



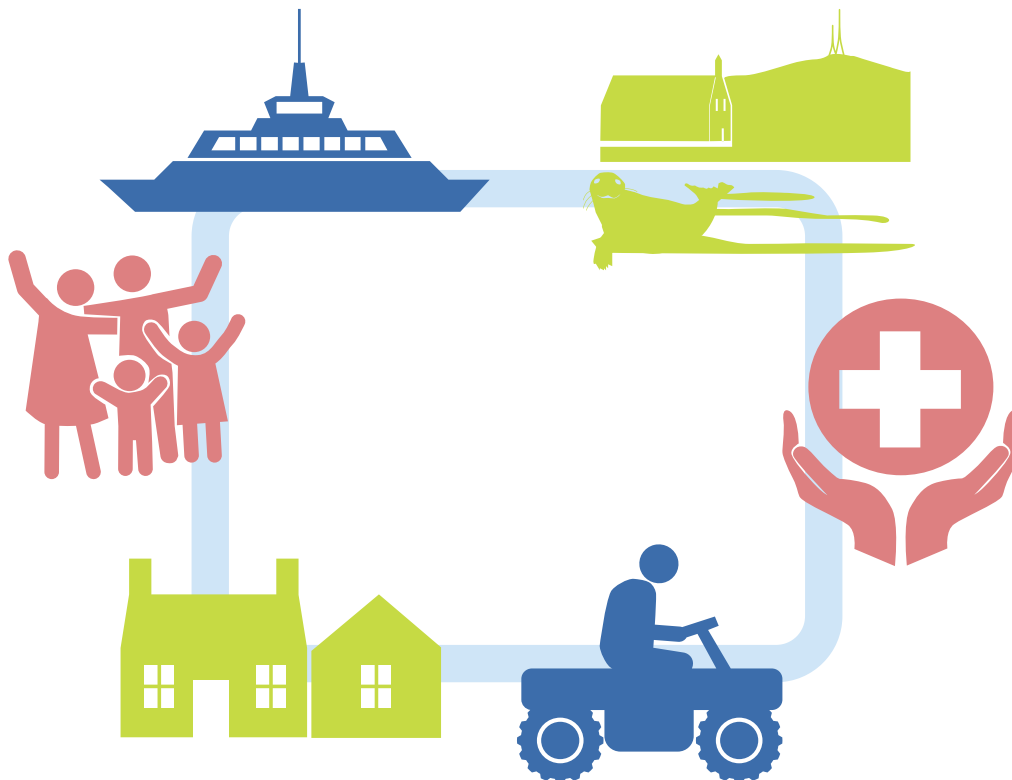
Bressay Community Action Plan:

Research Report

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1. A Development Plan for Bressay

Why we are creating an action plan

Bressay Development Ltd aims to secure and sustain a vibrant future for Bressay in an active, connected, thriving and resilient community. To do this effectively, we need to understand our community - its demographics, how it lives, works and plays, and its needs and wishes. We were in the process of developing consultation material at a time when Bressay Community Council also wanted to consult to represent our island better, so we have shared consultation activities. However, the work in this document is primarily that of BDL. Our consultation has the following purposes;

- To identify issues facing island residents**
- To prioritise our work based on these issues**
- To identify facilities and services residents need or desire**
- To identify opportunities for development work**

The resulting plan has been produced by BDL and will guide our progress in the next five years, but will be a 'living document' that will grow and change as circumstances dictate. It will be available for all Bressay organisations to help with their own growth and development.

About Bressay Development

Bressay Development Ltd was formed in 2015, developed from a small association (Bressay Community Development Association) which aimed to improve the lives of island residents. It currently has a team of 6 Voluntary Directors, one full time equivalent Development Officer, funded by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, a cook and part time cafe assistants, all of whom are funded by the cafe. It is dependent on volunteers to run much of its work.

BDL's objectives:

To secure and sustain a vibrant future for Bressay in an active, connected, thriving and resilient community.

To do this, Bressay development works in co-operation with organisations and individuals within and beyond Bressay to:

- a) Promote Bressay as an affordable, accessible and safe residential base, so as to encourage people to settle and remain within the community.
- b) Seek to retain and support the existing population.
- c) Seek all means to reduce the cost of access to work, off-island services and leisure facilities.
- d) Seek to improve, develop and promote affordable infrastructure, services and facilities on the island.
- e) Seek to increase the availability of affordable housing in the community.
- f) Identify and maximise opportunities to grow the Bressay economy.
- g) Promote Bressay and its historic and natural environment and encourage and maximise tourism development.
- h) Identify and maximise employment and learning opportunities for the community.

- i) Identify and maximise technological advances to the benefit of the community.
- j) Identify and maximise funding opportunities for community activities and projects.
- k) Seek to strengthen the community bond.
- l) Seek to facilitate effective communication within the community
- m) Raise awareness and understanding of the Bressay community's requirements within and outwith Shetland
- n) Undertake any other activities in pursuit of the association's aim

BDL's Values:

- We are open and inclusive - all are welcome
- We won't compete or conflict with other local groups or businesses
- We try to buy/use local products and services and support local businesses
- We support other local community groups
- We seek to make our community more sustainable and resilient
- We will promote and facilitate business start-ups and economic development
- We aim to be green and follow eco-friendly policies and practices
- We believe that Bressay is a great place to live, and are working to make it better and more attractive for residents and businesses alike

BDL's Activities

In seeking to pursue its vision, BDL leased the former school building from Shetland Islands Council in 2015. Through the Asset Transfer process BDL took ownership of the building and surrounding site in early 2021, creating the Speldiburn Community Hub where a number of activities are carried out, including:

- A successful cafe which provides a service to island residents and visitors
- A 'Good As New' Shop, which provides a popular way of recycling and serves our ambitions to work towards Net Zero
- Providing a central site for selling the island's art and crafts
- Holding further selling events and activities such as pop-up craft fairs and markets, helping to support local businesses.
- Various sized studios/workspaces to rent
- Hosting the island's Under 5s's group
- Spaces available to rent for meetings and/or workshops, including our multipurpose 'Big Room'
- Hosting the newly installed NHS clinic and Living Well Hub, which will be a new model of provision in Shetland
- Acting as the end point for Bressay's Parkrun, where our cafe is manned by ParkRun volunteers
- A weekly social afternoon for the island's elderly and isolated residents
- Hosting and/or organising some of the island's important events, for example
- Bressay Garden Show and the Christmas Market
- Responding to community requests for support, activities and anything else that arises

While some of our building-based activities are self-sustaining at certain times of year, this is largely due to the tourist season. In winter months the island is quiet, and so is Speldiburn and our trading activities. By necessity summer trading subsidises winter activities. BDL currently aims to become more self-sustaining, to continue to look at what we can do to support our island both in and outwith Speldiburn and investigate and implement ways of supporting Bressay transitioning towards Net Zero.

Achievements to date:

Achievements from 2015 to 2023 include the following;

- Finalisation of the Asset Transfer of Bressay primary School to BDL
- Returning visitors after the pandemic
- Training for employees and volunteers
- Fundraising for and installation of a new, more environmentally friendly heating system for the Speldiburn Community Hub
- Increased the variety in demographics of people engaging with Bressay Development/Speldiburn
- An increase in group bookings for lunches/visits to Speldiburn including regular tourism company visits
- A new funded post for a young person
- Providing jobs for young people on the island
- More events and activities up and running
- Covid Support/ Operating differently in Covid
- Hosting Under 5s
- Community Engagement
- Producer's markets
- Selling for Local crafters
- Providing cafe for ParkRun
- Community communication through social media and the 'Weel Bressay' Newsletter
- Establishment of woodland group and Funding for trees
- Establishment of Community Woodland
- RSPB/Nature Scot Award for Woodland
- Funding for feasibility work to building to refurbish and make Speldiburn more fit for purpose
- Locally made products increased
- Signage in the building
- Broadband progress - loan of 4G router for families to try - resulted in some changing their broadband provision.
- Setting up of Social Afternoon
- Surf Award for Community Regeneration
- Continued development of Good As New Shop
- Hosting NHS health Care Support Worker Clinic and Living Well hub

2. About Bressay: Community Profile

Geography

Bressay is a small island - around 7 x 3 miles (11 x 8 km) situated to the east of the Shetland mainland and the capital town, Lerwick. It is Shetland's 5th largest island and its size and proximity to Lerwick make it ideal for walkers and active travel, especially since many sites of interest can only be reached on foot. The Ward (Da Wart) to the south of the island is the highest point at 227m (744 feet). Noss, a National Nature Reserve, sits to the east of the island. Bressay shelters Lerwick harbour from the North Sea, making Bressay Sound an important port of refuge and leading to the founding of Lerwick in the 17th century. Despite Lerwick's growth, Bressay has remained a rural community. It has also been a strategic defence point from which to defend Lerwick and the north and south entrances to the harbour during both World Wars. There are many remains from this period scattered across the island. Telecommunications masts serving much of Shetland's population are located on The Ward.



2.2 Landscape, history and culture



Bressay is mostly old red sandstone with some basaltic intrusions. The coast varies, small beaches and low coastal rocky stretches contrast with high cliffs to the south of the island.

The largest of eleven lochs on the island are the Loch of Grimsetter in the east, and the Loch of Brough. There are many quarries on the east side of Bressay and the stone was extensively used in Lerwick and other Shetland locations. Stone is still used for small local projects. The Ward was historically used extensively for peat cutting.

The island has been inhabited for 6000 years and there are many burnt mounds, brochs and Neolithic remains in locations across the Island. There are other historical sites, including churches, viking settlements, abandoned crofting settlements and other agricultural sites across the island, along with coastal remnants of fish processing. The twentieth century left the island with military remains from both World Wars, including gun emplacements at the north and south end of the island and a watchtower on Ander Hill. Bressay has long been a crofting community, and the remains of abandoned single croft houses and whole settlements sit side by side with more modern housing. The island is also known for its scenery and bird life. There are many migrant birds, particularly on the east of the island, including Whooper Swans and Arctic Skuas and waders.

2.3 Population and demography

Most of the population live on the West side of Bressay. The greatest concentration of houses is at Fullaburn/The Glebe, around 2.5 km from the ferry. Most of these were built as social housing, but a good number are now in private ownership. At the time of writing, we are waiting for the 2022 census results to be made public (having been postponed a year due to the pandemic), and are therefore referring to information from the previous census in 2011. The following tables describe changes in Bressay's population, it's current age and breakdown by age and household type;



The island's population has clearly fluctuated in the past 30 years and for a small island, 20 people leaving the island is a big loss. For a broader context, the 1977 local Plan states that just over 300 folk lived in the Bressay at that time, a steady fall from around 650 in 1901, but up from a low of around 250 during the 1960s.

As of October 2022, The Scottish Government's Community Insights gives The Bressay population at 343. While the majority are of 'working age' this includes students, those not working through long term illness or disability and those taking early retirement. While some household types are lower than the Scottish average, Bressay's percentage of pensioner households (26.4%) is noticeably higher than the Scottish average (20.9%).

On the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), the data zone that Bressay is part of falls into Decile 6 of 10 (with 1 most deprived). However, Under the Geographic Access domain, Bressay's data zone is ranked as 230, that is within the top 3% of most deprived areas in terms of 'geographical

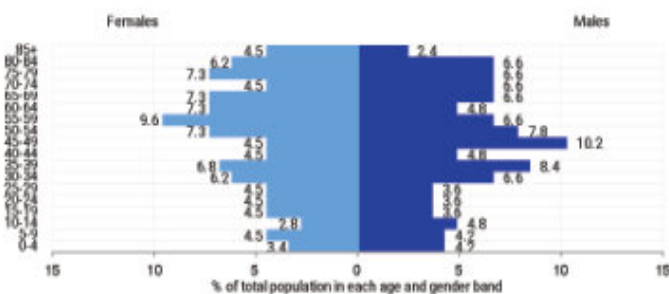
Bressay Population since 1981

| Year | 1981 | 2001 | 2011 |
|----------------------|------|------|------|
| Population | 352 | 384 | 368 |
| Number of households | 138 | 161 | 174 |

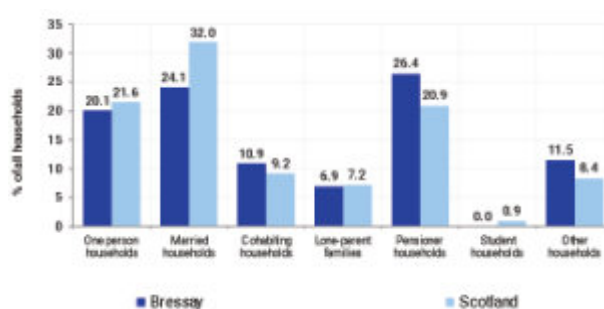
Bressay Population by age, Oct '22

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Age 0-15 | 44 |
| Working age population | 200 |
| Age 65+ | 99 |

Breakdown of Bressay population by 5 year age band in 2020



Breakdown of Bressay population by household type in 2020



access to services'. (<https://simd.scot/#/simd2020/BTTTTTT/14-1.1161/60.1558/>). It should also be noted that SIMD is considered unsuitable for rural areas, where deprivation much more likely to be distributed in the community.

Additionally, not all Bressay islanders have a high income and quality of life. Some islanders receive assistance with housing and/or income and are in receipt of other benefits, for example for disability. There are also those who are considered as belonging to vulnerable groups living on the island, in particular pensioners living alone - at 14.4% of Bressay households, this is higher than the Scottish average of 13.1%. There are also a higher percentage of carers on Bressay than the Scottish average. 1.0% of the Bressay population was claiming Universal Credit in October 2022, compared to a Scottish average of 3.2%. There was no youth unemployment at that time, compared to 4.1% in Scotland. 6% of Bressay's population received incapacity benefits.

HOUSING



At the time of writing (October 2022) there are estimated to be 186 inhabited dwellings in Bressay, although the Scottish Government Community Insights has 192 dwellings listed, with 1% of these as second homes. The tables below shows how these are distributed and the ratio of owner occupation compared with rental houses in Bressay, Shetland and Scotland. Council tax bands give us a picture of the general size of housing on the island, with a high number of houses being in the lower bands, and therefore of a smaller size.

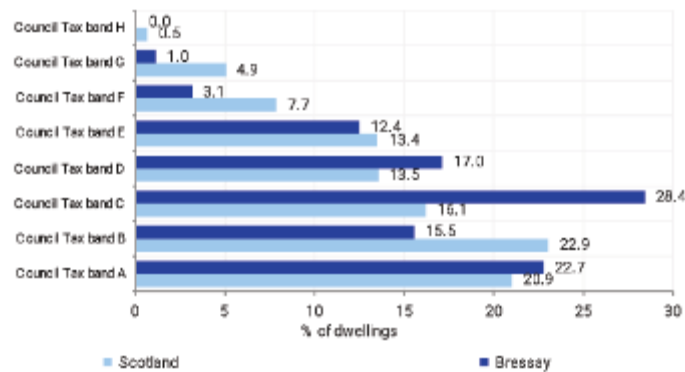
Houses by ownership/tenure in Bressay, Shetland and Scotland



Bressay housing stock

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Detached Houses | 84 |
| Semi-detached Housing | 49 |
| Terraced Housing | 26 |
| Flats, maisonettes and apartments | 33 |

Dwellings by council tax bands in Scotland and Bressay



Source: Scottish Government Community Insights.

There are two social housing providers in Shetland (Shetland Island Council and Hjaltland), providing 36 houses in Bressay, with a variety of housing types, ranging from bedsits to 3 bedroom family units, built from the 1950s onward. Other older properties available to rent are more likely to be within the private sector. According to the 2011 census, 63.8% of households were owner occupied, 23.6 were council or housing association houses and 12.6% were private rentals. There is a perceived shortage of housing both in Bressay and in Shetland as a whole. Qualitatively, we can say that the majority of new residents are 'incomers' (generally from outside Shetland or Scotland), rather than residents moving from one house in Bressay to another, or returning after being away for work or education.

Number of SIC applications by house size

| No. of Bedrooms | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-------------------------------|----|----|---|---|---|
| Live applicants | 25 | 12 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Live and suspended applicants | 49 | 21 | 9 | 4 | 1 |

Number of SIC applications by household type

| Household type | Live applicants | Live and suspended applicants |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Single Person 25 to Retired | 20 | 43 |
| Couple No Children | 6 | 12 |
| Single parent >25 | Less than 5 | 9 |
| Single person 18-24 | Less than 5 | Less than 5 |
| Shared household | Less than 5 | Less than 5 |
| Elderly couple | Less than 5 | Less than 5 |
| Elderly single | Less than 5 | Less than 5 |

Source: Shetland Islands Council

SIC have 31 properties in Bressay, made up of 20 houses with 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms and 11 sheltered houses (6 bedsits and 5 x 1 bedroom homes). There is notable demand for these houses. As of August 2022, there were 43 live applicants (84 live and suspended applicants). The size of house they were looking for and applicant by housing type is shown in the following tables.

Shetland Islands Council and Hjalitland Housing Association share an application form, although Hjalitland allow more specificity about desired location. As of October 2022, out of 777 live applications, 3 applicants to Hjalitland cited Bressay as their preferred location. They would all require single person or couples' accommodation. This is a broadly similar picture to overall demand across Shetland.

Hjalitland experience very little turnover, averaging about 4 or 5 years between a tenancy change, spanning across all 5 properties (It has been over 13 years since they have re-allocated one of their 2 bed houses), suggesting that overall, current Hjalitland residents are both happy with their house and its location.

In terms of suitability of housing stock, The National Records of Scotland 2017 reported that in Shetland 8% of housing was overcrowded (compared to 9% in Scotland overall) and 3.4% lacked central heating, compared to 2.3% in Scotland overall. We are aware of demand for accessible housing with 4 bedrooms.

2.5 Industry and economy



The largest employer in Bressay is currently the Council-run ferry between Maryfield and Lerwick. The fish processing factory at Heogan employs 5 full time employees at the time of writing, and employs additional workers at different times of year. Speldiburn, the Maryfield and Royal Mail are also employers on the island. The other main forms of economic activity within the island are family concerns and include agriculture (farming and crofting), holiday accommodation provision, small boat fishing and crafts. The island also supports a shop and post office combined. Tourism supports jobs in private enterprises, such as accommodation and tour groups, increased activity at BDL, and increased use of Bressay Marina's caravan site and the shop/post office. housing, ferry services? And also the heritage centre as a community facility.

Statistics for economic activity are provided by Scotland's census, and so are 10 years out of date. The world has changed a great deal since then, and since the Covid pandemic, more people work from home or hybrid working. Anecdotally, we are aware of some people who's workplace is based elsewhere but are working from home. However, the vast majority of those who work commute to the Shetland Mainland each day, and most economic activity takes place in Lerwick.

Occupations

At the time of the 2010 census, the three largest employment sectors for Bressay residents were Health and social work (17% of the Bressay workforce), Transport and Storage (16%) and Education (13%). 37.4% of the workforce were in Managerial or professional occupations, 12.5% were in skilled occupations and 8.3% in administrative occupations.

More recently, the Business Register and Employments Survey of 2020 - based on a survey of 80,000 businesses - estimated that 62.6% of the Bressay workforce worked in the education sector, public service administration and other public service employment, and 12/1% of the Bressay population in health. This is an extrapolation, rather than factual and so serves as a guide.

Education

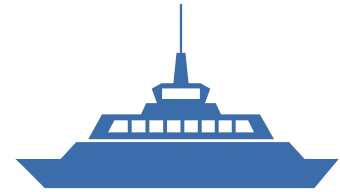
Bressay residents tend to be well educated. The 2011 census showed 45% of Bressay Residents being in full time education, compared to 40% across Scotland. The island has a lower percentage of people with no qualifications (20.3%), compared to the Scottish average of 26.8%. 37% of residents are educated to degree level or higher, compared to the Scottish average of 26.1%. School attainment is equal to that of the Scottish mainland in S4 and beyond in S5 and S6.

Infrastructure, amenities and services

Public services are limited in Bressay. There are essential amenities, such as the ferry, roads, a limited amount of lighting, (which is confined to the area by the shop, Speldiburn the hall, and social housing areas), bin collections and the public park. There are limited care services for the elderly and vulnerable.

Community Facilities include The marina, The football park, The community hall, Speldiburn (Cafe, Good As New Shop, rooms to hire, studios) and the Heritage Centre. The NHS have recently opened a small part time clinic in Speldiburn, where regular GP appointments, such as blood tests are carried out by Practice Nurse. Part of this space is also used as the venue for a weekly 'Living Well Hub' one afternoon a week.

Transport



Bressay is connected to the mainland and the capital of Lerwick by a Ro-ro ferry which runs mostly hourly, with a shuttle service at peak times. It runs from 7am until 11pm with later sailings at weekends. Ferry crew will also respond to emergencies if directed after a 999 call. The island has a weekly 'shopper' - a 9 seater minibus which takes people to Tesco and the co-op in Lerwick, as well as a three times a week community bus service of the same size, which tours the island in the mornings. The timetables are as follows for 2023.

Tuesday Shopper bus

| | Tu |
|------------------------|------|
| Bressay Ferry Terminal | 1008 |
| Voeseide | 1010 |
| Fullaburn/Glebe | 1015 |
| Bressay Public Hall | 1017 |
| Voehhead Road | 1018 |
| Bressay Ferry Terminal | 1020 |
| Bressay Ferry | 1030 |
| Esplanade | 1038 |
| Lerwick Health Centre | 1045 |
| Tesco | 1048 |
| Co-op | 1050 |

| | Tu |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Esplanade | 1300 |
| Lerwick Health Centre | 1303 |
| Tesco | 1305 |
| Co-op (arrive) | 1308 |
| Co-op (depart) | 1355 |
| Tesco | 1400 |
| Bressay Ferry Terminal (Lk) | 1410 |
| Bressay Ferry | 1430 |
| Bressay Ferry Terminal | 1435 |
| Voeseide | 1437 |
| Fullaburn/Glebe | 1440 |
| Bressay Public Hall | 1442 |
| Voehhead Road | 1444 |
| Bressay Ferry Terminal | 1450 |

Bressay Service

| | MWF |
|-------------------------|------|
| Ferry Terminal | 0908 |
| Noss | 0916 |
| Pettifirth Junction | 0920 |
| Bressay Shop | 0924 |
| Ferry Terminal (arrive) | 0928 |
| Ferry Terminal (depart) | 0930 |
| Heogan | 0935 |
| Beoseiter | 0946 |
| Ferry Terminal (arrive) | 0958 |
| Ferry Terminal (depart) | 1008 |
| Kirkabister | 1016 |
| Ferry Terminal | 1028 |

Source: Zettrans

A return service operates on a Dial-a Ride basis on Mon, Wed and Fri. This service connects to the 1300 ferry departure from Lerwick and leaves from the Bressay terminal at 13.08

School buses operate in the mornings, provided by a Lerwick tax firm. There are up to three of these, depending on pupil numbers. One is kept on the island as the driver lives here. Secondary school pupils are dropped off at the ferry and primary school children are taken to Bell's Brae. There are no taxis or private car hires available on the island.

Car ownership was reported in the 2011 census as generally higher than in Scotland as a whole.

Connectivity

There is a single internet fibre box outside the shop at Mail, but is copper from there onwards. The closer a connection is to the fibre box, the higher the broadband speed. However, since some residents are up to three miles away, this is not useful and speeds are very poor in outlying parts of the island. Some households/premises use 4G routers and Radio Broadband is also available, but is currently the most expensive option and can still be patchy.

Between 2017 and 2019, 11.3% of Bressay premises/households were below the 'universal service obligation' - a piece of government legislation that gives eligible UK addresses the right to request a 'decent' broadband connection., as opposed to the Scottish average of 37%. There has been no new infrastructure in the past few years to improve this.

The average broadband download speed in Bressay in 2019 was 28.33 M/bits and the Scottish average was 69.86 M/bits The average broadband upload speed in Bressay was 7.8 M/bits with the Scottish average at 11.22 M/bits

Source: Ofcom 2017 and 2019.

Safety and emergencies

Bressay has a retained fire service. As previously mentioned, the ferry crew will also mobilise outside normal operating times if needed. In emergencies, if the ferry cannot run for weather related reasons, the RNLI or the Coastguard helicopter Oscar Charlie will respond. At the time of writing, Bressay Community Council are currently working on a resilience plan.



Groups and Associations

As well as Bressay Development Ltd, there are the following groups and organisations on the island;

Bressay Community Council: BCC provides community representation to official bodies, assisting in planning, service delivery and decision making. BCC meets once a month.

Bressay History Group: BHG own and operate the Bressay Heritage Centre, which hosts exhibitions about the history, culture and archaeology of Bressay and provides tourist information for visitors.

Bressay Sports Club. The sports club maintains and manages the Bressay Sports pitch. The pitch is used regularly for football and other sports and they also hold regular funding events.

Bressay Boating Club. The club manages and maintains the island's marina, and also provides camping space for caravans and motorhomes.

Bressay Under 5s. A weekly group who met in Speldiburn's nursery and provide the only under 5's activity on the island.

Bressay Public Hall Association. The group manages and maintains the island's public hall.

Bressay Up Helly Aa Committee. They organise the Bressay Up Helly Aa, a weekend long event held on the last Friday in February.

3. Research methodology

We consulted the community over a period of 3 months, to understand their needs, wishes and priorities. We received over 120 engagements/responses using the following methods;

Open days at Speldiburn and the lighthouse, which included;

- An Asset Mapping exercise where attendees are asked to pinpoint the current economic, environmental and community provision,
- General discussion and focussed conversations around housing and future uses for Bressay Lighthouse.
- Young people gave us their opinions through drawing.

Community survey;

- Aiming to gather a broad range of community views about the current situation and what they would like to see happen in the future. This was delivered to every household in Shetland.

Stakeholder consultation;

- A mix of local organisations and businesses were interviewed in person or by phone/email giving their input on the needs and priorities of the community.

Analysis and priorities planning

- Involving BDL directors, members and Bressay stakeholders to analyse the data to create a viable action plan.

Other information sources.

As well as our open consultations, interviews and questionnaire, we have used the following sources.

- National Records of Scotland
- Scottish Government Publications, including Census data
- Shetland Islands Council Local Development Plan,
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise online and in person information and advice
- Well regarded examples of other island Community development Plans, Including Shapinsay and Papay
- Local consultation, as described above
- Community insight - Housing Data

Limitations and additions

At the time of writing, a new census had been completed but not yet published, and was already two years late due to the Covid Pandemic. Therefore some statistical data is outdated and as such, indicative.

At the end of 2022, we were asked by Shetland Amenity Trust whether we might consider taking on Bressay Lighthouse as a community asset. We undertook to ask the community about their thoughts before making any decisions, as we did not have the resources at that time. As a recognition of the importance of the site and in order to get the opinions of as many islanders as possible, the subject was woven into our consultation. The consultation results are summarised here as they also give a picture of the needs and wishes of Bressay residents.



Small group discussion at the lighthouse consultation Day

4. Policy context

As part of the Community Development Plan process, national and local policies and strategies have been reviewed and the following summarised as being of importance. BDL can also align and contribute to/helps deliver on developments with other local ideas and initiatives, where appropriate.

| Policy | Purpose and key priorities/actions |
|---|---|
| <p>Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation</p> <p>www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-strategy-economic-transformation/pages/1/</p> | <p>NSET sets out the priorities for Scotland's economy as well as the actions needed to maximise the opportunities of the next decade to achieve a vision of a wellbeing economy. It focuses on 6 programmes within which BDL's own aims for increasing work opportunities on the island fit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Entrepreneurial people and culture •Productive businesses and regions •A fairer and more equal society •New market opportunities •Skilled Workforce •A culture of delivery |
| <p>Highlands and Islands Enterprise</p> <p>https://www.hie.co.uk/about-us/policies-and-publications/strategy-and-operating-plan/</p> | <p>HIE's operating plan reflects NSET priorities.</p> <p>HIE has invested in BDL since 2015, in the form of a development worker, recognising the impact such as resource can have, enabling BDL to create local jobs, develop and improve community assets, increase its traded turnover, leverage external funding. BDL's work aligns with HIE's goal of enabling strong, capable and resourceful communities;</p> <p>We will enable communities and social enterprises to fulfil their vital role in contributing to the social and economic wellbeing and growth of the region. We will continue to support the acquisition and development of income generating assets and encourage communities to benefit from and exploit the many opportunities presented by the transition to Net Zero and from our unique culture and heritage.</p> |
| <p>Scottish Government Climate Change</p> <p>https://www.gov.scot/policies/climate-change/</p> | <p>Scotland's climate change legislation sets a target date of 2045 for net zero emissions of all greenhouse gases. Scotgov's Action plan aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through a Just Transition to a net zero economy and society. It wants to ensure the journey is fair and to create a better future for everyone – regardless of where they live, what they do, and who they are; to engage the public and encourage individuals and communities to tackle climate change.</p> <p>For Bressay, this includes supporting communities to tackle climate change and delivering a just transition, by working with communities, business, industry and the people of Bressay to plan for our net zero future.</p> |
| <p>National Islands Plan</p> <p>www.gov.scot/publications/national-plan-scotlands-islands/pages/2</p> | <p>The National Islands Plan provides a framework for action in order to meaningfully improve outcomes for island communities. Actions are around the following areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Population Levels •Sustainable Economic Development •Transport •Fuel Poverty •Digital Connectivity •Health, Social care and Wellbeing •Environmental wellbeing and biosecurity •Climate Change and Energy •Empowered island communities and strong local partnership •Education •Arts, culture and language •Implementation •Housing <p>And of particular relevance;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Empowered Island Communities and Strong Local Partnerships <p>The consultation process for the Plan identified a need to fully back community empowerment and recalibrate governance arrangements for island communities. The importance of community was a key theme from the consultation and respondents provided a range of examples that highlighted the uniqueness of the islands and the strengths they provide for cultivating innovative initiatives and projects on a small scale. A thriving third sector was also highlighted as a key strength amongst island communities –in many cases filling in gaps in service provision.</p> |
| <p>Social Enterprise Strategy</p> <p>https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-social-enterprise-strategy-2016-2026/pages/6/</p> | <p>A ten-year, national social enterprise strategy, which sets out ambitions for social enterprise in Scotland, jointly developed with the sector, with the following priority.</p> <p>Stimulating social enterprise, developing stronger organisations and realising market opportunity</p> <p>Creating enterprising communities is a key priority. It states:</p> <p>We will work with others, including the community, learning and development sector, to ensure that our communities, particularly those experiencing deprivation, receive the continuous community development support needed to define their objectives, initiate community activity, develop their skills and run local assets and services in an enterprising way.</p> |

5. Community and Stakeholder feedback

Response rates

As previously said, we used a variety of methods to consult our islanders. We aimed to get opinions from members of the community who would not respond to a questionnaire, especially as ours was fairly lengthy. It also allowed for both quantitative and qualitative data to be collected - statistics and stories. The table below is an indication of the number of engagements with all of our information gathering methods.

The open day event numbers are based on those we listed as definitely attending, and we held a session with our Social Afternoon to ensure we engaged with some of the islands more isolated residents. One household questionnaire was delivered to each of 186 households, (as opposed to individuals). Thirty three responses from this part of the consultation equates to around 18% of households. However, some respondents opted to respond as a stakeholder rather than a household, particularly if they ran a business from home. It is likely that those who attended the first open day, which was designed to collect an overview of opinions may have felt they had made their contribution.

The number of separate engagements is listed below.

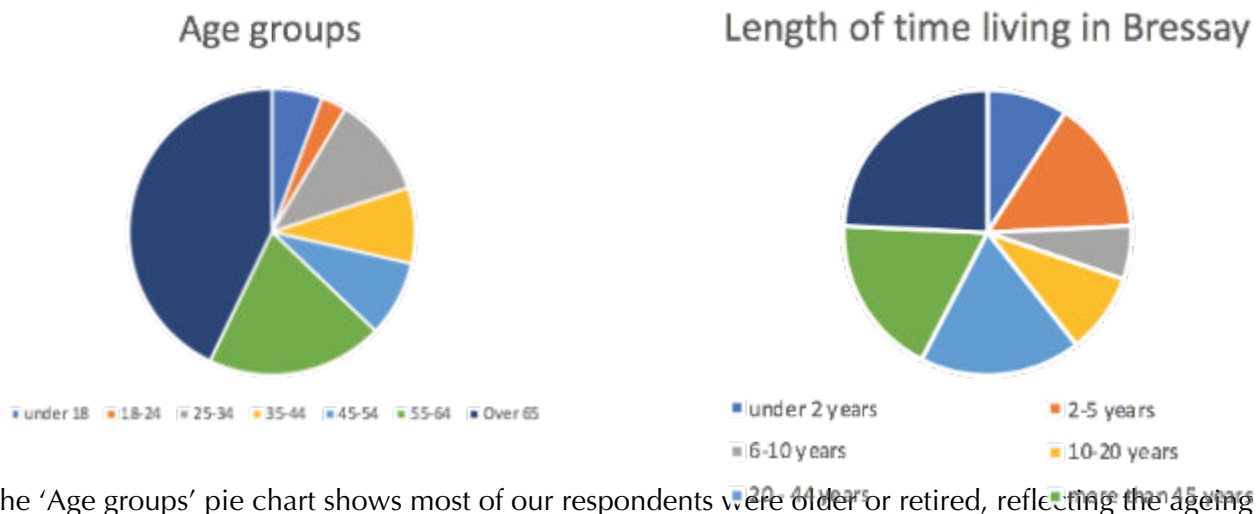
| Consultation method | Number of responses |
|--|---------------------|
| Speldiburn drop-in session, plus session with the social afternoon group | 40 approx |
| Lighthouse drop in: Information and Questions around housing and the Lighthouse: | 30 approx |
| Household Questionnaire | 33 |
| Stakeholder Interviews (for some family businesses, this includes their household) | 11 |
| Young people's responses: | 12 |
| Other individual contributions: | 2 |
| Total contributions | 128 approx |

Household survey

The household community survey was given out with our newsletter which is distributed to all households in Bressay. We also sent copies out online on request and had surveys available in our building and at our consultation open days. Reminders went out to people in person and through our Facebook pages. We received 33 surveys back. All respondents were Bressay residents. There were two known instances where more than one person filled in a questionnaire in one household. In total, around 18% of households returned a questionnaire. Some people with family businesses (for example crofting) responded to the stakeholder questionnaire rather than the household survey, discussing personal/family circumstances as part of their interview, which takes the response to around 20%. In addition, further responses were given at our open days, and we estimate we had at least 120 separate engagements throughout our consultation process.

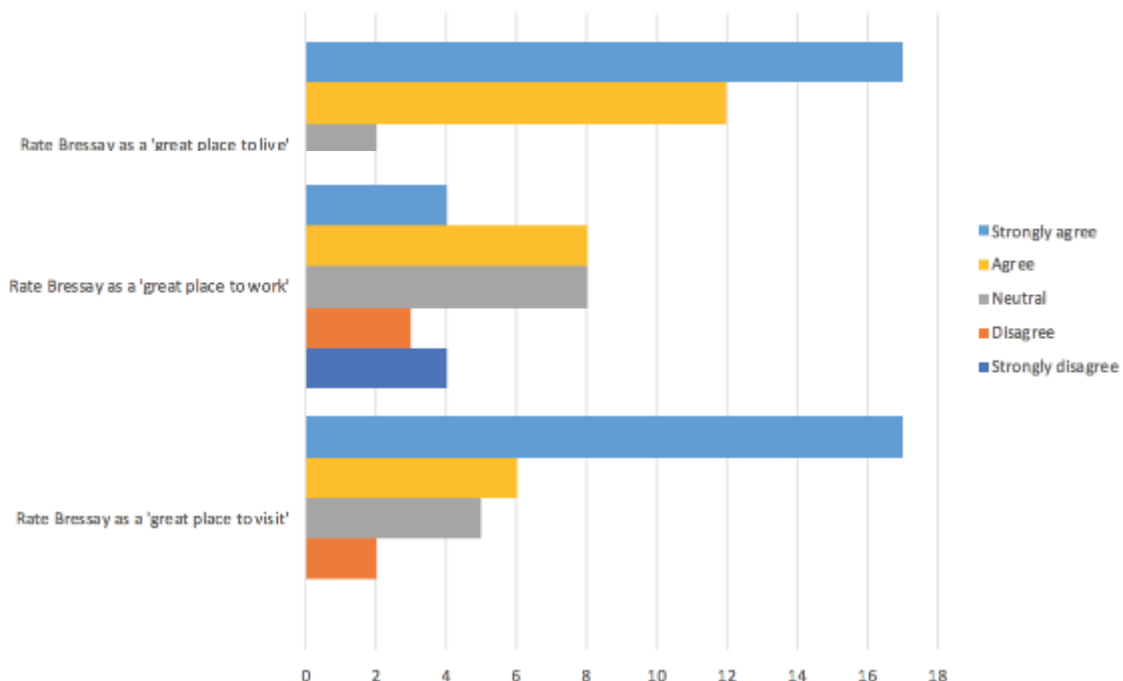
The following sections show the responses to statements given, ranging from 'strongly disagree' through to 'agree'. To keep the survey of a manageable size, some of the statements were broad, but respondents could give comments after each one, allowing us to analyse issues a bit more. representative comments are included here, particularly where they give a fuller picture of islander's feelings about an issue.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS



The 'Age groups' pie chart shows most of our respondents were older or retired, reflecting the ageing population of the island. Anecdotally, those already engaged in community activities in Bressay were more likely to respond. There was a wide spread of length of stay on the island. Most of the residents who had been here less than two years already had a knowledge of the island before moving here. Two respondents who had lived all their life in Bressay or grew up, moved away and returned answered with a sentence rather than filling in a category. Eight chose not to answer.

General Views of life on Bressay



We asked respondents for their general views on Bressay as a place to live, work and visit: Clearly, respondents find Bressay a great place to live, with only 2 having a neutral view. There were mixed views about working in Bressay, with respondents mentioning lack of opportunities to work on the island. People also felt that transport timings between the island and mainland limited work opportunities.

Respondents were very positive about Bressay as a place to visit and comments showed pride in the island. Any negative comments were related to the lack of infrastructure, such as public toilets.

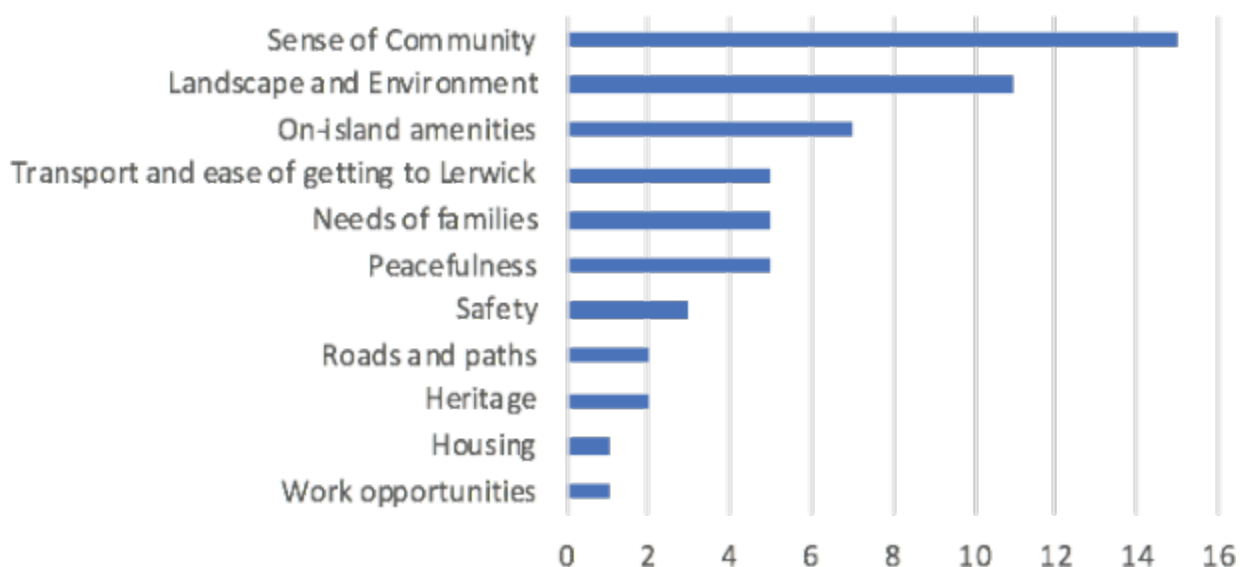
'I am lucky enough to be able to work from home, but I know there is very little employment on Bressay.'

'Work opportunities are very limited. It's largely a commuter island.'

'Bressay is a hidden gem as a place to visit!'

'We've brought friends over and they have been very happy with what they saw and would like to come back. We are quite happy to show off the island community.'

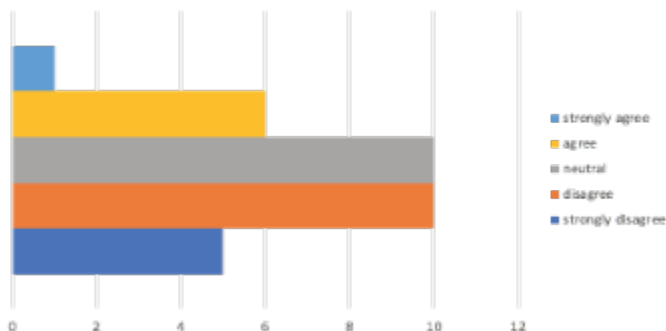
What needs protected or enhanced?



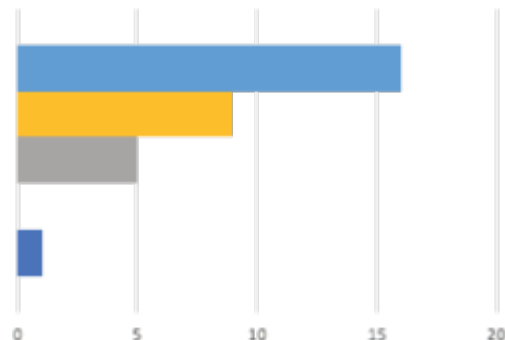
When asked for comments in relation to what needed to be protected or enhanced the most common was that the sense of community should be protected (48%). This is clearly important to islanders. Bressay's landscape and the peacefulness and its current way of life came an easy second. Getting to Lerwick was also cited as important. On-island facilities and the needs of families came next - the things that make life in Bressay sustainable for many. Although we have included housing as its own category, it could just have easily been included within the needs of families.

Public and Community facilities

There are good public/council facilities on Bressay



There are good community facilities on Bressay



We asked respondents what they felt about both publicly funded and Community provided facilities. Comments clarified this, with most saying that the services we have were generally good, with major gaps. The lack of a school, nursery, health and leisure facilities came up repeatedly, as did the fact that there is only one set of public toilets on the island.

When asked about community facilities, the picture was very different. Respondents were much more positive about Bressay's community facilities, and there was an appreciation of what the island provides for itself, but it was noted more than once that more people were needed to keep community provision going:

Public facilities

'Where they exist (i.e. ferry public toilets, rubbish collection etc) they are generally good. Some don't exist at all'

'No facilities for old folk, parents/carers, no leisure. We have to pay to access things that islanders elsewhere don't.'

'No school/nursery. No resident nurse/public health service'

'(We have) issues with bottle bank, public toilets, transport.'

'Bressay will be needing a new graveyard soon. Preliminary work would need to begin soon.'

Community facilities

'We have facilities that we are very lucky to have in such a small island. Hopefully current optimism will help them grow and continue to benefit us.'

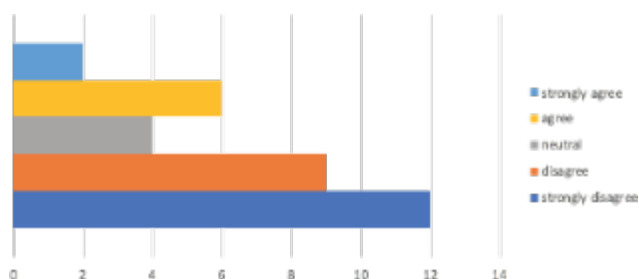
'Multiple community organisations providing facilities and attractions for Bressay.'

'Great to see the new Bressay Community Council working with other groups.'

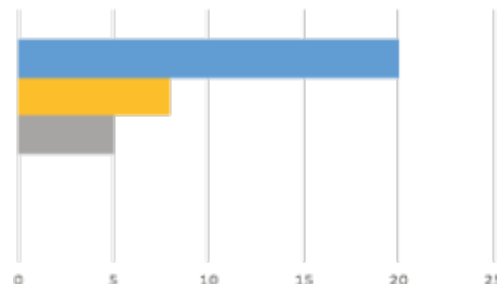
'(There are) not enough volunteers to operate community facilities'

Health and wellbeing

It is easy to look after my health and wellbeing in Bressay



Bressay is a safe and caring place



Health and wellbeing was a topic that drew lots of comments. Even those who said they could look after their own wellbeing said that they knew of many who couldn't because age or lack of transport made getting to Lerwick difficult. The length of time it has taken to establish the NHS room at Speldiburn (not yet open at the time of the survey) was commented on. Having to pay for the ferry to access healthcare was also mentioned frequently, along with our lack of facilities compared to other main island populations. Overall, respondents viewed our island as a safe and caring place to live, but within the comments there were some contrasting opinions. The nature of our road system was mentioned as making our island less safe and lack of health care also came up.

'Yes (it is easy to look after my health and wellbeing), as I can drive. Not so easy for folk relying on public transport.'

'My health is fine, but I feel pressure to support family and friends who can't access Lerwick by themselves.'

'NHS room promised not available. No island nurse or first responder.'

'Need regular support with healthcare, eg nurse clinic at Speldiburn.'

'Why do we have to pay (ferry fares) to access the health centre? No other island has to do this.'

'Roads are dangerous for cyclists/children.'

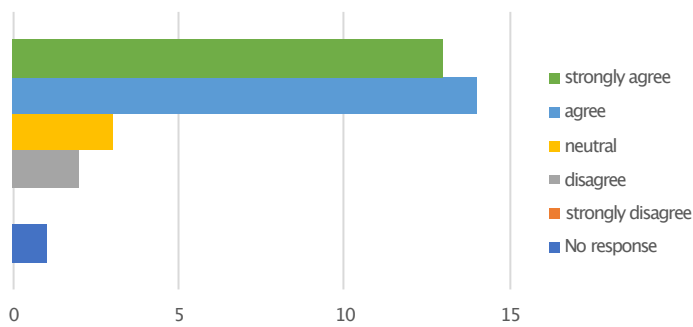
'Community spirit and support is one of our best assets.'

'Hard to feel safe and cared for if (there is) no straightforward access to healthcare.'

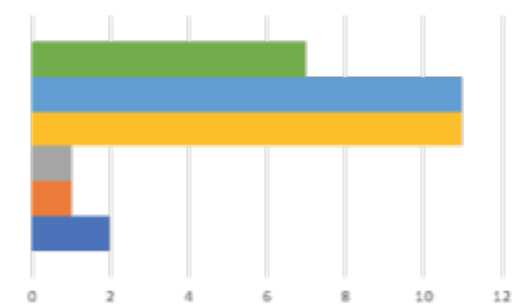
'Strong sense of community. Very safe.'

Community and Participation

I have a sense of belonging and good social contact



It's easy to have a say in what happens



The majority of respondents (83%) had a sense of belonging to Bressay and good social contact. However, one respondent felt the sense of community had diminished somewhat through the years. In another comment, the loss of the school and the ageing population was identified as contributing to this. Most respondents felt that they could have a say in what happens in our community;

'Ageing is reducing this. Having the school here was good for the whole community. I still feel its loss.'

'Still a strong sense of community to be part of.'

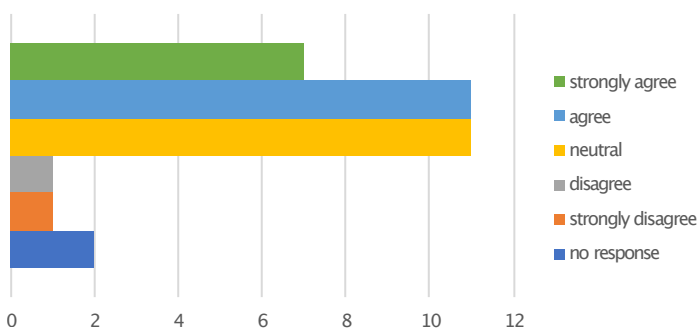
'I was not born here but feel very welcome.'

'(I have a say) in community led things, but not Council/NHS/public services. It's the '... And Bressay' problem'.

'The Bressay Community Council is approachable'

'This may change with better - co-operation and communication between BDL and BCC'

There are opportunities for education and informal learning



There were a range of opinions about whether Bressay has educational opportunities. Informal classes are viewed as infrequent and community provided, with a need for a broader range of opportunities. Others were unaware of any opportunities. The lack of a nursery came up here too. In relation to formal education, having nursery and school level education on-island remains a priority for respondents, not just for the children, but to counteract the ageing demographic. Views around this subject came up frequently in our stakeholder surveys too.

'BDL provides night classes for leisure/arts/gardening etc but nothing from education dept for adult learning.'

'Need more diverse evening class option. Most classes on offer are art/baking.'

'Proper fitness class would be good.'

'BDL has helped here. We need a nursery to encourage young people to stay on the island/avoid ferry costs and travel awkwardness'

'Need a primary school and a nursery!'

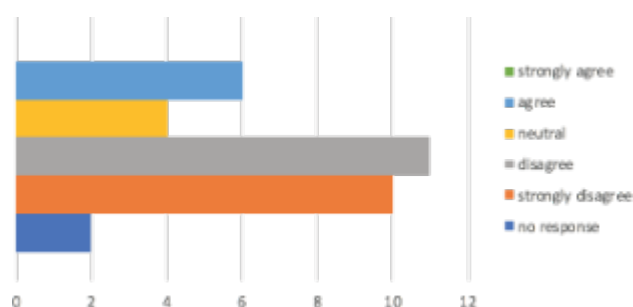
'Opportunities for children could be improved, for example with a creche or even a nursery.'

'Closing of the school was a blow.'

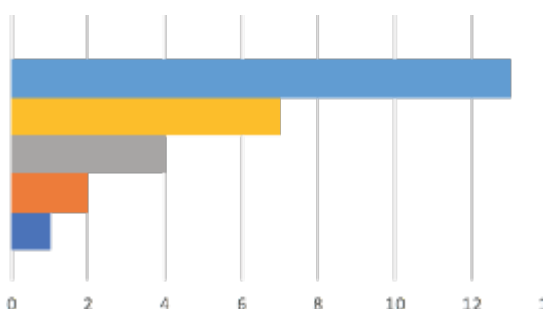
4.9 Transport

'Transport' is a broad heading, and for other purposes could have been a more detailed standalone survey, given that on-island buses and the ferry have very different levels of provision. Our focus was on convenience and affordability overall. Comments showed that people's opinions of the ferry and bus service were poles apart. Our first question asked whether our public transport overall was good enough, and generated mixed responses. 70% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that our public transport was adequate and the vast majority of comments related to the on-island bus service: Respondents did say that they felt the existing ferry service was generally good;

Bressay has adequate public transport



It is convenient for me to get on and off the island and go to/return from where I need to be



"On-island transport is not fit for purpose, but the ferry is convenient and reliable, mostly."

'Good ferry service, but lack of on-island public transport'. Existing shopper and feeder bus services need revisiting, routes, times etc. Sure we can make better use of the cost of the current service.'

'Very limited and unhelpful for many.'

'Buses are understandably scarce. What do we do for taxis?'

'It does not meet the needs of working people. I can't get the bus to and from the ferry for work - it runs during working hours.'

Please progress the 'dial-a bus' scheme, proposed years ago.

'Great if you want to walk into Lerwick.'

'Yes, because I can drive.'

'Good frequent ferry service. A tunnel would be an advantage.'

'It really is a good ferry service, but why there's not a shuttle service most of the day, I don't know.'

'Ferries are good during the day and evenings but early ferries would benefit some'

'Lack of an early morning ferry service limits access to flights from Sumburgh.'

'Weather can hamper ferry runs'

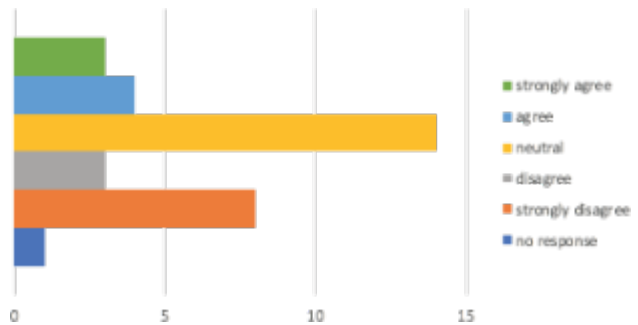
The majority of respondents gave a positive or neutral response when asked about convenience, but 22% of respondents were clear that it was not convenient for them to get on and off the island. Some people pointed out that the ferry does not run early enough to enable Bressay residents to take early starting jobs or get early flights, necessitating an overnight stay on the mainland. The start time came up here and in other parts of our consultation too. Other comments mentioned lack of reliability caused by weather or other factors outwith timetabling issues.

Only 21% of respondents felt public transport was affordable. Many respondents commented that although passenger fares were affordable, car fares were expensive. Free transport for pensioners and reduced rates for their cars were also frequently mentioned:

The cost of taking a vehicle to Lerwick came up frequently, particularly for those who need to use one for work;

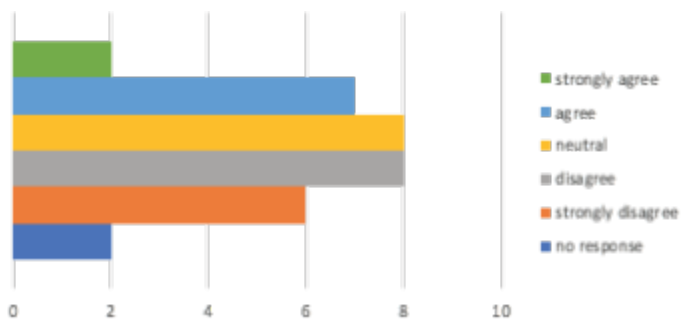
'Foot passenger prices are okay, vehicles are expensive'
'The costs of taking a car means we limit journeys.'

It is affordable for me to get on and off the island



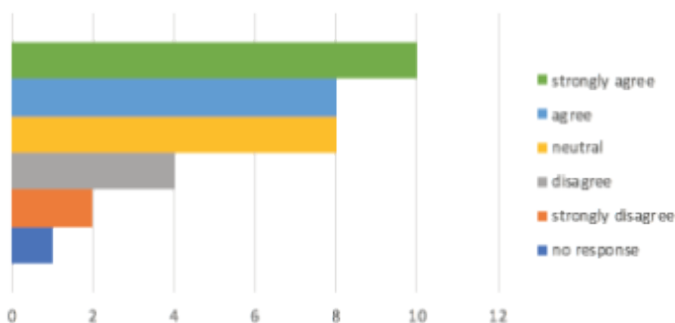
'Apart from healthcare trips with relatives and neighbours.'
'Good shop/post office/mail delivery.'
'Most of the facilities are good but I need to commute for work and fuel for the car'
'Having a job in Bressay means I don't need to leave it as much'
'My needs are simple, but many people do need to travel to Lerwick for facilities that are only available there'

I don't need to leave the island much, it provides me with what I need



When asked whether they needed to leave the island much, comments seemed to correlate to whether the respondent worked in Lerwick, or is retired. Many people praised the facilities we do have, in particular the shop and post office:

Bressay is an 'active travel' island, ie easy and safe to walk around



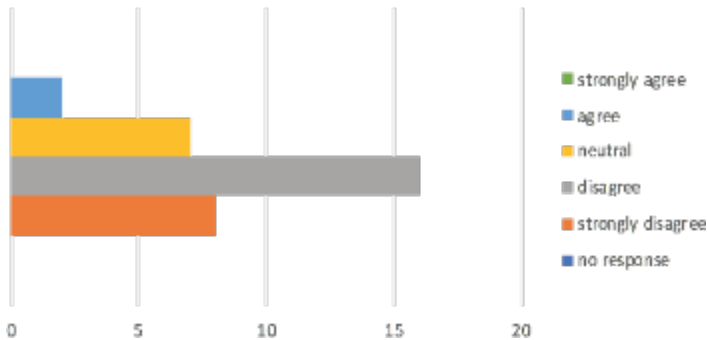
'Bressay is a difficult place to walk and cycle at times. Ferry traffic can be fast and verges too narrow to get off the road safely. Not safe for children or elderly or anyone pushing a pram.'
'Mostly, but bus shelters and pavements - especially at Maryfield are very necessary'
'Not always safe where roads are narrow, and in the dark.'

The majority of respondents to this statement felt that Bressay is easy and safe to walk around. However some did not, and there were caveats from those who agreed. Lack of pavements, or narrow verges were mentioned repeatedly, and in particular the lack of continuous pavement from the ferry to Voehead, and from Voeseide to the 'centre' of the island, where the shop, marina, hall and Speldiburn are.

Jobs and economy

Only two respondents agreed there were enough jobs and a strong economy in Bressay. Comments mentioned both the lack of existing jobs and that there should be more opportunities;

There are enough jobs and a strong economy in Bressay



'Not enough jobs in Bressay to ensure a buoyant economy but access to Lerwick means everyone can work. Lack of workers Shetland-wide.'

'Better than before, but could still improve.'

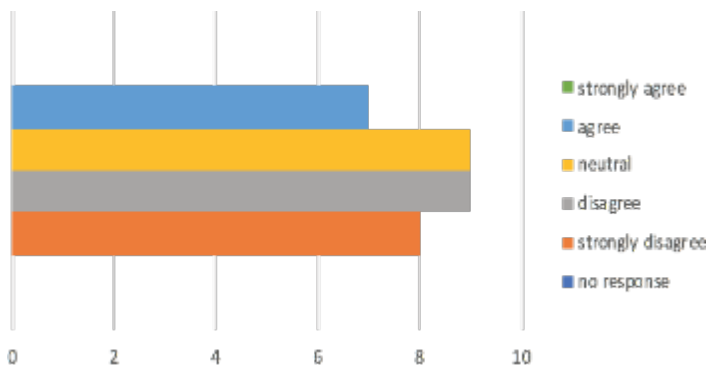
'Most folk commute - affects the vibrancy of the island.'

'Bressay needs more employment options.'

4.11 Connectivity

16% of respondents felt that Bressay has good connectivity and 55% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This statement drew many comments, which reflected the patchiness of our service and the need for different parts of the island to rely on different forms of internet access.

Bressay has good connectivity (broadband access)



'Continue to push for Bressay to be connected - possibly underwater cable alongside water pipes?'

'We risk being left behind'.

'No plans for superfast broadband?'

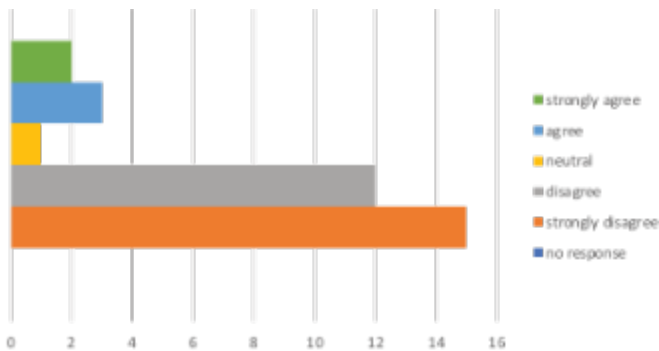
'While it's okay in some areas, we really need fibre to houses or road ends.'

'Wired is terrible but I have 4G broadband that is usually good. It would be good if the community can be supported to adopt 5G broadband to reduce digital disadvantages created by BT OpenReach's failure to invest in infrastructure.'

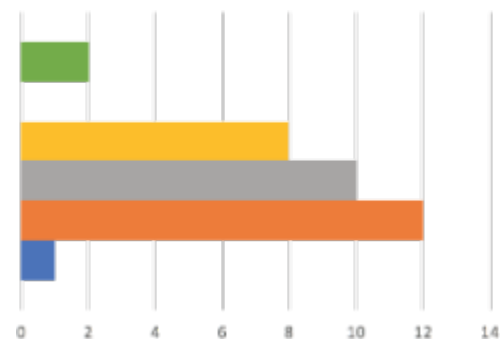
'Good internet is also necessary for folk to access their own choice of education and learning'.

Housing

Housing is available for anyone who needs it



Housing is affordable for anyone who needs it



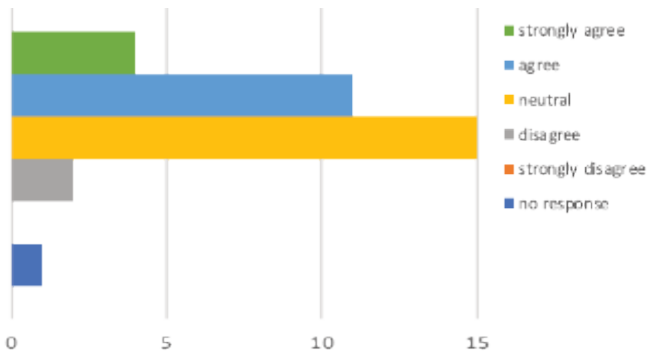
When asked about housing availability, 85% of respondents felt that housing wasn't available for those who need it. Some felt that existing housing on the island was under-utilised.

Generally, respondents disagreed that there is affordable housing for anyone who needs it, in particular for young folk.

'It was really hard for us to find a house in Bressay.'
'Not enough council housing for young folk locally'
'Lack of affordable housing, some emptycroft houses not being used.'
'(There's a) conflict between housing needs and tourist accommodation/airbnb.'
'No housing options for young folk'
'As long as private landlords don't get too greedy.'
'Definitely NOT. Prices have risen to buy and cost of mortgages/cost of living puts pressure on household expenses. Not enough social housing either.'
'Limited by supply.'

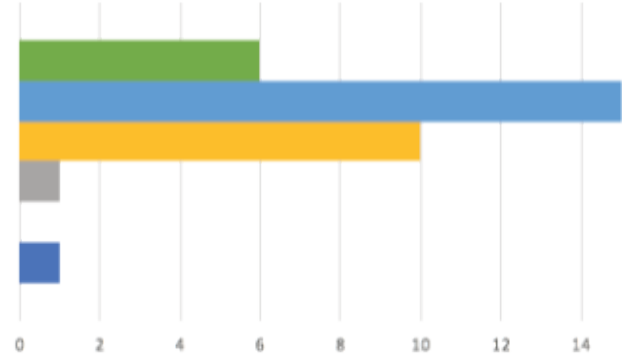
Tourism

Bressay has good facilities for visitors



Most respondents felt that Bressay has good facilities for visitors, although many commented on the lack of public toilets other than those at the ferry. There were opposing views as to what the island offered in general:

Bressay has a strong sense of heritage



Most respondents (64%), felt that Bressay had a strong sense of heritage. Those commenting felt that younger people were not so interested in heritage, but that it might develop. Others wanted our heritage to be more visible;

'Need more public toilets'

'Visitors seem delighted with what they find here. On-island transport is the only thing missing.'

'For the size of the community we provide a number of varied facilities.'

'Speldiburn and Heritage Centre are great but not much more for visitors.'

'Only by older folk, I suspect young folk have not reached the stage of being interested.'

'Varies within the community.'

'(Our heritage) needs reinforcing so it can be maintained.'

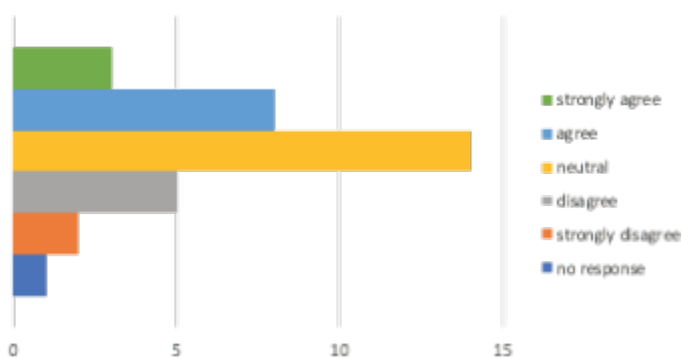


Visiting tour group ordering lunch at Speldiburn cafe

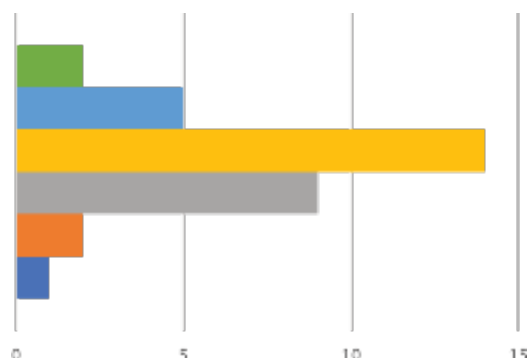
The environment

There was a spread of opinion here. Praise was given to the Community Council's organisation of skips. Most respondents had a fairly neutral opinion, although some commented that we could do better and some weren't actually sure of what was available. Several suggestions were made in the comments as to how recycling could be improved. There were also thoughts about our geographical location and climate which making it harder for us to act in some areas.

Bressay has good recycling facilities



Bressay is doing its bit to address climate change



'Often collection facilities (blue bins) are very quickly filled thus hampering the collection for three weeks.'

'Provision to deposit large batteries would be helpful.'

'Would like to see a clothes bank.'

'Not enough plastic recycling (an SIC problem?)'

'Could have more recycling bins.'

'Not too sure about that. Other than paper recycling and can bank - what else?'

'I don't believe it's a priority within the community.'

'Not sure of any climate change action. Weather keeps us dependent on the car and it's hard to access help with insulation/heating/old houses.'

Open Days

We held 2 consultation based open days. The first on Sunday 19th March 2023 at Speldiburn and the second on Sunday 16th April 2023 at Bressay Lighthouse. To encourage attendance, we opened our cafe on first session and Bressay Community Councillors made themselves available to talk to participants. The second day was held at the lighthouse, which in itself encouraged people to attend as the building is normally closed. Both were well attended with over 70 engagements between them.

Open Day at Speldiburn

The open day at Speldiburn focused on Bressay's assets and desires. Over 30 people attended, there was another informal session with 5 participants at our Social Afternoon and others participate remotely. In total around 40 people took part, approaching 12% of our island population. We asked three questions (right):

- Can you help us plot our assets? (physical mapping exercise)
- What is important to you about living in Bressay - what needs protected/enhanced?
- What skills does Bressay have?

Physical Mapping

Map of Bressay's assets from the first open day



The map shows that attendees felt we have many physical assets for a small island. Their contributions are also categorised below, along with any comments, grouped so that they correspond with our Householder Questionnaire sections:

Bressay's Assets, grouped into topics

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Public Services.</p> | <p>Our roads are good, but not for pedestrians. Parking. Our transport and connectivity - the costs of enhancing both?; Potential tunnel; The ferry: invaluable; Public toilets The fire station - invaluable!</p> |
| <p>Community organisations and Businesses</p> | <p>The shop; The Community Hall: For general use, games events, gatherings and shows; Speldiburn; Bressay Up Helly AA; Marina; Maryfield</p> |
| <p>Health and wellbeing</p> | <p>ParkRun; The community woodland; The playpark: 'An essential facility for residents and visitors'. 'the best - ask any bairn!'</p> |
| <p>Jobs and Economy</p> | <p>Bressay's crofts The fish factory The ferry</p> |
| <p>Tourism</p> | <p>Heritage Centre: A visitor destination, past and present aspects, the burnt mound - a great asset Noss - as a wildlife reserve, a visitor destination and one for locals, and an area of outstanding beauty Public toilets Crubs at Silver Valley Speldiburn The WW1 Guns at the Bard and Aith The Lighthouse Archaeology and heritage in general Culliesbrough - an area with St Mary's Kirk, the Bressay stone and other archaeology - a destination for walking and wildlife</p> |

What is important about living in Bressay, what needs protected/enhanced?

This very broad question was designed to generate discussion. There were a a huge variety of answers, but these were easily mapped onto the paper survey sections. The following represents a summary of the most common answers, in no particular order..

Active Travel and Roads

Many of those who took part wanted something done about the lack of a pavement and lighting between the ferry and Leiraness and a lack of lighting between the ferry terminal and Voesome.

Transport.

Ferry transport came up often, in particular the lack of free travel for nursery children, as compared to school children, and the cost/inconvenience of having to pay to pick up children when they have to come home sick from school. Ferry fares in general were mentioned, with many commenting on the expense of ferry fares. The ferry was also viewed as contributing to connectedness and wellbeing;

'(We need) Free ferry for parents taking bairns to/from school nursery.'

'Ferry fares free for parents picking up bairns from school when they turn ill or get hurt when at school'

'The ferry (provides a place for meeting people and separation from work (in Lerwick)'

'The Hall is getting more used now by varying groups - great having New Year's Eve.'

'I'm hoping the Sports Day comes back as that was a great Summer Community Day.'

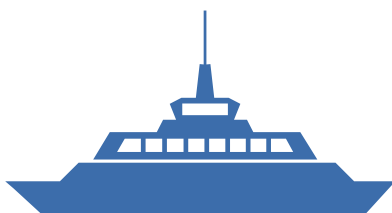
Facilities and infrastructure.

Our attendees felt it was important to protect and maintain key buildings and locations. The shop, and post office, Speldiburn and ParkRun, the community hall and sports field all came in for praise from attendees for what they are currently adding to the island, especially as things are getting back to normal after the Pandemic;

The need for fuel pumps were mentioned more than once, litter bins at Noss and the lighthouse were asked for, along with picnic benches at the area of ground next to the park. There were suggestions to move the bottle bank away from the ferry car park to somewhere more accessible. Increased public toilet locations were also requested. The need to protect and maintain Bressay's important buildings was mentioned several times, including the lighthouse - the potential of which was also mentioned.

Tourism/heritage.

There was acknowledgement that we have a good spread of attractions for visitors, including landscape, wildlife and physical attractions. Businesses supporting each other in practical ways (such as the collaborative work between Speldiburn and Garth's croft) was mentioned as a good model. More in the way of interpretation, information and better access for visitors was suggested.



Healthcare, wellbeing and leisure

Lack of on-island healthcare repeatedly came up in conversation. At the time of the consultation, the NHS room was still unopened after a couple of years of planning. Our attendees wanted more leisure provision in Bressay. Suggestions included yoga, walking football (reflecting our ageing population), tennis, exercise classes, weekend or evening walks, a youth club, more evening classes, bingo (in winter) and a running group.

Connectivity

Slow and patchy broadband speeds were highlighted many times. The question as to what happens when the land-line service is switched off and all phones become digital was also a concern.

Housing

Lack of housing and the need for affordable housing came up often - lack of housing was viewed as the root of many of Bressay's challenges. Unavailability of plots for building was commented on and there was discussion about cases of residents having to leave the island, or who had already left and were unable to come back. The best location of any new housing was identified as being close to amenities, with good infrastructure, well insulated, efficient and accessible (for wheelchairs)

***More housing,
More population
'Affordable
Housing - various
options to meet
differing needs'***

Landscape and environment:

Many commented on valuing the rurality, relative quiet, cleanliness of beaches, the wildlife, the wildness and space that Bressay affords, as well as access to Noss. The new woodland was identified as being a great asset for the island. Some felt maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity of the island was important - litter picking, ditch maintenance, access and signage were mentioned.

Bressay as a Community

'People you don't even know come and clear your path of snow in winter'
'Community and supporting each other'
'Everyone knows everyone'

The value of our community and its social life was praised by lots of people. There was a suggestion that if groups on the island could collaborate more, we would achieve more.

What Skills does Bressay have?

This was the least engaged in question at the open day so the comments are reproduced here in full. There is clearly pride and fondness for heritage skills. Skill sharing was also suggested.

'Community Development and Co-operation.'
'Farming and crofting skills, knowledge and experience.'
'We need (more) people willing to volunteer.'
'Heritage skills (Dyke-building, knitting, weaving etc).'
'Knitting.'
'Musicians - more chance to hear them would be good.'
'A more formal skills inventory would be good.'
'We can use groups/mentoring for sustainable/practical skills, eg gardening, DIY, Health, fitness support.'

Open day at Bressay Lighthouse

The Lighthouse open day, held on April 16th 2023, focussed on two subjects; Housing and the future of the lighthouse. Holding our consultation in the lighthouse itself enticed people to visit who may not otherwise have come. More than 30 people came to this 2 hour session.

Housing

Participants were shown examples of different kinds of community housing that exist on other Scottish Islands and asked questions about what they thought was needed. They liked the examples they were shown.

There was concern about the changing (ageing) demographics on the island, but a desire to have mixed and adaptable housing, so that we could continue to respond to need; The importance of securing the right location for any new housing was also mentioned and the practicalities of providing new housing was considered by some;

One participant said he's here because it was the only available place to (privately) rent in Shetland when he was looking. In relation to the lighthouse being a site for housing, one director reported that visitors didn't seem put off when it was suggested the lighthouse might not be the best location for housing - they said the views are great, people look for different things, uniqueness.' One said when her son lived there and the rough weather did bother them a bit.

'Housing a must for a vibrant community – needs to suit needs of all ages with adaptability for change.'

'(we need) multi use housing – some co-share, some family, some small with the potential for extending as families grow.'

'Co-housing (rooms to rent) for young folk - only options are a tiny room at mum and dads or £200 for a house of their own.'

'More council housing needed.'

'Need to sort out sewerage if building more council houses, look at places that aren't at the bottom of a hill, which causes damp.'

'(we need) new sites round the square – walking distance to the shops/ferry/Speldiburn.'

'There needs to be more grants for energy efficiency improvements.'

'Ferry fares are a problem for people moving here'

'There is difficulty finding land and then progressing a new build project.'



The future of the lighthouse

Attendees were shown lighthouse ownership and activities throughout Scotland, engaged in discussion and asked for their thoughts. All participants wanted the lighthouse put back into use. No-one seemed weren't nervous about the community project (although some were honest enough to say they wouldn't be able to put time into it). Housing was mentioned as a solution as much as rented accommodation. Ideas for its use included.

Other ideas:

- Self catering of many different kinds - see right hand column
- 'Active' Tourism opportunities (ie learn trades to fix lighthouse)- community/outside input to this
- A gym (4 suggestions)
- Guided tours with someone who could give a talk about the history of the building
- Look at doing an audio tour of the the lighthouse that can be downloaded for free or a nominal charge
- Look at arts project at the lighthouse
- Use for a film night?
- Community meetings could be held here or classes such as first aid, catering etc.
- Artist and music group retreats
- Artist Workshop and shop
- Diverse accommodation possibilities
- Seasonal café, the likes as what Sumburgh has
- Make it more disabled friendly
- Plaques with names of previous lighthouse keepers
- No fancy hotel and masses of tourists please
- Nobody seemed shocked or worried by the building's condition.

'Self - catering - the only thing to pay its way and not need lots of volunteers.'

'I would find self catering accommodation helpful for visitors.'

'Keep holiday self catering in the cottages but maybe have a bit of a museum in one of the flats or decorate it as it would have been back in its heyday when people who worked at the lighthouse lived here.'

'Rent out for conferences and accommodation.'

'Hostel/cheaper accommodation.'

'A base for activity holidays'

Most folk seemed to think basic accommodation would be popular but there was also a feeling that some high end accommodation - a mix - could work. Space for workshops, business etc were also suggested. Most attendees seemed to think the cottages could be brought back into use fairly easily and could be rented out whilst work on other areas was taking place (this was suggested both in terms of getting the place used/providing accommodation and of bringing in an early income. There was concern that the bank to the east of the entrance is eroding.

Working/activity holiday group lets came up more than once - for example, residential workshops starting with renovation projects on the site itself using the letting houses as accommodation for people restoring the engine room and other areas.

Engine Room

There was a suggestion that the engine room, with double doors and level access could be an ideal workshop space for light industry, for rental etc. It could also be used as a unique event space. The workings would need removed, whether by SAT or the new owner. The compressor tanks would have scrap value if they were removed.

'The engine house block has more space than I remembered and I think there would be scope for multiple uses of the site. For example, there could be group rentals for visitors undertaking art/craft/skills/wildlife/research.... type residential workshop weeks, and still have room for workshop space(s) to support local business.'

Housing units

The layout of the letting houses has potential to turn one into multi-room accommodation block in a hostel style with communal kitchen and lounge (which would free up one kitchen/lounge to become an extra bedroom. Some attendees knew people who'd lived at the lighthouse in the past, which was very interesting to hear about and they seemed to mostly enjoy life there.

Other comments

Directors reported no negative comments, attendees were all enthusiastic to see something positive happen to the site. It was noted that to be financially viable it would need to be a solution that worked all year round (so not just tourist focussed), it should complement other facilities on Bressay and should not compete with other businesses or duplicate existing facilities, such as Speldiburn Cafe. It would need a dedicated team to deliver the project including a professional construction project manager on a paid contract to ensure the effective delivery of the renovation works.

Condition of the building and potential repair: Ideas around renovation as workshops

An attending architect felt that necessary insulation would not impact room size too much. A joiner felt it was in better condition than he expected and wondered whether much of the internal works could be handled by the community themselves (if we could find the volunteers). He thought that the roof repair was the main issue to be addressed and the rest was easy to remedy once the building fabric had dried out. There was also discussion around the poor condition of the building being exacerbated by being empty and unheated for a long period of time. It was also pointed out that the boundary wall is also in poor condition in places and is very susceptible to erosion. It has already been moved away from the cliff.

Young people's opinions.

Speldiburn Open Day

As part of the open days, we asked Children what they might like to see in Bressay in five or ten years time, with questions designed to ask them to consider the topics we asked householders in their questionnaires. We asked them to tell us their thoughts in a drawing and had some conversations with them. A selection of these drawings are shown below.

Young people were very aware of the positives for Bressay, including the community facilities, a feeling of safety, and the landscape/environment. Their vision for a future Bressay included active travel (cycling), the ferry still running, having facilities that allowed them to be creative. When asked where their housing would be, most just wanted it to be somewhere on Bressay.

'My house is on wheels so I can go anywhere in Bressay, because it's beautiful.'



Lighthouse Open Day

The island's young people were asked to draw us their vision for the site. Their ideas broadly reflected those who had taken part in the main consultation, with suggestions for a museum, or hotel accommodation, and a 'party place' for social gathering. All wanted the lighthouse site to be available for the community to access.



Stakeholder Questionnaires:

We put out an open invitation and also personally contacted many stakeholders - those who either ran an organisation or a business on the island. In all, we had 11 respondents. A good cross section of our stakeholders responded: from Bressay based industries and organisations, including the fish factory, tourism and craft related businesses, agricultural/crofting businesses and self employed tradesmen. Most community organisations on the island contributed. We anonymised contributions and made 'word clouds' for each section, to indicate the frequency of topics being mentioned. For each individual question, we generated the top 25 words. The word cloud below, of 50 words, represents of all of the stakeholder interviews combined and gives an idea of some of the common issues faced by our stakeholders.

Key assets and Services for Bressay:



The word 'people' came up most frequently - and although this word was used in general contexts, so it is perhaps over-represented, 'people' were specifically mentioned as an asset. 'People' were also mentioned in the context of needing to increase the population to ensure Bressay is sustainable in the longer term. There was also some concern that there is less commitment to community life than there used to be.

'People who care about the island, understand the culture, and wish to share that with everyone'

'People! We would like to employ people on the island.'

'We need support for the shop to ensure they carry on.'

'(Speldiburn) is a good information point for visitors. The cafe is a real asset.'

The shop and Post Office came up for almost all respondents. The new owners, who at the time of writing had only been running the shop for a few months, were repeatedly praised for their efforts to serve and work with the community, but there was also an awareness that for it to be sustainable, it needs to be used; The contribution that Speldiburn makes was also praised. The cafe in particular was mentioned as a real asset to the island, both in terms of tourism, and as a service to islanders.

The ferry and transport in general also came up for almost everyone. Most businesses felt that the ferry was good in terms of frequency at the times it did run, and for tourism businesses, it was 'part of the experience'. However, the timing of the first ferry (7 a.m.) meant that some people could not take work offers on the mainland. As with the household surveys, needing to stay in Lerwick to get an early flight from Sumburgh came up, For others, both cost and regulations hindered their business, in one case to the point that closure of the business was considered. Finally, The island itself, the space, landscape, heritage and culture were praised as being a key asset for both both residents and visitors.



Infrastructure that needs protected.

'Maintain the ferry service - 'maintain' at least, and improve at most!'

'The ferry is our bus'

'What needs protected? - Everything we have left!'



The ferry is clearly the most important piece of infrastructure to the island and was referred to repeatedly. The need for additional earlier or later services, more frequent services, and at the very least, to preserve the service we currently have were mentioned by all respondents. Having reduced facilities in comparison to the mainland and some other islands was mentioned frequently. It was felt there is a need to ensure Bressay promotes itself, so that our stakeholders' businesses and organisations are sustainable. 'Park' referred to several things - parking spaces, the play park and the football park - all of which were seen as valuable assets for the island. Finally, the key assets and services mentioned in the first section were all seen as needing protected, since the island has lost so much over the years;

Investing time and money in Bressay



'The costs of ferry doesn't just affect business, it affects everybody. School and nursery is a great example. As a family, sometimes we need three trips in a day. A pickup and trailer is £22. And the time taken - getting to nursery is a huge cost and inconvenience. (It) has a negative effect on business if I have to take time out. It's hard to live and raise your kids here.'

'At the moment, the ferry is really expensive because I have to take the car over (to Lerwick). The nursery is also a price for us. The cost of the car on the ferry is quite prohibitive for lots of things.'

Investment in ferry services was again at the top of stakeholders list. Crofting businesses tend to be small, family concerns, and the costs for family and business use came up repeatedly. Cheaper ferry fares were viewed as making both business and family life in Bressay more sustainable. The word 'business' was often used in relation to the ferry service - again in terms of the affect cost has on a business, or the potential to increase business. There was a desire to have some form of nursery or childcare on the island. Toilets and facilities in general came up in reference to tourists, which are some businesses' source of income. Transport, buses, and the need for a car were all part of the same conversations - about limited options for public travel on the island for both residents and visitors.

Thoughts on the challenges for Bressay as an island

'The younger ones, they are the future. Without the young ones, there is no future.'

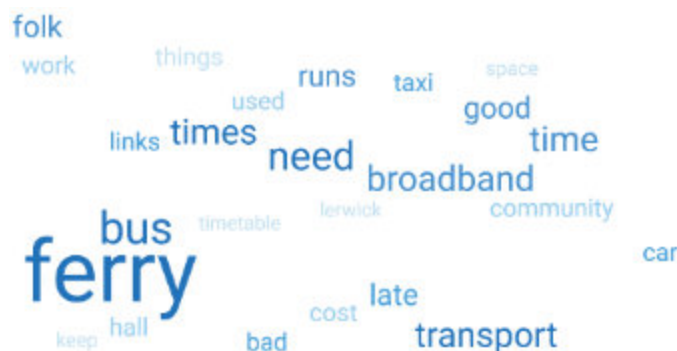
'Having a 3-5 year old is hard. You can have a free nursery place, but you have to pay to access it.'

'Education not being available. Having to write off the day for nursery'.



The cost of island living came up frequently - for housing, travel, the ability to take up services that aren't available on the island and the cost of having things delivered. Housing was viewed as a real challenge for the island - in terms of availability, cost and the future of the island. The need to maintain our population levels and young folk staying on Bressay was mentioned by many. Older stakeholders felt there was no housing or facilities for this group: younger stakeholders with children talked about how difficult things are with a lack of on-island provision for children and young people.

Transport and connectivity



The ferry came up for everyone. Commercial rates and increasingly stringent regulations and paperwork were criticised. Having our annual refit during the tourist season affected some, as vehicle capacity is significantly reduced. The timetable came up many times - respondents were unable to take up work because of ferry timing, or it affected their ability to do business from Bressay, because they needed to work beyond the ferry timetable, or because their customers could not access transport off the island early enough to access onward journeys.

'The islands' minibus service was viewed as poor. It was perceived as not running at times that are conducive to business or work, and not going where it was needed. The idea of on-island control of a bus/taxi was mooted by respondents, but there was also the view that it was not sustainable for volunteers to run services like this.

'The ferry is a major thorn (for our business). We need to fill in a form, every time...We are trying to resolve issues, but we get nothing. ...We are struggling with fuel.'

'Transport costs are not good - for example we need haulage from time to time. It's so expensive, I have to work with trucks leaving the quarry to try and double up and save a bit. It still costs £250. In Tingwall it would cost £50.'

'You can't get out of Bressay early enough to do some jobs. And there are poor transport links. You have to have a vehicle.'

'Bus goes straight to the ferry, doesn't take you past anything else - not cafe, shop and hall.'

'The bus is a total waste of money - runs at the wrong times - a taxi is needed at times.'

'Flexible on-island transport of some sort could be useful to attract more people to the hall'

Good quality broadband is viewed as essential both for business use and for visiting tourists and customers to other businesses too. One stakeholder was looking at expensive alternatives to both wired and 4G internet, as neither provided what they need;

'Wifi connectivity - it's atrocious'

'People coming to stay need to be able to work from Bressay. Folk need to check emails while they are away and be contactable.'

Housing

'Doesn't affect business, but there are very clear demographic issues - absence of education (is) not great for the island in particular.'

'It has got to a point where not enough housing means no young people. Years ago if they'd looked into it and built more housing, people might have stayed.'

'We struggle for volunteers, lack of young people with energy with enthusiasm, we are struggling for the lack of people in general who are willing or able to be involved. That in part is about having less of them on the island.'

'Building plots don't become available often. The public don't know where there is permission to build. No-one knows if it's worth asking if there might be a place to build or who to ask whether you can build.'

'We were very lucky to get the housing we got, and we were looking for months. There's not much availability.'



Lack of housing was seen as detrimental to the island. The lack of social housing came up repeatedly throughout the interviews, as did the lack of housing for young people. Existing housing was seen as not suitable. The link between housing, demographics and the future of the island came up several times. The difficulties in self building came up more than once - viewed as difficult, no knowledge of where there is permission to build, or where to find building plots. Buying a house was also viewed as difficult, due to lack of availability and variety.

Community Spirit



Stakeholders who had been on the island a long time felt that community spirit and volunteering had declined over the years. Newer islanders very much appreciate what goes on. All felt that community spirit had not been so evident for a while, but had got better - in part due to the Covid pandemic, and also because Speldiburn has given a focus back that was removed with the closure of the school.

'I think it's exceptional. Really inspiring. The amount of things to do that are there if you look. Always something going on. We cater for everybody.'

'Not a huge amount going on. It's different from what it was when I was growing up.'

'The hall is struggling for volunteers, even enough people to run events. Even when we do put things on they can tail off.'

'Has improved in recent years, which is heartening. In years gone by we used to have dances in the hall, but folk stopped participating.'

Tourism

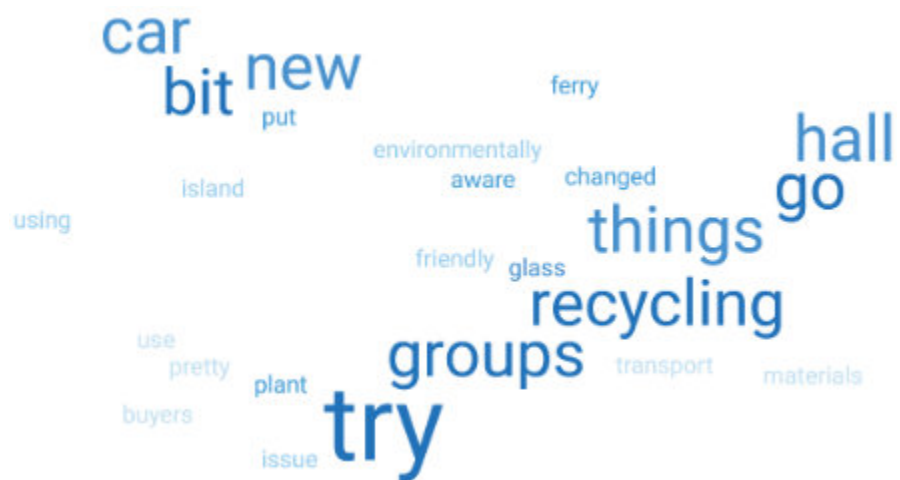


'Tourism is key to invigorating the community. Employment can be found, the island can be promoted, The place feels alive when people are walking around. I'm happy to recommend the shop and Speldiburn... Tourists support the shop, cafe, accommodation and other businesses - it's the key to keep the place going. there's no industry here now, so tourism is the key.'

Tourism was described as 'very important' by lots of respondents, and even businesses for whom tourism is not a priority felt it was important to accommodate visitors. However, there were stakeholders who had thought of diversifying but felt that the infrastructure (in particular ferry times and costs) hampered this. Some respondents felt that it was where the future lay for ensuring a vibrant community: There was also a recognition that the different organisations and businesses working together make a quality visitor experience. For example, accommodation businesses working with the shop to provide welcome packs, and tour businesses working with Speldiburn to provide catering as part of their visit to the island.

The environment

'Buyers groups could be useful for all sorts of things - deliveries of DIY materials, for example'



Almost every stakeholder we talked to had made changes to the way they operated in recent years to try and be more environmentally responsible. For crofters, this continues to be a way of life - conservation and recycling of materials is part of what crofters do. There were also many suggestions to help with recycling, such as car sharing or more public transport and increased opportunities for recycling on-island. Respondents also talked about the need to continue to put out the message that we all need to do our bit, and possibly share messages from other organisations - for example making sure crofters know about grants for peatland conservation, or working collectively, There were concerns about how some future policies would work in an island context - for example how a bottle return scheme would work.



Thoughts on the lighthouse as a community asset



'It would be fantastic if it could be developed into a visitor attraction that could be self-sustaining, more self catering accommodation would be fantastic, so people would spend their money. There are fantastic opportunities there. It's a positive asset for the island, it would be a shame to let it go.'

Most stakeholders felt it would be a wonderful community asset, but understood the difficulties involved in terms of resources in terms of the scale of the project - refurbishing the building, having a viable business plan, and then running it. Several respondents did question whether it was realistic for a voluntary community group to realise the building's potential, wondering if it would be more viable for a private business? But overall, it was felt that any way we could ensure that it remained an asset to the community should be considered. Accommodation of different kinds was the most common suggestion for its use, with heritage and accommodating the visitors who are here for walking and wildlife also a common theme.

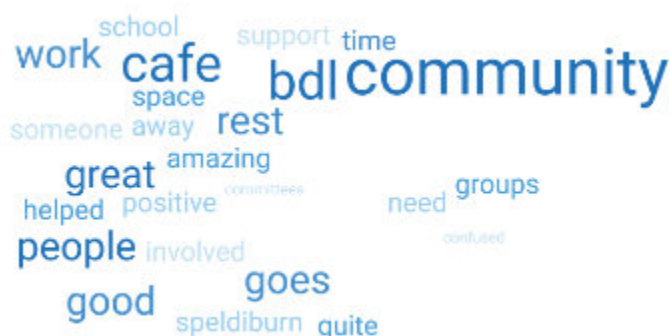
Views on BDL and Speldiburn

'BDL has helped the Community come together and supported small groups as well as individuals. Room hire, the cafe and markets have all helped.'

'There is always room for improvement, especially for those who work in the tourist industry.'

'We need to try and shout about Bressay more - to funders and visitors.'

'The commitment is quite clear. The rest of the community seems to support BDL, the rest of the community don't realise the work that goes into the cafe. There is a lack of recognition of what goes in to make the place work. Moving forward making sure that other groups work with BDL - it should be there to support the rest of the community.'



We made it clear that this was a chance for respondents to say what BDL could do better, and we were not just looking for praise. However, stakeholders were generally positive about BDL's activities. There were comments about the fact that Speldiburn, while a great facility, has replaced something that many islanders would like back - the school and nursery. One stakeholder found the amount of different organisations on the island confusing, but felt it was great that people gave up their time. There was recognition of the amount of work that goes into keeping the building and its activities running, and a suggestion that we could help support other groups more.

Other thoughts



'There needs to be more people – they are out there, it's just trying to get them to commit. How do you bribe them?'

'As a whole it's a great island. There are things other islands in Scotland are doing better, there are people here that could get more involved.'

Open comments tended to reinforce what had been said elsewhere - the need to cater or young people, the need for more volunteer input as a whole. All stakeholders wanted to do the best they could for their community. There was praise for the way that BDL and the Community Council are beginning to communicate.



The social afternoon group enjoy late summer sunshine at Speldiburn

6. Summary of Findings

Living in Bressay

All our respondents said they valued living in Bressay. The space, peace, scenery, proximity to Lerwick, heritage and above all the sense of community all contribute to Bressay being a desirable place to live.

The island's assets

The ferry is the most important asset to the island. People, place and community spirit were praised throughout the consultation process. Places that attract or provide services to tourists, including the shop/post office, heritage centre and Speldiburn featured most strongly in our asset mapping exercise, and the cafe was praised as a valuable asset to the community. Our landscape, events (Up Helly Aa, Garden Show, Christmas events etc) and the wealth of heritage knowledge was praised. Community organisations and activities were strongly appreciated.

Services and amenities

The island's public services need improvement. Many services, especially healthcare, leisure and nursery/education are lacking on the island, given other populated islands have on-island facilities. Roads, paths and lighting on Bressay are viewed as needing improvement.

All community provided services and amenities were greatly valued, but a lack of volunteers means organisations are not running as they could be.

Health and wellbeing

Respondents generally feel safe and cared for by other islanders, but statutory healthcare was found wanting. The new and very part-time NHS GP appointment clinic is not seen as a substitute for having proper healthcare on the island. Islanders feel discriminated against as they have to pay ferry fares, usually with a vehicle, to access healthcare.

Bressay lighthouse

There is a strong attachment and desire to do something with the lighthouse for the community, but no offers of time and effort to make it happen.

Housing

There is not enough social housing or housing for young people in Bressay. Private housing is not affordable for many. Families are leaving, or considering leaving because their housing needs cannot be met.

Community and participation

Those who have lived elsewhere value community spirit the most, but those who have lived in Bressay for a long time feel it has declined. There is a sense that the island and its organisations can work together and this is appreciated. However, there is a shortage of volunteers.

There could be more opportunities for learning, both formal and informal, on the island. Lack of nursery services and the difficulty/expense of using those in Lerwick came up often.

Transport and travel

Most householders saw the ferry as affordable for passengers and generally reliable. The frequency and quality of service is appreciated but additional early services would broaden employment and travel opportunities. The cost of travel to access nursery provision is unfair. Stakeholders were unhappy with the cost of business use and bureaucracy.

On-island public transport needs improved. The minibus is felt to be badly timed for commuters and not responsive to islander or tourist needs.

Tourism (and cultural assets)

Tourism is important to the island. The island could market itself more and some of our facilities, such as toilets, could be better. Our natural heritage, for example Neolithic and World War archaeology, and our cultural heritage such as agricultural skills, crafts and music were recognised and appreciated.

The environment

Stakeholders try to do their bit for the environment. Householders wanted additional facilities for recycling. Some existing facilities need tweaked. The island could do more to address climate change.

7. Analysis: Challenges & Opportunities for Bressay & BDL

Bressay's challenges in relation to those of other Scottish islands

In comparison to research from the Scottish Islands Federation we can see that Bressay's challenges are broadly similar to Scotland's Islands as a whole. For Bressay, addressing affordable and available housing, connectivity, health and social care concerns, transport issues and encouraging a younger population are all important challenges that, if tackled, could improve the sustainability and vibrancy of the island. Tourism, heritage and culture are opportunities that the island is beginning to grasp. Working towards Net Zero is an ongoing process that most islanders and stakeholders are addressing on an individual basis, but there are opportunities for more joined up thinking.

5. What could make the most difference?

Consideration was given to the opportunities that could make a difference to the sustainability of island communities:

Figure 5. What would make the biggest difference (% listed as most important)?

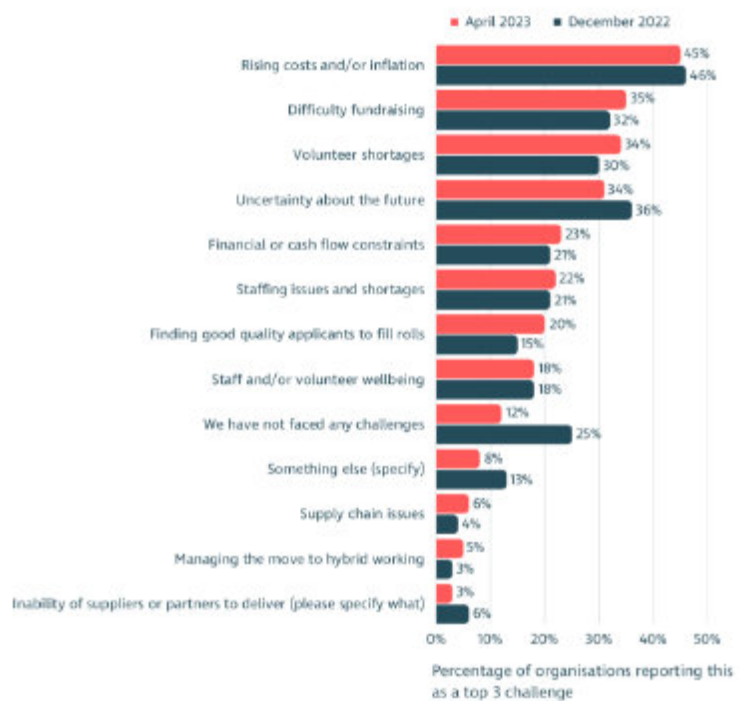


Amongst the top issues are broadband and transport. These were also highlighted at the recent EU Committee of the Regions Conference in Shetland which S.I.F. attended.

Source, referenced October 2022 <https://www.scottish-islands-federation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SIF-Island-Survey-2016.pdf>

Challenges for BDL in relation to Scotland's third sector organisations

The table on the right, from the Scottish Council for Voluntary organisation's Third Sector tracker for the first quarter of 2023, mirrors BDL's experience. At the time of writing, we are entering a second winter of the 'cost of living crisis' with high inflation, low pay increases for most and no sign that things will change. People are in real terms becoming poorer, while the cost of food, all other items and energy are steadily increasing. For householders, the loss of people's disposable income affect the vibrancy of the island. For stakeholders, the cost of doing business or the costs associated with running voluntary organisations continues to increase. For third sector organisations such as BDL, people have less time to volunteer and less money to spend with us.



In Shetland, there is said to be 5 paid jobs for every 4 people and 1 available house for every 3 job vacancies. The hospitality industry has suffered immensely, with businesses out of town having to reduce their offering or close. It is widely acknowledged that working patterns have changed since the Covid pandemic. While some of those who worked from home have returned to the office, others have continued to work remotely, either full or part time. BDL is aware of an increase in people working from home in Bressay. This could present opportunities for us to engage with a new demographic, who spend more time on the island.

6.3 Swot analysis for BDL

SWOT analysis

This SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis for Bressay is taken from Bressay Development's Business plan of 2022, without the extensive consultation exercise that has taken place for this community development plan. However, the issues closely mirror those identified in our consultation. We can surmise that the islands issues are known and understood by all, and that BDL's close community links allow it to have a good grasp on the island's needs.

Strengths

- Close proximity to Lerwick
- Good agricultural land and growing number of local producers
- Strong community spirit and involvement / Range of community facilities
- Many visitor attractions including Noss
- Rural island with a vast range of fauna, flora, archaeology, history, geology
- Positive external view of Bressay and BDL
- No empty housing

Opportunities

- Housing
- Increasing visitor numbers, including cruise line passengers / provide better services
- Provision of improved further facilities at Speldiburn and elsewhere -inc, increasing options for the creative sector, business start-ups and community wellbeing. Speldiburn re-development
- Develop purpose-built nursery and childcare facilities Speldiburn
- Decarbonising
- Increase production of Local food and produce / support, market and encourage EV charging points
- Bressay Community Woodland
- Staycations – promote/increase accommodation options
- Lighthouse development
- Sports Pitch development

Weaknesses

- Lack of employment on the island
- Lack of business premises to rent
- Dependence on ferry to Mainland Shetland / limited by ferry run times
- Lack of available and affordable housing
- Shortage of public toilets
- Reliance on Lerwick for many facilities and increasing costs of doing so
- Lack of Kirk/primary school
- Lack of nursery and childcare provision
- Lack of visitor accommodation/limited visitor facilities
- Lack of island medical cover
- Limited island public transport
- Standards of older housing
- Decarbonising costs
- Poor broadband, no R100 rollout

Threats

- Further loss of services and facilities
- Ageing and declining population
- Increasing cost of ferry service
- Cost of decarbonising
- Limits of voluntary pool

Opportunities for Bressay and BDL: A discussion

Supporting a vibrant community

The loss of the school and nursery is still keenly felt, and may have affected how the population has changed since its closure. Despite its proximity to Lerwick, and sometimes because of it, Bressay is a fragile island in terms of population, employment, infrastructure and services such as education and health. Looking at a population breakdown from the Community Profile in section 2, we can estimate that the island loses around a half of its population every day to work, school or nursery in Lerwick, and Saturdays are often a shopping day, again taking people off the island.

Questions for Bressay in general:

- *How can we continue to raise awareness of and support volunteering?*
- *How can we ensure that we don't lose any more services or infrastructure?*

Work within BDL's scope

- *BDL can continue to prioritise inclusivity and wellbeing in its activities. It can continue to organise and support events which bring the community together.*
- *We can work on increasing accessibility and engagement, evaluating our service on an ongoing basis to ensure we are meeting islanders' needs*
- *We can explore ways of meeting any on-island needs of homeworkers.*

The island comes together for some events, including the annual Garden Show and Bressay Up Helly Aa. There are other activities that bring groups within the population together, such as card games in the Community Hall, Speldiburn cafe provides an informal meeting space, and the Social Afternoon is open to anyone but aimed at the elderly or isolated. However, the post pandemic drop in volunteers, who come from a very limited pool of available 'bodies' has an effect on what the island can offer - some activities, such as the island's community sports gathering have not gone ahead. There are volunteers who are involved in several organisations, or make things work almost on their own, helping to ensure organisations continue to function, but these individuals are overstretched.

More positively, a sense of community was considered Bressay's biggest asset, and the respondents to our research consistently recognised Bressay as somewhere safe and caring. Additionally, our research showed that Speldiburn has become recognised and valued as a 'hub' for the community.



The challenges of island life: lack of statutory services, and a changing demographic

For sections of our community, island life is challenging. The affordability of the ferry, lack of available and affordable housing and lack of facilities for young families came up throughout our consultation process, as did the general difficulties of living on the island with a young family. We are also aware of families who are considering leaving the island as their current housing does not meet their needs and they cannot find anything else on Bressay. At the other end of the scale, The 2011 census has Bressay's percentage of pensioner households at 26.4%, and the ONS 2020 mid-year estimate is that 28.9% of our island residents are over 65. This is higher than the Shetland average of 21% in the 2022 census. This will have an effect over time in terms of the need for services.

Questions for Bressay in general:

- *How can we ensure our elderly and isolated are cared for and have access to what they need to ensure their health and wellbeing?*
- *How can we make Bressay attractive, accessible and affordable for younger families?*
- *How can we support the island's new NHS provision and encourage its expansion?*

Work within BDL's scope

- *Ensuring BDLs services continue to meet the needs of the island's population as it is, and look for opportunities to expand what we currently offer.*
- *Supporting the work of services based at Speldiburn, for example the NHS, and make links with other organisations who can hire our space to provide facilities to those who support islanders' challenges.*
- *Continuing to provide opportunities for informal learning and education, and expanding this where we can.*
- *Using the Housing Needs Assessment to direct our work around housing in the longer term.*

Our housing questions were general, as we aim to undertake a more specific housing Needs Assessment in the near future. However, our respondents made it clear that they felt an increase in housing and therefore the population (including creating more balance in our ageing demographic) is key to maintaining Bressay's future.

Difficulty and the cost of accessing NHS provision came up many times. This view is substantiated by those who have worked in social care services. Red Cross staff and a retired island nurse have told us they feel Bressay is an afterthought in terms of provision for the elderly. The island's small row of sheltered housing is now used for single renters, so no sheltered or supported accommodation is available on the island. In addition, we have specific knowledge of elderly islanders who have chosen to go into supported accommodation or care in Lerwick because of the lack of healthcare here, taking them away from their families.

The cost of accessing nursery education, the extra expense to collect an ill child from school and other effects of having no education service, whether formal or informal on the island was mentioned throughout the consultation, and islander feel that Bressay can be forgotten or ignored.

Work and enterprise

Every commercial stakeholder talked about the difficulties of doing business on Bressay. These were mostly connected to ferry fares and the burden that off-island nursery and education puts on the business, both in time and cost. But finding and retaining staff is also an issue. Poor connectivity is also a major challenge for businesses, with no sign of improvement in infrastructure.

Questions for Bressay in general:

- *How can Bressay become a more attractive place to do business?*

Work within BDL's scope

- *Offering to to advertise jobs and other opportunities for other organisations using our social media pages.*
- *Making ourselves available to young people as a place for work experience. We can also be available to Anderson High School for work experience weeks.*
- *Our own journey towards sustainability may provide further on-island employment, for example an office manager.*

Travel and Connectivity

Questions for Bressay in general:

- *How can we improve our on-island transport and connectivity?*
- *How can we ensure that everyone is engaged/consulted in the future of our public transport?*

Opportunities within BDL's scope

- *BDL can explore ways to available public transport more visible to islanders through marketing timetables and fares, having posters around etc.*
- *We can explore how other islands provide public transport, the viability of a dial-a-bus service, how they are funded and staffed.*
- *BDL can continue to offer its internet provision to islanders and explore alternatives where appropriate.*

The Bressay ferry is the most importance piece of infrastructure for islands. Although it is appreciated for many reasons, including its regularity, general reliability and quality of service, the social aspect of passenger travel, and the experience it gives to tourists, it adds to the challenge of operating a business on Bressay and the timetable needs expanded. Interestingly, the idea of an alternate fixed link came up only two or three times throughout the consultation, although the focus was very much about what we have currently. On-island travel is recognised as difficult, and the bus service is minimal at best. Our digital connectivity is poor with no sign of any structural improvement coming to us.



Tourism

Tourism is increasing across Shetland and this looks like it will continue. Bressay is well placed to take advantage of this, especially given our proximity to Lerwick, and our wealth of natural and cultural heritage. There are organisations and businesses on the island that work in partnership to increase the quality of our offering, including BDL. Tourism provides an opportunity to increase income both for BDL and for individuals we support, such as local crafters. BDL are already aiming to ensure our refurbishment, in part at least, gives us an opportunity to further meet tourism needs and generate more income from this sector, as well as providing additional services to island residents.

Questions for Bressay in general:

- *How can we promote our strengths to islanders and visitors alike, and encourage people to look after the island's assets?*
- *Are there further opportunities for Bressay organisations and/or businesses to work more closely to promote the island and its heritage?*
- *Are there ways that Bressay organisations could share skills, and assets and manpower to all our benefit?*

Opportunities within BDL's scope/resources

- *Consider how we can both increase our service to tourists and maximise tourist income, so that we can provide a service to them, and continue to subsidise facilities for islanders at quiet times of year.*
- *Are there island stakeholders that BDL can work with and/or support?*
- *Continue to work towards making the building more fit for purpose and attractive, for islanders, for visitors and to promote small craft businesses on the island who depend on tourism.*
- *Support an extended tourist season, perhaps with more local visitors, which again could maximise our income (assuming we can staff this)?*

Climate challenge and the circular economy

Questions for Bressay in general

- *Is there more that Bressay can do to be more climate-friendly?*

Opportunities within BDL's scope/resources

- *We explore further the future of the GAN shop, and how it can practically be managed in the medium term. We can continue to try and re-establish a growing/garden group, and continue to develop our Green Growth Strategy.*
- *We can continue on Speldiburn's journey towards Net Zero in general. We can explore whether Speldiburn or even the 'wellbeing' space can become a place where 'green' organisations visit and utilise, for example to promote recycling, advertise grant funding, etc. This could time in with busier days in the cafe, for example Fridays.*
- *We can explore facilitating skill sharing/learning opportunities*

Working towards Net Zero is an issue for Shetland overall, and there are limited opportunities for recycling on Bressay. Having to pay to take recycling to the facility in Lerwick is an extra expense for Bressay residents and possibly results in extra car journeys. Grants to address energy efficiency, such as insulation and energy efficient heating for homes are less available than in the past. Within Speldiburn, we continue to work towards a Zero Waste policy, trialling ideas in the cafe and other parts of our work. Our 'Good As New' shop has become a key part of island life, contributing greatly to the island's circular economy. However, we are challenged to staff the shop, and becoming increasingly dependent on cafe staff for purchases.

Bressay Lighthouse

There is a strong attachment to and desire to do something with the lighthouse, not just from locals, but from Shetland Amenity Trust. Community ownership would help SAT fulfil its own principles and aims. However, there have been no offers of time or help from Bressay residents so far. For BDL to take the lighthouse on and it would need more manpower and expertise than we currently have.

Opportunities for Bressay and/or BDL

- ***Are there new and perhaps radical ways that Community organisations can work with private enterprise so that the building is not 'lost' to the community but it is equally not the sole responsibility of BDL? How do we find out?***

Opportunities within BDL's scope

- ***A new, fit for purpose building will be more attractive to all users, and hopefully help to increase income.***
- ***Taking advantage of business development evaluation/training from HIE, business gateway etc.***
- ***Seeking funding for other aspects of running Speldiburn.***
- ***Updating our business plan in due course (due by 2027)***

Consolidating BDL in the longer term

BDL is a non-profit organisation which runs on a shoestring both financially and in terms of staffing, making it difficult to respond to unforeseen circumstances, maintenance issues etc. Business development is hampered, as previously discussed, by a current lack of available staff, volunteers and changing levels of visitors throughout the year, with limited footfall during the winter months. The building needs upgraded to make it more fit for purpose, and we are in the process of developing our initial feasibility study into realistic and workable plans so we can raise funds to have the work done. In addition, Directors are doing many of the everyday tasks required to run the organisation, especially administration and finance, and this is not something that can be guaranteed long term.



8. Bringing together BDL's priorities and the consultation results.

In 2022, BDL's Business plan was updated in, with the following 5 Priorities (in no particular order):

- 1. Speldiburn.** *Progress the re-development of Speldiburn - sustainability for BDL, increase usage, create more opportunities for business start-up/creative sector, public toilets and shower, NHS clinic.*
- 2. Island needs.** *Broadband, strong community participation.*
- 3. Housing.** *Affordable and accessible housing, complete a comprehensive housing survey to assess need, location opportunities and costs and work with partners to deliver.*
- 4. Bressay as a destination.** *Increase outdoor infrastructure for locals and tourists, lighthouse developed as a continued/improved asset.*
- 5. Green Issues.** *Lower carbon community, increased local food access, woodland development, island transport (green and accessible), champion climate change awareness.*

BDL's Core Values are as follows, and work in conjunction with our current priorities. These value underpin all of the work that we do, including our Action Plan:

- *Be open and inclusive – all are welcome*
- *Don't compete or conflict with other local groups or businesses*
- *Buy / use local products and services*
- *Support other local community groups*
- *Seek to form a more sustainable and resilient community*
- *Promote and facilitate business start-up and economic development*
- *Be green and aim to set eco-friendly policies and practices*
- *Bressay is a great place to live, continue to make it better and more attractive.*

The following table is a summary of the results of all our consultations, grouped so that they fall within the priorities of our Action Plan. For a final, inclusive consultation exercise, we invited islanders to take part in a workshop where we fed back this information and asked the participants (around 12) to reflect on these and suggest opportunities for BDL that fitted within our five priorities.

The discussions reinforced our existing priorities, and provided some good suggestions for taking them forwards. Putting all of the research together with our own understanding, needs and priorities BDL have created a 'working' action plan.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Speldiburn | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Speldiburn is appreciated as an asset to the island,</i> • <i>There is not enough healthcare on the island</i> • <i>We can work more closely with other organisations.</i> • <i>Tourism is important to the islands, the island could market itself more and some of our facilities could be better.</i> • <i>There could be more opportunities for learning, both formal and informal</i> • <i>There is a lack of nursery facilities</i> |
| Island Needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A shortage of volunteers, for BDL and all island organisations. *</i> • <i>Community organisations and activities are strongly appreciated.</i> • <i>The sense that the island's organisations can work together is appreciated.</i> • <i>There could be more opportunities for learning, both formal and informal. *</i> • <i>Lack of nursery services and the difficulty/expense of using those in Lerwick.</i> • <i>Living in Bressay is valued, especially people, place and community spirit - islanders feel cared for and valued by others.</i> • <i>The ferry's timetable and foot passenger costs are generally appreciated, but vehicle and business costs are too expensive, and it could run earlier.</i> • <i>On-island public transport needs improved. The minibus is not responsive to commuter or tourist needs.</i> • <i>Islanders feel discriminated against paying ferry fares, (often with a vehicle) to access healthcare and other services.</i> • <i>Landscape, events (Up Helly Aa, Garden Show, Christmas events etc) and heritage knowledge were praised.</i> |
| Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There is not enough housing for young people.</i> • <i>There is not enough social housing</i> • <i>Private housing is unaffordable for many.</i> • <i>Families are leaving, or considering leaving because their housing and other needs cannot be met.</i> • <i>Publicly provided infrastructure is considered poor, eg GP and education. The cost to access these by ferry is not borne by anyone else in Shetland.</i> • <i>On-island public transport does not respond to commuter needs. Internet is poor.</i> |
| Bressay as a Destination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tourism is important. Bressay could market itself more.</i> • <i>We need to improve our facilities, ie toilets, signage.</i> • <i>Our natural heritage, for example Neolithic and World War archaeology, and our cultural heritage such as agricultural skills, crafts and music were recognised and appreciated.</i> • <i>Places that attract or provide services to tourists, including the shop/post office, heritage centre and Speldiburn were appreciated and featured strongly, and there are ways that local businesses and organisations work together to make a better tourist offering.</i> • <i>There is a strong attachment and desire to do something with the lighthouse for the community, but no offers of time and effort to make it happen.</i> |
| Green Issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Businesses, organisations and Individuals are all trying to do their bit for the environment.</i> • <i>Householders wanted additional facilities for recycling.</i> • <i>Some existing facilities need tweaked, for example the location of the bottle bank.</i> • <i>The island as a whole could do more to address climate change.</i> |

8. The Action Plan.

The plan

Our Action Plan aims to be achievable and realistic. Within the current economic climate and funding landscape, It has a theme of consolidating our achievements, and development our existing five priorities. However, as a working document, there will always be room for flexibility to take on any new opportunities that arise.

Our Action Plan is grouped into the Current Five priorities: (Speldiburn, Island Needs, Housing, Bressay as a destination, Green issues)

Monitoring and evaluation

BDL aims to use the Action Plan as a guide for its work, and to review the document on a regular basis. We have indicated a working time of up to five years, but these targets should be reviewed on a regular basis, with successful outcomes noted and challenges learned from.

Priority: Speldiburn

| Actions | Priority Level | Progress/Next Steps | Lead by:(plus support as necessary) | Collaborating /Supporting groups | Timescales |
|--|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Ensure sustainability of Speldiburn | High Med Med High | Take advantage of free Business Review advice to maximise income from current mixed use. Continue to try and identify new sources of income. Eg online sales? Develop bespoke packages for tourists and locals (lunch and activities?) leaflet? Succession Planning for future Development Officer or similar role (Delivery Officer?). Does the role need modified to take account of running the building? Create case for role going forward in case funding can't come from HIE | DO 2 | HIE, Business Gateway | Ongoing 1 year After this tourist season Towards end of current DO funding |
| Fundraising. | All | Identify further ways of fundraising: for example, Auction, wedding exhibitions, Sunday Teas | Directors | HIE, SIC | Sunday Tea planned for August. Consider more ideas in Autumn |
| Staffing of café and volunteers for GAN | High | Keep exploring sustainable staffing solutions. We are already providing opportunities for young people. | Directors | SIC, School Advertising etc | Ongoing. |
| Refurbishment of Speldiburn Community Hub, Increase business opportunities and income | High High | Work on "Development Phase" for fundraising purposes (ie detail design, costing and permissions, to RIBA stage 4) Redevelopment of building to increase studio space . Fundraising for build phase Redevelopment of studio will increase studio space | DO 2 Directors | HIE, SIC, Architect | Discussion with Architect to develop case for Development phase funding. |
| Support business development and training opportunities | High | We already support several creative small business working in Bressay. | Directors | | Ongoing 2-3 years |
| Support existing & new groups in the building: Social Afternoon, Under 5's Craft group etc | High | We already support and underwrite the Social Afternoon and support other groups as necessary by sharing marketing etc or as required. | Social Afternoon Worker | Groups | Ongoing |
| Continue to provide learning opportunities. Increase engagement | High | We already provide informal winter classes. Consider opportunities that engage islanders that use Speldiburn least, ie families and young people, local crofters, more tourists (leaflets?) | DO1 | SIC, Learning providers | Ongoing |
| NHS Room | High | Continue to liaise with NHS and Living Well Hub and promote their activities. Explore ways to support the Living Well Hub expand their services to engage more Bressay residents | Social Afternoon Worker | NHS, Wellbeing Hub | Ongoing, |

Priority: Island Needs

| Actions | Priority | Progress/Next Steps | Lead by (plus support as necessary) | Collaborating/Supporting groups | Timescales |
|--|------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|------------|
| Working with other businesses and groups | High - med | We already successfully work with both businesses and organisations on the island and will continue to explore new opportunities. | Directors, DOs | Island groups | Ongoing |
| Events to bring the island together | Med | We provide opportunities for island-wide socialising - eg Garden Show, Social afternoon Continue to encourage volunteering | Directors DOs | | Ongoing |
| Internal Transport | Med | We have already shared the results of this 2023 consultation (including transport) with Bressay Community Council. Promote timetables of existing bus service, ie posters at shop. Consider working with SIC to convene an island wide steering group to explore community transport. | DOs | Island businesses , SIC and groups where appropriate | Ongoing |
| Bressay Branding | Med | Investigate local branding/working together to promote the island's varied produce - food, wool, crafts etc. Explore developing online sales, including Gan and crafters plus the provision of a central hub for selling Bressay's varied products. | Directors, DOs Admin | Island businesses and crafters | 2-3 years, |
| Broadband | Review | We have explored 4g broadband, and loaned out a 4G router, which resulted in some islander purchases of a similar. BCC have also done some work on Broadband.- | Directors | BCC, SIC | Review |

Priority: Housing

| Actions | Priority | Progress/Next Steps | Lead by (plus support as necessary) | Collaborating/Supporting groups | Timescales |
|---|----------|--|-------------------------------------|---|------------|
| Carry out Housing Needs Assessment | High | We are already working on this. The council is working on a policy since most CDC's are looking at housing. We unfortunately need to wait for them to catch up as expressed Council support is a condition of funding for housing projects. Consider other was of getting funding. | DOs and Directors | SIC, funders and supporters, for example Rural Housing Fund, Councillors. | Ongoing |
| Provide any info re grants etc for renovation/ insulation of existing housing | High | Living Well Hub that could be utilised for this as information becomes available. | DOs | SIC, Living Well Hub, appropriate businesses | Ongoing |

Priority: Bressay as a Destination

| Actions | Priority | Progress/Next Steps | Lead by (plus support as necessary) | Collaborating/ Supporting groups | Timescales |
|---|---------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| (Re)establish Bressay Tourism Forum | High - medium | Invite BBC, BHG, BCC, BSC BHC, BUHA and interested individuals | DOs and Directors | Bressay Groups and businesses, other interested parties | Begin after this year's tourist season |
| Guides for Tourists: Interpretation panels, leaflets, posters | Medium | Support History group where appropriate to develop Tourism strategy (branding, locations, themes), look for funding to develop high quality panels, leaflets and trails (ie WW I and II trails, archaeology trail, Bressay stone, nature highlights etc). Create public transport information for shop and website. Develop a written statement/poster etc that is ready to use for publications. | DOs with support from Directors | 'Bressay Tourism Forum', SNH, Amenity Trust, UHI tourism dept, Bressay History Group Complete | 3 years Medium Medium |
| Continue to ensure our presence in appropriate guides. | High | BDL/Speldiburn have already developed a presence in Shetland that we can build on. Develop a written statement that can be used for each (can this be held in Operations Manual?) | Dos with support from Directors | Relevant Tourism bodies | Ongoing |
| Continue to serve bus tour market, working with other organisations & individuals where appropriate | High | BDL have developed a good working relationship with many organisations, for example, OAT tours. Directors will continue to develop and expand as staffing allows. | Directors | Relevant Tourism bodies | Ongoing |
| Continue to explore whether the lighthouse could be a community asset. | High | We have already held open consultations for islanders. While everyone is keen, there is no-one willing to assist us take this on. | Directors, with support from DOs | Amenity Trust, 'Tourism Forum' | Meet with SAT to close this project. |

Priority: Green Issues

| Actions | Priority | Progress/Next Steps | Lead by (plus support as necessary) | Collaborating/ Supporting groups | Timescales |
|---|---------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Increased/enhanced recycling facilities | High | Share requests for increased statutory recycling facilities with BCC/SIC | DOs | SIC, BCC | Ongoing |
| Continue to champion climate change | Medium | Continue to lead by example and to provide green themed workshops and events. Provide information eg leaflets etc where appropriate. | DOs and Directors | SIC, Living Well Hub, appropriate businesses | Ongoing as workload allows |
| Good As New Shop | High | GAN is a recognised part of Speldiburn's offering. Continue to look for GAN volunteers. Consider how GAN can be developed as part of business review mentioned in Speldiburn section. Put more valuable stuff on Vinted/Ebay etc. | Directors supported by DOs | Business Gateway if appropriate | Ongoing, as staffing/volunteers allow. |
| Woodland | High | We have already planted 2/3 of our 3000 tree woodland. The final tranche of trees will be planted in spring 2024 with an open call for helpers. Going forward, Directors will organise annual maintenance sessions and organise educational and other events. | Directors | Amenity Trust, NatureScot, RSPB | Year 3 of plating in 2024, followed by maintenance, workshops etc 5 years plus |
| Growing | High - medium | Support growers where appropriate. Continue to develop this/organise 'Crub Crawls', open gardens etc Pursue connection with Gary at Fish Factory re fertiliser. Consider 'starter growing packs', or selling fish fertiliser. | DOs supported by Directors | Fish Factory | Ongoing 1 year |
| Island energy | Low | Consider revisiting whether a turbine could provide income/energy for Bressay/BDL | Directors | SIC, energy specialists, other CDCs | 5 years |