

**BALLOT OF THE WEST HARRIS CROFTING COMMUNITY  
DECLARATION OF RESULT: FRIDAY 3 OCTOBER 2008**

I hereby declare that the results of the Ballot of the West Harris Crofting Community was as follows:

**CROFTER VOTE - LUSKENTYRE**

Are you in favour of The West Harris Crofting Trust (Company No: SC34716) applying to the Scottish Government to transfer the estates of Luskentyre, Borve & Scaristavore to the West Harris Crofting Trust as provided for in the Transfer of Crofting Estates (Scotland) Act 1997.

Yes

8

No

0

Turnout 90 % + 1 spoilt

**CROFTER VOTE - BORVE**

Are you in favour of The West Harris Crofting Trust (Company No: SC34716) applying to the Scottish Government to transfer the estates of Luskentyre, Borve & Scaristavore to the West Harris Crofting Trust as provided for in the Transfer of Crofting Estates (Scotland) Act 1997.

Yes

19

No

12

Turnout 96.9%

**CROFTER VOTE - SCARISTAVORE**

Are you in favour of The West Harris Crofting Trust (Company No: SC34716) applying to the Scottish Government to transfer the estates of Luskentyre, Borve & Scaristavore to the West Harris Crofting Trust as provided for in the Transfer of Crofting Estates (Scotland) Act 1997.

Yes

9

No

1

Turnout 100 %

**TOWNSHIP RESIDENT VOTE**

Are you in favour of The Pairc Trust (Company No. 261145) applying to Scottish Ministers for consent to buy the common grazings and associated assets including sporting and mineral rights of Pairc Estate in Lewis, using the provisions of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003: Part 3, Crofting Community Right to Buy?

Yes

97

No

29

Turnout 94 %

mil. 126

23

Derek Mackay  
Returning Officer  
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar  
3 October 2008

**WEST SIDE BUYOUT MINUTES OF MEETING  
HELD 27/05/08 SEILEBOST SCHOOL.**

**Present:**

Mr C Macvicar (B) Mr & Mrs R Macleannan (S) Mr & Mrs M Maclemman (B)  
Mr & Mrs A Macleannan (SC), MR & Mrs N Campbell (SC), Mr N Beaton (H), Mr A  
MacDonald (H), Mr M Mackay (L), Mrs M Mcphee (S), Mr D J Morrison (S), Mr A  
Morrison (S), Mr & Mrs S Bennett (SC),, Mr D Macdonald (H), Mr R Mackinnon (SC),  
Mr H Macleannan (H), Mrs a Rennie (consultant), Mr & Mrs G Cumming (S), Mrs M  
Macleod (S), Mr John MacQuorcodale (L), Mr A Mackay(SC), Mr F Macleannan (S), Mr  
D I Macleannan (S), Mr D A Mackinnon (s), Mr D J Mackay (L), Mr N Macleod (L), Mr  
R Macleod (L), Mr M Mackinnon (L), Mr C Morrison (S), Mr R Macleannan (B)

*Letters in Brackets refers to Township represented.*

**S -Seilebost L Luskentyre B Borve SC Scarista**  
**H Horgabost**

**Apologies:**

Mr M Munro (B), Mr A J Macvicar (B)

*Those who requested a visit by Mrs Agnes Rennie earlier in the day (House bound and unable to attend meeting)*

Mrs M Maccuish (H), Mrs F MacLeod and George Macleod (SC), Mrs M MacDonald (SC), Ms C Macdonald (S), Mr D J Mackay (S).

**Minute:**

Murdo opened the meeting by giving a brief summary as to how the steering group was formed and what has happened to date over the last year. During this period an application was made to the National Lottery and funding was granted for a feasibility study to ascertain the viability of a buyout. The meeting tonight was part of the study process which is being hosted by Mrs A Rennie. Agnes is carrying out the community consultation, part of the feasibility study. Murdo Macmillan is looking at the financial side & Simon Fraser the legal side

**Consultant profile:** Mrs A Rennie gave a short account of her background and the process involved in the Galson Estate buyout of which she was heavily involved in.

***Process:***

- Mrs Rennie remit is to evaluate the local interest in the scheme and to find out what plans the estate would have.
- Valuation of the estate is done independently by the District Valuer
- Following the completion of the study & each household has received a copy there will be a postal vote, possibly in August. A majority of the crofters need to show a majority for the buyout to progress. This is broken down further in that 51% of each estate has to be in favour. Absentee crofters also have a vote.
- Feasibility study is done as one community i.e 3 estates inclusive but there is an option of one or two estates proceeding with a buyout.

***Points for discussion:***

- What it means to the community
- Concerns of the community
- What it means if it goes ahead
- Funding

**What it means to the Community:**

***Opportunities:***

Brain storming from the floor highlighted the following opportunities

***Social prospective-***

- **Affordable housing:** Option of local affordable housing for rent as well as sites for purchase therefore encouraging young families into a socially fragile area at the moment. Therefore securing the future of the school and the long-term future of the west side.

***Local statistics are:***

41% of current housing is self catering or holiday homes.  
Only 1 child Pre School on the West Side.

Ageing population - 37% are over 65, with a total population of 113.

- **Part of common grazing released for sites.** Each township will benefit from any income from rental or sale. ***Legal position of the individual townships remains the same as it is now.***
- **Could the trust have charitable status?** Clarification on this matter is to be sought from a legal representative.
- **Provision of shelter housing** in the township for elderly and therefore releasing crofts.
- **Triple SSSI-** should be considered as a benefit.

***Economic Opportunities-***

The following ideas were submitted by those present:

- Access to the beaches
- Tourism- increased accommodation
- Working from home
- The area's natural resource
- Outdoor activities
- Hydro scheme- currently being looked at in Seilabost by consultants
- Wave energy
- Mobile phone mast rental up for renewal and therefore opportunity to negotiate new rate. The agreement should also include a provision on sub-letting by the phone company.
- Around 5000 hectares of common grazing available
- Looking into Carbon trading schemes. Where businesses are encouraged to plant trees on land to offset their carbon footprint.
- Sheep stock clubs- This suggestion was not seen to be favourable by local a local crofter.
- Alternative croft products-wool insulation
- Horticultural schemes

***Concerns:*** (Points raised by those present are highlighted)

- ***How is the trust formed:*** Majority of the trust has to be crofters.
- ***How does the existing status of the crofter stand:*** The crofter's status remains exactly the same. The crofters commission role in relation to the crofter will be the same as it is currently
- ***Privately owned land in the area:*** This remains the same and will not be owned or managed by the Trust
- ***Who will be the landlord:***; The Trust will be a separate legal entity with each member contributing £1- member's liability in the event of failure will be limited to this.
- ***Concern that "Neighbours" would be involved in decisions on private matters which currently are dealt with by a "Government office":*** The position will remain as it is. Currently all matters sent to Government office are all made available to each Township concerned and the legal right of the crofter is still the same. E.g. every crofter is legally entitled to an apportionment and the Trust would therefore not have any say other than what each township have at the moment on whether he/she is entitled to that apportionment or not.
- ***Rentals:*** would go to the Trust.

- **Exiting crofters status would it change.** No -crofting will continue as previously and the rights of the crofter remains the same.
- **Volunteer time to run the estate:** Mrs Rennie used the Galson example that although there was in the early stages a lot of volunteer time spent on the project and in setting it up, this was now reduced.
- **Estate manager.** Mrs Rennie again used Galson as an example they currently employ Mr Simon Fraser and that West side Estate could also employ someone similarly. Revenue would be received from rents & other opportunities to meet this.
- **Galson Estate** – Mrs Rennie was asked if there were similar concerns amongst their crofters during the consultation stage. She confirmed that there was.
- **Membership:** At Galson, membership of the trust is optional and is charged at £1.00.
- **Shucksmith Report:** concern expressed that crofting over the next few years is going to change and that subsidy money will more or less cease to exist. Mr R MacLennan went on to say crofting is going to change whether there is a buyout or not.

**General:**

Currently Community Buyouts are in favour with the lottery, therefore there is an opportunity of funding being available to cover the cost of purchase, five years running costs & five years development costs. This lottery fund closes this year with no alternative announced.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion Mrs Rennie understood peoples concerns and encouraged all to either contact her or any of the steering group with any issues they are unsure off.

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