



Identification, Dissemination and Exchange of good practice in
Local Employment development and promoting better governance

The Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust - Scotland

Background on leader organisation

The Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust is a unique partnership between the residents of Eigg, The Highland Council, and The Scottish Wildlife Trust. The Trust was created in 1996 to purchase and manage the Isle of Eigg for the benefit of the community, is a company limited by guarantee, and a registered Scottish charity.

The Trust has three members, Eigg Residents' Association, The Highland Council and The Scottish Wildlife Trust. Each of these members appoints directors to the board of the Trust. In the case of The Highland Council and The Scottish Wildlife Trust, two directors each are appointed. Eigg Residents' Association has four directors appointed to the board, and there is an independent chairman. The main board holds quarterly meetings as management is devolved to the island directors who meet on a three weekly basis. Regular meetings of Eigg Residents' Association are held on Eigg to ensure that the Trust is meeting the expectations of those living on the island. Prior to each Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust Board meeting, Eigg Residents' Association meets to discuss the agenda. The results from this meeting are presented to the Trust as a series of recommendations. The decisions taken by the Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust are based on these recommendations.

Purpose of the project

- To take all appropriate measures to conserve the natural heritage (being flora and fauna, the geological, physiographical and archaeological features, and the natural beauty and amenity) of the Isle of Eigg for the benefit of the community of the island and the public at large and to promote open public access thereto insofar as this is not detrimental to such conservation;
- To promote sustainable development on the island including agriculture, silviculture, arts and crafts and other economic activities compatible with object (1) above;
- To relieve poverty on the island and provide help for the aged, handicapped and infirm and to advance education and other charitable purposes beneficial to the community;
- To provide or promote the provision of housing on the island for people in necessitous circumstances and also specially designed or adapted housing as may be required for the elderly, handicapped or disabled;
- To develop or promote the development of infrastructure designed to improve communications throughout the island including piers, harbours, roads and bridges.

Geographical focus Project partnership

The Isle of Eigg

By its very nature, the Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust is a partnership. In every project the Trust undertakes, there are partnerships formed with relevant organisations that have the skills and experience necessary to ensure the success of the project. Through this partnership approach, the Trust has been very successful in accessing funding for the various initiatives undertaken on the island.

Activities

- Forward Planning
- Caring for the Natural Heritage
- Enhancement and Management of Eigg's Woodlands Renovation of Trust Properties
- Creating Employment
- Improving Infrastructure
- Encouraging Development
- Caring for the Natural Heritage

Target groups

Residents of and visitors to Eigg

Particular successes

There are three subsidiary companies of the Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust; Eigg Trading Limited, Eigg Tearoom Limited and Eigg Construction Limited.

Eigg Trading Limited:

Eigg Trading Limited owns and manages An Laimhrig, the centre built with assistance from Highlands and Islands Enterprise to house the island shop and Post Office, a Tearoom, Craft Shop, Waiting area with public toilet and shower facilities. This was the first major project managed by the Trust. The building contract was awarded to an island contractor who employed as much local labour as possible. The project was completed by early June 98 & was officially opened on the first anniversary of the buy-out.

The Shop/P.O. is leased to an island resident and the Craft Shop leased to a group of women who have formed a craft co-operative. Eigg Tearoom Limited runs the tearoom.

Part of the roof space has been converted to house the Trust office. This enables the Trust to operate on a more professional basis. As well as being a base for administration staff, the office is used by a team of volunteers who are responsible for assisting with a number of different projects (e.g. training, tourism, marketing, waste management etc).

Eigg Tearoom Limited:

Eigg Tearoom Limited runs the island tearoom, which is open daily from April to October. The tearoom is licensed and also opens for evening meals regularly throughout the summer. At the height of the season, the tearoom employs two full-time & up to eight part-time staff. During the winter months the tearoom is open to coincide with the arrival of the ferry (run by volunteers) and also provides a warm & comfortable venue for a variety of community events.

Eigg Construction Limited:

Eigg Construction Limited is the newest of the three subsidiaries, and was set up to undertake renovation works on the Trust's properties. It employs three men full time and one part time supervisor. To date four properties have been renovated; Millers Cottage, Hill Cottage, Gamekeepers Cottage and Kildonan Farmhouse.

Lessons learnt

- Community consultation and participation is essential for the success of a project like this. It is important to try and maintain this at a high level without placing a heavy burden on individuals.
- Good working relationships and communications with external agencies are vital to enable access to funding opportunities and to ensure their support in

development activities.

- If land ownership is highly concentrated it can act as a barrier to entrepreneurial activity and local development.
- Community ownership of local assets can help sustain vital public services and provide communities with an independent income to invest in local infrastructure or entrepreneurial activity.
- Community activities working with a strong local mandate can mobilise significant voluntary contributions of time and skills.