around the Polytunnels although gates still have to be installed. Water access continues to be a problem.

### We continue to run the Unst Partnership website and are in the process of updating the Unst “Walkers are Welcome” information to run on a free website. The Walking guides placed at Saxavord, the Hotel and Gardiesfauld Hostel/Campsite are also needing to be upgraded.

We have put out the 2019 **Unst Tourist map** which nearly covers its cost through local advertisers. We also have copies of the Collaster walking guide, produced last year through a Heritage Lottery project.

With the advent of the **new SIC Recycling Scheme**, we no longer take in plastic bottles or cans. We have no space for this now anyway due the amount of Shop Stock.

**Broadband**

There are some improvements in Broadband with the installation of a 4G network by EE in some parts of the island. People with mobile phones can use this network to improve their access. The SIC is planning to install fast fibre to public service buildings with a £2M grant starting in December 2019. This should be completed by spring 2020. This should then make it easier and cheaper for businesses and home-owners to get connected.

**Shetland Space Centre**

This project still seems to be going ahead and it may hasten the arrival of better broadband if it does. Funding is still being sought by the Centre to set up its operation; and it will also need to satisfy the relevant planning and environmental restrictions.

**Halligarth**

Not much recent progress has been made in developing the house at Halligarth. The National Trust and Shetland Amenity Trust have not been able to secure Heritage Lottery funding to develop the property and it appears that only a minimum amount of work is likely to take place. This is quite disappointing given the earlier plans to transform the building into a Visitor Centre and Café.

**2019-20**

In the year ahead, we will cease to have funding for our Development Officer after September and so will be relying on more volunteer staff to run our operations. It may be that we are able to employ some part-time staff to oversee the running of the shop. We would like to do more in terms of recycling and upcycling but this depends on suitable premises being found as well as the necessary funding.

### As usual, our thanks to all our Directors this year, and to the staff at Bon Accord Accountancy for assisting with our payroll and compiling our annual accounts.

### *Gordon Thomson, Chairman*

### *July, 2019*