

Shetland Environmental Awards 2015

heritage
Shetland
culture

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Shetland Amenity Trust

Foreword

It is my pleasure to introduce the winners of the 2015 Shetland Environmental Awards. For 27 years, these awards have acknowledged a wide range of projects demonstrating sustainability, innovation and best practice. Including the 2015 winners, 193 projects have been acknowledged with a Shetland Environmental Award. Each one of these has contributed to Shetland's rich and diverse environment – an environment we all cherish and wish to preserve for the future.

This year one of the winning projects has also won the Alan Inkster Award for an outstanding voluntary contribution and commitment to Shetland's environment. The winner will be presented with the award by Ruby Inkster.

On behalf of Shetland Amenity Trust, I would like to thank the Shetland Environment Group for its continued support of the awards as well as the award sponsors, details of which you will find in the back of the booklet.

Finally, I would like to pass on my personal congratulations to all this year's winners - I hope you enjoy today's event, are proud of your award and what you have achieved.

Brian P Gregson

Chairman

Shetland Amenity Trust & Shetland Environment Group

Anderson High and Brae High School Pupils

Anderson and Brae pupils worked together to develop an anti-litter film inspired by Cecilia James' roadside litterpick and 1950s horror movies. The pupils collaborated with local filmmaker, JJ Jamieson and many well-known local characters to develop and produce the now famous Bruck Monster anti-litter film that encourages road users not to throw litter from vehicles.



Shetland Arts was so impressed with the pupils' film concept that they showed the film in Mareel, free of charge, as part of their advert/trailer sequence before film screenings.

Shetland Amenity Trust also worked with the pupils to think of other ways in which their campaign could be promoted. This led to the idea of a Bards in the Bog poetry competition focused on litter.

The Bruck Monster anti-litter campaign has grown arms and legs through local press and social media coverage. At the time of judging for the awards the main feature had 'reached' nearly 36,000 people via Facebook and had been viewed over 15,000 times.

The Shetland Museum and Archives also hosted a display that included the models used in the film, the cinema poster, and the feature film along with "making of" and "outtake" videos. A 6ft cardboard cut-out of the Monster was also on display. It proved popular with museum goers, many of whom took 'selfie'-style photographs and posted the pictures online. People are now using #bruckmonster on social media when reporting their own encounters with local littering; demonstrating that the community is beginning to take ownership of this highly successful anti-litter campaign



JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

The project was incredibly successful as a result of its wide reaching impact on social media and beyond. It was both innovative and extremely memorable. A quick and unanimous decision from the judging panel. A tremendous achievement.

Brae High School

In conjunction with RSPB, this project aimed to get children to design their play area to support and encourage wildlife and get the community involved in the building work. This included the construction of cycle paths, bug hotels, den building areas and bird nesting boxes.



Parents, particularly dads, became wholly involved in this project. Diggers, power saws, chainsaws, drills, tools of all descriptions were brought to the school and materials were donated by local businesses and parents or staff.

The play area is used constantly and the new cycle track is in regular use by all age groups. A committee has also been set up with subsequent year groups and parents to ensure the ongoing maintenance of the area.

The project's main success was to ensure school pupils, parents, staff and local business were all fully involved in the construction process. The resulting play area is now a focal point for children in the Brae area and is used all the time. Birds have been nesting in the nesting boxes and the whole area is a much more natural area for children to play in.

The impact of the project led one teacher at the school to say: "This was one of the most successful school events I have been involved in in 25 years of teaching". High praise indeed!

JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

The judging panel praised the scale of this project and commented on its high level of use by the community. The panel felt this project deserved an award for hard work and dedication of the staff and pupils and especially for getting parents and the wider community involved. It is a genuine community initiative that has added a great deal of environmental and social value to the local area.



Logan Johnson

Logan Johnson is a young Shetlander actively involved in various aspects of natural history. He regularly submits records of birds, insects and plants to the Shetland Biological Records Centre and recently located only the second Sea Kale ever to be recorded in Shetland! Logan raises money for local wildlife-related projects including the Mousa Storm Petrel tagging programme.

Logan is an active member of the RSPB's Young Nature Volunteers and has recently undertaken a placement in the Shetland Museum to create a 'birdwatching' cabinet highlighting the wealth of ornithological opportunities at

Sumburgh Head. Far more important and impressive than any of this, however, is the way Logan is actively encouraging and inspiring other youngsters to get involved in wildlife. He has been giving wildlife lessons to raise awareness of Shetland's natural heritage to P4-7 pupils at the Mid Yell School.

JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

The panel unanimously agreed that Logan is well worthy of an award after clearly demonstrating his long-term commitment to environmental work. There is a desperate need to raise awareness of Shetland's natural heritage among its younger population and who better to engage and encourage children than one of their peers? Logan has already become a local "champion" for wildlife and ecology and he is commended for his work within local schools and being one of 15 young Scots involved in a national SNH initiative.



Nesting Primary School

Following the opening of the neighbouring caravan park Nesting School identified a need for picnic facilities and a safe play area. The school took on the task of transforming a piece of waste ground into a picnic and play area for the whole community with access for buggies and disabled users, and provide a place for parents to sit while children play in the adjacent school multicourt.

The picnic area includes three picnic benches made from recycled materials and one of these benches has wheelchair access. The centre piece of the garden is a replica wooden longship built by local men. The mast was donated by Nesting History Group and is from the old flit boat "The Venture". Pupils painted blue barrels to look like wooden ones and erected a cut-out Viking for silly photos. The school shredded their own waste tree cuttings to provide bark chips around the base of the galley and they used plants found within their grounds to create a thatched fence and windbreak. The garden also includes the nearby memorial mural for Dean Gilfillan who was Jarl in 2014.

The picnic, garden and safe play area is a community asset regularly used by the school and Toddlers group during school hours and the wider community and visitors to the caravan park the rest of the time.



JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

The judging panel were unanimous despite the school winning an award just last year. The

panel praised the school for the pupils being highly engaged and motivated, for the new initiatives underway and for the school continuing to engage a wide range of people in their environmental projects.

The school shows consistency in their efforts and deserves to be acknowledged for that. They continually go beyond "business as usual".



RSPB

RSPB Shetland's "Nature Friendly Schools" project has worked with schools across Shetland to better connect children with the natural world. During this project the RSPB has supported individual schools to design and create play areas that encourage wildlife and provide outdoor learning experiences. Pupils were encouraged to involve teaching staff, parents and businesses in the construction and delivery of their nature-friendly play areas, with many parents and businesses donating materials, skills and time to their local schools.



Schools have literally seen their grounds come alive thanks to the addition of bird boxes, bug hotels, ponds and plants that offer space and shelter for wildlife. The schools that have taken part in this project have benefited from new outdoor learning opportunities for their pupils and these nature-friendly areas are an important community resource used by local families at weekends and during school holidays.



Although the RSPB drove these initiatives they were able to create sufficient enthusiasm for each community to not only buy into the project in the short-term but to plan and coordinate sustained activity around maintaining and enhancing these projects into the future.

JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

It was agreed that the RSPB should receive an award for facilitating "Nature Friendly School" projects across Shetland that have engaged entire schools, local businesses and the wider community. These projects have been tremendously successful galvanising local communities and encouraging collective enthusiasm for their environment.



Whiteness Primary School

This project saw pupils, parents, the RSPB and Shetland Amenity Trust volunteers come together to create more play activities and develop the natural environment around the school.

Pupils wrote letters to source materials and seek community and parental help prior to the Day of Action, which involved the entire school community and a number of volunteers. Together they created several outdoor play areas including a pallet-built shelter containing logs, tarpaulins, rope for den-building and other team work. They also made a wooden log cabin, a log swing pole and a number of features to encourage wildlife, including a bug hotel and a pond made from old, sectioned tractor tyres, which is now teeming with frogs and bugs for science activities. An avenue of willows was planted along with other plants and bushes in the wildlife garden and cut tractor tyres provided planters for berry bushes and tatties.



This project has made a huge difference to pupils and their

teachers, providing a range of outdoor learning opportunities. The area is also proving popular with the wider community and is well-used by families with young children outside school hours.

JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS

Several members of the panel saw this project first hand and praised it for bringing the school community together. The project created outdoor learning spaces as well as an area that could be used by the community outside of school hours. Parents provided labour materials and equipment so the project's cost to the school was just £3! The judges also mentioned the fantastic contribution of the school janitor to the ongoing success of this initiative.



Yell Community Council



In 2014, Yell Community Council funded enhanced access to the Sands of Breckon and West Sandwick beach as a community project. The benefits to the community include preserving and maintaining wonderful natural assets, providing a location for locals to visit and providing 'Awarded' tourist attractions. Both beaches in Yell are recognised as Keep Scotland Beautiful Seaside Awards beaches. There are only five accredited beaches in Shetland and Yell is pleased to hold an award for two of these. The awards have been held since 2008 under the support and auspices of Yell Community Council and the local community.

In compliance with retaining the award the Community Council works with local groups from the youth cafe, the school, a local art group and Yell tourist group to ensure a rota of beach cleaning is completed each month during the summer to keep the beaches in pristine condition.

SIC counters installed at the Sands of Breckon recorded 2904 visitors from March 2014 to March 2015 and it is likely that many more visitors accessed the beach from other parts of the area.

Over the years the cost of maintaining the award (water quality testing, application and signage etc) has become increasing onerous and it may be likely in future to seek some assistance from private business to maintain the awards.



JUDGING PANEL COMMENTS



The judging panel agreed the fact that "litter is out of place" on these beaches is testament to the dedication and responsiveness of the community council. A strong sense of community pride in the cleanliness, and associated status, of both of these beaches has been fostered making this project well worthy of an award.

Judging Panel

The awards are managed by the Shetland Amenity Trust and judged by the Shetland Environment Group, a multi-agency group, set up to advise and assist the Trust in fulfilling its environmental objectives.

Partners represented in the Shetland Environment Group are: Shetland Islands Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Shetland Bird Club, VisitScotland, Shetland Civic Society and the Association of Community Councils.

Award Sponsors

The awards are sponsored by many members of the Shetland Environment Group, namely the Shetland Civic Society, Scottish Natural Heritage, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Shetland Islands Council and VisitScotland.

The awards presentation event is sponsored by the Total Laggan-Tormore Project.

Shetland Amenity Trust would like to thank the Shetland Environment Group and all Award Sponsors; their support is instrumental in the award's success.

