



## Community Archaeology Westray SCIO

# Annual Report 2019-2020

Community Archaeology Westray is a Registered Charity (SC049328) established in Westray on 24th May 2019.

The organisation's purposes are

- 1 The advancement of the heritage of the island of Westray, Orkney through the provision of an interpretive centre in the island.
- 2 The advancement of education of the history and archaeology of the island of Westray through the provision of events and activities for the benefit of the community and the general public.



## CAW Pre-History

In 2017, following initial discussions, an informal Links of Noltland Legacy Project Group was formed with seven members of the Westray community organisations i.e.: Tourist Association, Development Trust, Heritage Centre, Community Council and the Golf Club.

Discussions were held with interested parties both on Westray and further afield, including Orkney Islands Council, Orkney Business Gateway, Historic Environment Scotland, Voluntary Action Orkney and Highland and Islands Enterprise. An island-wide survey was also initiated to identify what people on Westray wanted to see happen with the Links of Noltland archaeological site after the archaeological dig had been completed. The results were overwhelmingly in favour of developing a legacy project with a permanent display.

In order to fund the island-wide survey and provide a financial basis for future activity of the legacy project, grants were secured from the Westray Community Council, the Westray Development Trust and Historic Environment Scotland.

In January 2019 The Links of Noltland Legacy Project Group was renamed Community Archaeology Westray and on 24th May 2019 Community Archaeology Westray was formally recognised by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) as Community Archaeology Westray SCIO.

The first act as a SCIO was a workshop led by a heritage tourism consultant in preparation for a funding application to Awards for All and the OIC CDF fund to conduct a feasibility study/project design.

Before any progress can be made, the future usage of the Links of Noltland archaeological site which is in the care of Historic Environment Scotland (HES), has to be determined. The plan is for HES to continue to concentrate on the archaeological side of the project with CAW dealing with the management of the visiting public to the site, the infrastructure external to the HES site and creation of an appropriate visitor, learning and information centre on adjacent land.

CAW has met on site with Historic Environment Scotland three times in 2018-19 regarding future collaboration on the project. Subsequently CAW contacted OIC Planning Department and held preliminary discussions with an architect to determine the type of building required for a LoN Learning Centre. There is very little left to see on the HES site now the dig has been completed.

The next stage of the project was to create a joint

working agreement with Historic Environment Scotland. An initial draft is now with HES for discussion in anticipation of the easing of the Covid-19 lockdown.

Meantime CAW has been garnering support from various people outwith the island, discussing its project with, for instance, our MSP Liam MacArthur to judge the possible political impact and support within Scotland and locally with Dr Donna Heddle to see how it could fit with the Institute for Northern Studies.

The project was on hold waiting for Historic Environment Scotland (HES) to get back to CAW with its plans for consolidation of the dig and then the restitution of the site. CAW had a meeting with two members of HES in September 2019 who came to Westray for a flying visit just to meet with CAW. The outcome suggested that ideally reconstruction of some of the buildings could possibly be undertaken, depending on finance, but at that stage no decisions could be taken in Edinburgh so CAW thought that it would be unwise to start fundraising for a building project adjacent to the site until after the HES decision on the future of the site.

CAW already has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Westray Development Trust and will in future seek MoUs with the Westray Golf Club, the Westray Heritage Trust and the Westray & Papa Westray Tourist Association.

The archaeologists have uncovered 38 buildings on the Links of Noltland (LON) site and while it will never be possible to reconstruct all of them, CAW has aspirations to provide visitors with access to computer reconstructions as time and funds permit.

In April 2020 PN and IR reported on discussions they had had with representatives from HES via ZOOM, on possible next steps for the project, given the current Covid-19 situation.

HES reported back that it is concentrating all efforts on live projects that will bring in revenue to the HES charity. There is currently no fieldwork scheduled at LoN.

A new suggestion for CAW to progress was put forward at the 2020 May Board meeting, which splits the project into three phases: 1, create an information platform. 2, look into producing a digital tour of the site and 3, erect the visitor and learning centre based on perceived need following the success of 1 and 2.

HES is looking to assist with CAW's project and has a considerable amount of information that could be very useful, it also has staff who create displays etc.

## Report from the Treasurer

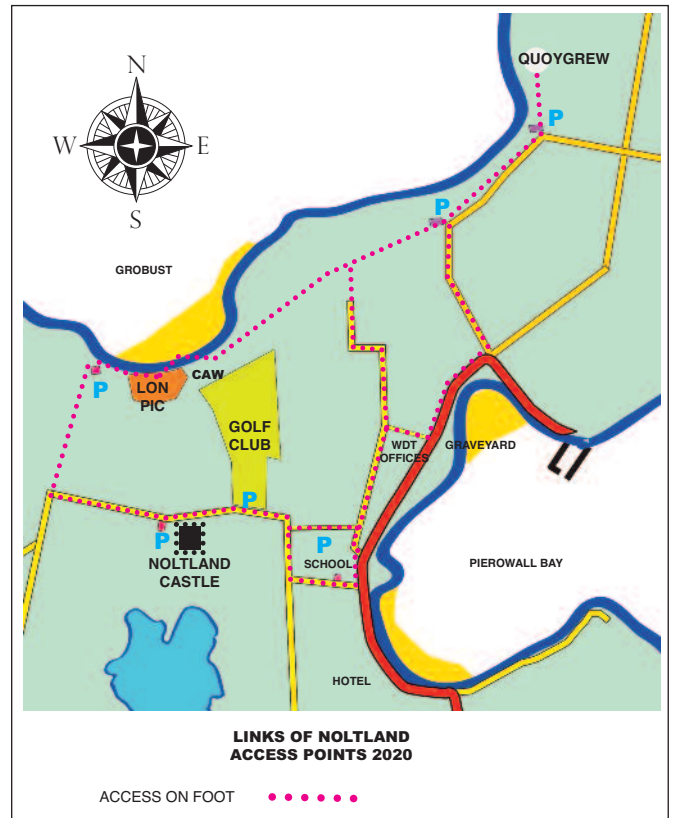
A summary of CAW's Financial Year (24/5/2019 - 23/5/2020)

CAW has continued the modest growth of its financial reserves with an opening balance of £1514.63 rising to £2279.46 by the close of the year.

The additional funds were generated by Board members, plus friends & family, activities in the Bargain Box yielding donations of £703.43 plus £100 from the Wood family 'garage' sale.

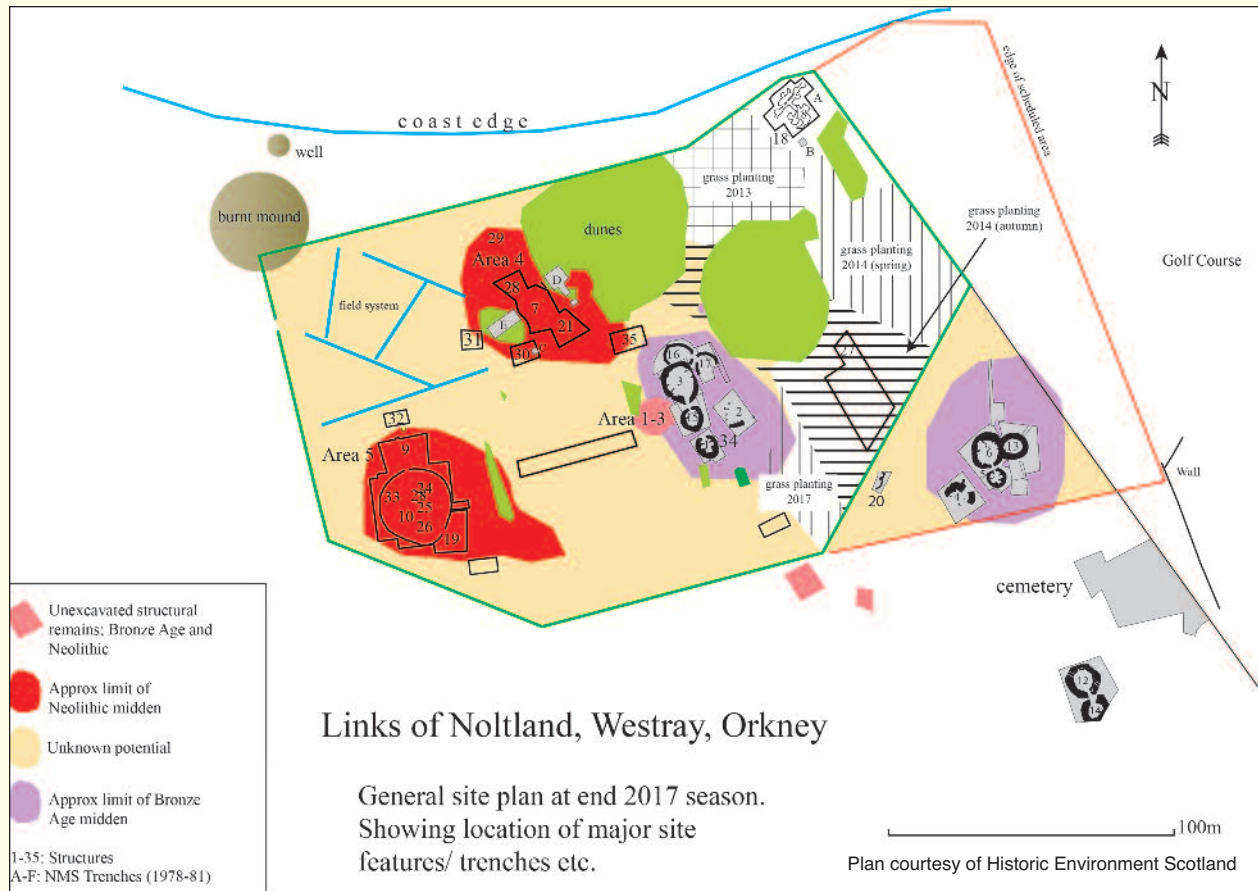
CAW's expenditures for this financial year amounted to £38.60 An itemised list of income, expenditure and running balances is available via the treasurer.

Ian W. Ricketts  
CAW Treasurer  
24.6.2020



## APPENDIX

A plan of the site showing the positions of structures. Areas 1-6 are the most recently uncovered by EASE archaeology. The site is now covered over.



**General observations from a consultant-led discussion with trustees of CAW and members of the public on how to promote the Links of Noltland archaeology. Attendees and more information can be found on the CAW web site.**

- A path from the visitor centre through the archaeological area will show points of interest within the site and also off-site landmarks as viewed from the path.
- Areas of ground can be used to grow traditional crops..
- Links between Orcadian archaeological sites would be valuable.  
There is very little archaeological archive information for visitors - this presents a great opportunity.
- Cruise ship visits to Orkney including Westray are growing steadily.
- Valuable information could be gleaned from B&B proprietors about visitors' opinions and wishes.
- Package tours are very popular.
- Vehicular access to LoN should be restricted to those with disabilities.
- The path from the road to LoN gives onto pleasant views.
- Earsets/headphones/phone app giving visitors information on their way along the path.
- Shortest scheduled flight in the world from Westray to Papay is an added attraction - and Papay has much to offer as well including archaeology and boat trips to the Holm.
- Ann Marwick said our plans were very good and would fit in an Orkney-wide plan - quality visitor experiences were so important and Westray is an extremely attractive island for many reasons.
- Visitors are fascinated by the continuity story - with archaeology, old buildings, coastal erosion etc.
- LoN needs to be attractive to local people as well as visitors.
- Engage and build links with Destination Orkney (previously Orkney Tourism Group) which had been set up to promote Orkney.
- Cruise ship visit organisers from Mainland have visited Westray - they were keen to have information on what Westray could offer including visitor packages.
- Independent visitors will probably come for longer stays.
- Westray needs to take ownership of visitors.
- LoN is part of the Orcadian Archaeology story and is unique.
- The discovery of the Westray Wife at LoN was a major find.
- School access to the site is very important.



**Community Archaeology Westray SCIO**

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