



## Investment in people pays off with three top work awards

**Scottish Sea Farms has won a hat-trick of prestigious Investors in People (IIP) accolades for its sustained investment in jobs, training and staff wellbeing.**

The internationally recognised awards, re-accredited every three years, are seen as the global benchmark in people management.

The We Invest in People Platinum Award, first achieved by Scottish Sea Farms in 2018, has been retained, as has the We Invest in Young People Award at Gold level, while the company has scored Gold for the first time in the We Invest in Wellbeing category – making it only the second company in Scotland to do so.

Head of Human Resources Tracy Bryant-Shaw said: 'We have worked hard over the past three years to build on our 2018 performance and reach even higher standards.'

Key has been the introduction of a comprehensive new health and wellbeing strategy; something that was already underway prior to the arrival of Covid but gathered new momentum in the months thereafter, says Bryant-Shaw.

'During the pandemic, when we couldn't see everyone, we looked at what more we could do for our employees and their families.

'We are now able to offer a really wide-ranging suite of support: from our employee assistance initiative and various training programmes to new innovations such as the Healthy Advantage app, as well as one-to-one help with employees' physical, mental or financial health.

'We've also added staff wellbeing to our health and safety meetings as a further way of checking that we're doing everything we can to support our people.'

To help recruit and nurture future talent, the company has launched a collaboration with Argyll College UHI to offer Modern Apprenticeships in Aquaculture and is liaising with local schools to introduce the next generation to the sector.

Winning IIP accreditation is a painstaking process, involving a series of surveys and interviews. More than 90 per cent of staff responded to the We Invest in Wellbeing questionnaire – 'an incredible level of participation,' said Bryant-Shaw – and 85 per cent

completed the We Invest in People survey, slightly up on three years ago.

'People clearly felt that their voices were going to be heard and we got great feedback, which has been very useful,' she added.

**Continued on page 2...**

### INSIDE

**Grieg acquisition: Q&A with Jim Gallagher**

**Quality team grows as volumes increase**

**Sector safety initiative underway**

**UK-wide shortage of logistics staff**

**One to one with our new Head of Freshwater**

**New-look long service awards**

...Continued from page 1.

Following the surveys, more than 70 interviews were conducted with selected employees, across all age ranges, over the phone and in person at South Shian and Barcaldine.

The next challenge for the Human Resources department is to try to improve on an already impressive achievement. But Bryant-Shaw is not complacent.

**'People clearly felt that their voices were going to be heard and we got great feedback, which has been very useful'**

'We're thrilled to be where we are but there is much more we can do, in terms of employee engagement, management behaviours and skills, and attracting our future workforce as well as taking into account the feedback we received through the questionnaire and our assessors' reports,' she said.

'And we will soon be integrating Grieg Seafood Hjaltdland UK into Scottish Sea Farms, aligning their people with the company so they feel equally valued and empowered.'

### Just some of the new initiatives introduced since the last awards:

#### Investing in our People

Real Living Wage  
Family friendly policies  
Management Academy  
Modern Apprenticeships in Aquaculture via Argyll College  
Leadership programme via SAIC

Move to online learning

Discounts on fitness equipment and activewear

#### Young People

Young People's Council  
Aquaculture Academy

#### Wellbeing

My Healthy Advantage app



Scottish Sea Farms Head of HR Tracy Bryant-Shaw with Emma Leyden and Claire Scott

# Q&A with Jim Gallagher: acquisition of Grieg Seafood Hjaltdland UK



Scottish Sea Farms Managing Director Jim Gallagher

## Scottish Sea Farms Managing Director Jim Gallagher on the benefits of buying Grieg Seafood Hjaltdland UK.

### Q: Why now and why Grieg?

**A:** We've always been interested in growing our business but the timing in this instance was really dictated by Grieg Seafood Group looking to sell off its Scottish operations. That said, we've worked incredibly hard at developing our farming approaches, infrastructure and team, consistently ranking among the highest performing salmon farmers for biology, survival and profit – not just in Scotland but in the global marketplace. So we feel in a really strong position to build on that.

As for why Grieg, with both Scottish Sea Farms and Grieg Seafood Hjaltdland UK having a number of farms and facilities in Shetland, our operations are very complementary. By bringing these together, our intention is to make our future in Shetland even more secure.

### Q: What appeals most about Grieg Seafood Hjaltdland UK?

**A:** Two things. Firstly, the increased scope to ensure the best growing conditions for our salmon. Bringing the two farm estates under one farming strategy gives us greater influence over several key biological factors including fish health, stocking regimes and sea lice management.

Secondly, the skill and passion of Grieg's Scottish team. Prior to making our bid, we were given the opportunity to visit, as were other interested parties, and farm after farm I was struck by the care and dedication I saw. These are people who care greatly about their fish – these are very much our kind of people.

### Q: Both farming companies have faced their challenges in Shetland. How will the acquisition help?

**A:** As with rearing any livestock, farming salmon is by its very nature challenging.

However we commit a huge amount of time to learning the lessons of every generation of fish, at every farm, and we've seen real advances as a result.

We're confident that by pairing the skill and know-how of the two teams, and by continuing to invest where it's needed most, we can further enhance fish welfare and, in turn, grow volumes across the combined estate.

### Q: Is the increased demand for farmed salmon due to retail customers or export markets?

**A:** Both. The boost in retail sales experienced during lockdown has held steady and export markets are re-opening keener than ever for our premium Scottish-grown salmon, which speaks volumes about the effort we put into every stage of the lifecycle.

Demand for this highly nutritious, low carbon food is quite literally insatiable. Globally, we normally see strong market growth of six to seven per cent annually, but with limited growth in supply predicted for the next two to three years, we anticipate strong market returns going forward.

### Q: What happens next?

**A:** First and foremost, the acquisition must be approved by the relevant competition authorities and customary closing conditions, with the transaction anticipated to close in Q4 2021. That done, we can really get going, bringing the two farming estates and teams together to begin working as one.

Until then, it's hugely important we stay focused on the day job: clean nets, low sea lice levels, minimal impact on the environment, maximum number of fish through processing and a strong return from our customers.



# Quality team grows as volumes increase

**Quality assurance is key to the production process at Scottish Sea Farms and as the company grows, so too is the team working to maintain the highest food safety standards.**

Several new roles have recently been created on the quality team.

There are three new Quality Monitors in Scalloway, Lori Smith, Harry Bedding and Matt Bracegirdle, with Matthew Palmer promoted to Team Leader.

Meanwhile, Evangelos Ntalagiannis joins South Shian as Quality Monitor, bringing each monitoring team up to four.

Also new in South Shian is Aquaculture Technical Coordinator Jamie David, formerly of Aquascot, who takes on the auditing duties of Anna Price, now overseeing Scottish Sea Farms' ASC programme.

Jamie's counterpart in Orkney and Shetland is Cameron Mullan, replacing Freya Robinson who has moved overseas.

The auditors are a familiar presence on the farms, ensuring compliance with Scottish Sea Farms' own internal standards and external certifications such as RSPCA Assured, Global GAP, Label Rouge, and individual retail schemes.

Andy Gourlay, Head of Technical, said the quality team was now up to 21 staff; the reasons for the expansion being twofold.

'We're processing more fish than ever before. Last year this was around 24,000

tonnes of salmon. This year we're on target to produce over 36,000 tonnes. To help ensure we continue to meet our exemplary food safety standards, we need to increase our team.

'We have also taken on new tasks, helping the company in its journey towards ASC certification, which involves a huge amount of extra work.'

Scottish Sea Farms is aiming to have its first two farms ASC certified by the end of the year.

The lab workforce has also increased, with Rebecca Buchanan becoming the third full-time member of the team, based at South Shian.

## New net cleaners off to a flying start

**Farm teams at Kishorn and Nevis are reaping the benefits of new net cleaners that improve efficiency, result in better containment, boost fish health and ensure greater safety for staff.**

Two FNC8s, or Flying Net Cleaners, supplied by AKVA, have been installed on service vessels Lady Christine and Solas Na Mara, following extensive trials starting last year.

The ROV (remotely operated vehicle) systems have in-built cameras and sensors that help reach parts other net cleaners can't reach and enable farmers to see the whole net during cleaning.

The feedback so far confirms they are doing an 'excellent' job, said Innes Weir, Regional Production Manager for the Mainland.

'The FNC8s provide us with several advantages over our manually operated systems. They allow our dedicated net hygiene staff to operate and view the nets from inside the wheelhouse or purpose-built console, improving safety by keeping them out of the elements.

'They provide full visibility and video footage of the net cleaning process and have already assisted in increased containment security on our farms.

'And they have superior cleaning over our current systems, particularly with the new HDPE SealPro nets, fitted to prevent predator attacks.

'They also effectively clean the entire base of the net, and are faster and more reliable than manual systems.'

Scottish Sea Farms Head Engineer for Mainland Marine, Craig Cameron, described the difference as 'totally night and day.'

'They clean eight cages a day compared to five before and are automatic, so less labour intensive; we needed two people to operate the manual cleaner but this just needs one person to drive it.'

Operators are trained by AKVA and Cameron said they have been finding that the younger generation gamers, who are used to PlayStations, become 'experts straight away'.

The cleaners are out every day and there has been a 'huge improvement' in the cleanliness of the nets, said Cameron. This, it's hoped, will lead to better gill scores, as fouled nets



Photo: Peter Coull, Farm Manager, Nevis C

can compromise fish health by reducing oxygen levels and harbouring pathogens.

Weir said he would now like to see FNC8s installed aboard more service vessels, allowing dedicated net servicing teams to provide 'best in class service' to Scottish Sea Farms' marine sites.

# Government reassures sector over Green fears

**The Scottish government has reiterated its support for rural employment following concerns that a political pact with the Scottish Greens would be damaging for the salmon sector.**

Kate Forbes, the SNP's Finance Minister and MSP for the Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, told the BBC's Good Morning Scotland programme that she was 'acutely conscious' of the importance of rural jobs.

'I would say that most, if not all, are in my constituency so I am acutely conscious of the importance of our rural economy and the importance of these very rural jobs in very remote areas.

'We are still the government but we have outlined a number of areas we are going to be focusing on [with the Greens],' she added.

The SNP was returned to government after the Scottish elections in May but with one seat short of an overall majority. Although in previous parliaments, the party has relied on the Greens to pass legislation, including its budget, First Minister



Scottish Sea Farms Managing Director Jim Gallagher with Kate Forbes MSP

Nicola Sturgeon announced she was seeking a more formal 'cooperation agreement' with the smaller, pro-independence party.

The SNP has pledged to continue backing the sustainable growth of the farmed salmon sector, with manifesto promises to 'reform and streamline regulatory processes.'

However, the Scottish Green Party spelt out in its own manifesto plans for a moratorium on the licensing of new

salmon farms and the expansion of existing ones, and the phasing out of open cage farming.

Scottish Sea Farms Head of Sustainability & Development Anne Anderson said the Greens' policies would have a 'catastrophic effect on salmon farming'.

And the Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation (SSPO) joined other trade bodies, including the Scottish Gamekeepers Association, in voicing alarm over the Greens' rural economy agenda.

The talks between the SNP and Scottish Greens have been ongoing during the summer recess and focus on six main areas: Covid recovery; the climate emergency; the constitution; public services; infrastructure; and making Scotland more equal.

It is not known whether aquaculture is on the table but Forbes said the government would 'explore with the Green Party those opportunities for cooperation'.

## Supply chain rallies as staff shortages sweep UK



Photo: DFDS

**Scotland's salmon farmers and logistics partners have been working around the clock to keep supplies moving in the face of a UK-wide shortage of road haulage, warehouse and distribution staff.**

The shortage is thought to stem from several factors, not least a reduced number of EU nationals post-Brexit, some workers still being on furlough and others self-isolating, as well as a serious shortfall in the number of HGV driving tests last year due to Covid.

Amongst the measures the UK Government is taking to help tackle the shortage is the allocation of additional hours and staff into HGV testing, with the number of passes per week having increased from 1,150 pre-Covid to 1,500.

Plans are also underway to enable key workers in lifeline sectors, including food supply, to become exempt from self-isolation if fully vaccinated.

Meanwhile, salmon farmers and logistics partners have been working more closely than ever to help mitigate any impact on customers.

Scottish Sea Farms Supply Chain Coordinator Lyndsay Foster said: 'What was a very slick system has become a complex juggling act on a daily basis. That said, our ongoing investment in IT systems has really come into its own, with our logistics partners DFDS having direct access to what fish will be packed, where it's destined for and by when, and Northwards receiving regular updates, giving both the maximum amount of time to plan.'

It's not only domestic deliveries that are under pressure but exports too, with shortages in freight forwarding

staff coinciding with a significant increase in airfreight.

Mark Kelly, UK Operations Manager (Logistics Division) at DFDS said: 'Typically, a driver would run a full lorry load down to Heathrow and bring a full lorry load back. But owing to the shortage of warehouse operations staff and longer turnaround times, we're now having to pay some drivers to come back empty just to ensure we get the vehicles back in time and keep our service levels up.

'To help in the longer-term, we've rolled out the driver apprentice scheme 'Warehouse to Wheels' to support any of our existing team with ambitions of becoming an HGV driver to gain their licence.'



Photo: Northwards

# Sharing good practice in health and safety



**A new Health & Safety Working Group has been set up by Scotland's salmon producers with the aim of addressing issues that affect the whole sector and standardising responses.**

Health & Safety representatives from all the Scottish salmon companies have been invited to attend, along with members of the Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation (SSPO).

Scottish Sea Farms Health & Safety Manager Gerry McCormick said a common approach to sector wide challenges will make it easier to identify problems and devise solutions.

'Health and safety are very high on each individual company's agenda but have not to date been part of the SSPO board's remit, as other aspects of farming, such as quality control, are.

'The new group gives us an opportunity to share information. For example, if we compare accident data, we can look at trends across companies and target improvements as a sector.'

Standardising signage around farms is another goal for the safety group, so other marine users are clear about messaging that is designed to safeguard them, farm staff and livestock.

And McCormick hopes the group will be able to develop a unified strategy towards unauthorised access at farms, which is a potential safety risk if, for instance, people are not wearing lifejackets or if farm operations or infrastructure are compromised.

At the first meeting in July, salmon company Health & Safety managers identified and agreed specific project areas to investigate.

The SSPO's Director of Strategic Engagement, Hamish Macdonell, said: 'The group is about shared good practice and ensuring Health & Safety

standards, and will involve all the Health & Safety managers of all the salmon companies getting together and deciding what issues they want to look at.'

The Health & Safety Working Group, chaired by Colin Blair, Managing Director of Cooke Aquaculture Scotland, plans to meet quarterly.



Scottish Sea Farms  
Health & Safety Manager  
Gerry McCormick

Photo: Anthony Robinson,  
Engineer, Barcaldine Hatchery



## Short-term fix for Norwegian wellboat crews

**Norwegian wellboat crews operating in Scotland are optimistic they will secure enough temporary work permits to continue working in Scottish waters as post-Brexit changes to employment rules come into force.**

As of July, all EEA (European Economic Area) nationals are required to have dispensation to work in the UK. Norway is not in the EU but is a member of the EEA.

Norwegian wellboat company Solvtrans applied for 116 frontier worker permits, which can be granted to Europeans who worked in the UK in 2020.

These will ensure seamless monthly shift changes, involving approximately 50 crew at a time, until a more permanent solution is found.

The Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation (SSPO), which lobbied the UK government on behalf of Solvtrans and its customers in the Scottish salmon sector, is now looking at the options going forward.

'When you only have a small pool of people who can qualify for these frontier worker permits, there are going to be problems if people go off sick, or

on holiday, or if there are new crews who haven't worked in the UK before,' said Hamish Macdonell, SSPO director of strategic engagement.

'So, we obviously need a more long-term solution as well as this short-term fix which we have managed to get.

'We are continuing to talk to the Home Office, Defra, and the Scotland Office.'

Current exemptions to the legislation include some fishing boat crews, who are on the designated occupation list and could qualify for skilled worker visas.

To meet the criteria for these visas, applicants need to sit an English test and earn more than £26,500 a year.

# People on the move

Our regular round-up of internal promotions within Scottish Sea Farms



Stephen King



Erin MacAulay



Colin MacDonald & Liam McClure



Luke Murray



Ross Johnson



Matthew Palmer

Within freshwater, Stephen King has been promoted from Engineer to Senior Engineer, based at Barcaldine Hatchery.

Also at Barcaldine, Erin MacAulay – daughter of Scottish Sea Farms' legend 'Spout' – has taken on the front of house role of Receptionist/ HR Administrator, having moved across from Processing at South Shian.

In marine, Aoife Brennan has been promoted from trainee manager to farm manager of Nevis B. Aoife originally joined Scottish Sea Farms as an environmental scientist, later transitioning into production where she has gained knowledge of day to day operations, logistics, H&S, feeding and health monitoring.

Scottish Sea Farms' vessel crews have seen promotions too. On the Helen Mary, Liam McClure becomes Senior Technician as manager Colin MacDonald moves to oversee commissioning of the Kallista Helen.

On the Fair Isle, Luke Murray has been promoted to Skipper, while Ross Johnson has been made First Mate.

Back on dry land, Matthew Palmer – who joined Scottish Sea Farms from the banking sector in April – has been promoted from Quality Manager to Team Leader at Scalloway.

Commenting on Matthew's new role, Scottish Sea Farms Head of Technical Andy Gourlay said: 'His quick promotion is well earned, having brought himself up to speed with the sector in record time and utilised his supervisory and mentoring skills from previous employment to good effect.'



## New-look long service awards unveiled

**Scottish Sea Farms' employees celebrating a special workplace anniversary can look forward to a new-look long service award.**

Under the long-running scheme, all employees reaching 15, 20, 25 and 30 years' service receive a signed certificate and voucher of their choosing.

Whilst the voucher will remain, the certificate has been given a fresh new look, complete with a special countertop display frame.

Managing Director Jim Gallagher explained: 'Every company benefits from having a healthy mix of new people and ideas, and longer serving employees who have grown along with the company.'

'The new-look awards are our way of expressing how much we value employees' loyalty and the retention of their skills and knowledge within the business.'

Whilst Covid delayed the awards' launch, scheduled for the start of 2021, no-one will miss out – those who have already celebrated a long

service milestone this year will be the first to receive them.

This includes mainland farm managers George Prosser and David MacMillan who recently notched up more than 40 years between them, after starting together at Loch Creran as husbandry staff.

For Prosser, becoming a farm manager has been his greatest achievement: 'Being in charge, you get a chance to do the things you've learned over the years, when working under other people, but in your own way.'

For MacMillan, whilst there has been huge technological advances over the past two decades, the core focus on producing great fish has remained. 'It's a credit to the company that we don't have a high turnover of staff. A lot of the employees are the same as when I started here, in the office in Stirling as well as on the farm.'

## Double honour for fish welfare initiative

Photo: Gordon Siegel Photography

**An in-house innovation to improve fish welfare and increase efficiencies during harvesting, reported in the September 2020 issue of The Source, has been shortlisted in not one but two categories of The Food & Drink Federation Awards 2021.**

David Lipcsey, formerly a Processing Supervisor at Scalloway but now part of the IT team, has been shortlisted for Food and Drink Engineer of the Year for his work to programme software capable of counting the number of fish entering harvesting and put that data onto an app, enabling well-boat crews to see how many fish are going

through harvesting per minute and adjust the flow as and when necessary.

The same project has also been shortlisted in the Digital Transformation category, alongside the likes of the Food Standards Agency, the Red Tractor Assurance scheme and KP Snacks.

The winners of this year's Awards, which aim to recognise and reward excellence for innovation, competitiveness and talent across the UK food and drink industry, will be announced at a ceremony on 16 September in London.



**‘This was  
a unique  
opportunity I  
wanted to grab’**

## **Scottish Sea Farms’ new Head of Freshwater, Rory Conn, will be better known in the business as UK Sales & Commercial Manager, his role for the past 12 years.**

Making the transition from one end of the value chain to the other has inevitably brought challenges but there are more similarities and transferable skills between the two jobs than might first appear, said Conn.

‘Working with a team, having a long-term goal, deciding the direction we want to go in, and keeping it moving is the same whether you’re in sales or production.

‘It’s a big leap to freshwater, but over the years I have learned a lot about how the sector works and have a broad understanding of production, as well as a good knowledge of the company.

‘Having relationships across management and knowing who to speak to is really important for being able to get things done.

‘Since coming to Barcaldine and freshwater, the focus now is on acquiring that depth of understanding of the day-to-day operations.’

Conn took up his new position in March, replacing Pål Tangvik who returned to Norway having fulfilled his mission of delivering the company’s first full generation of RAS-grown smolts.

The handover period was invaluable, said Conn, and so is the ‘great team’ he inherited and whose experience he counts on.

‘I am very impressed by their high standards and their commitment to what they’re doing, at our Knock freshwater facility and at Barcaldine.

They set high standards for themselves and take a lot of pride in what we’re producing.’

Conn jokes that his switch to farming from sales was his midlife crisis but, in fact, he contemplated such a move in the past.

‘I have always had at the back of my mind that I’d love a way to get into production but my family doesn’t live on the west coast and I couldn’t see a pathway to doing it.

‘But this was a unique opportunity to make that change and once I could see how it would work, I just wanted to grab it.’

There have been challenges, of course, the biggest being ‘coming to terms with the feeling that you really don’t know the answer’, said Conn.

‘That has been a novelty after being in my last role so long, but I have learnt to trust the team and my own instincts that if something doesn’t look right, then it probably isn’t right.

‘It is getting easier as time goes on, but the learning opportunities are when things are not 100 per cent as they should be.’

His plans for Barcaldine and Knock are about optimising what they can both produce, and he has already overseen some changes.

All fish will now start their lives in Barcaldine, with the Knock fry transferred at 2-3g, when they

**‘I have always had at the back of my mind that I’d love a way to get into production but my family doesn’t live on the west coast and I couldn’t see a pathway to doing it.’**

can better withstand the cold temperatures in the flow-through hatchery.

Knock will continue to produce around one million smolts which, said Conn, will be of the same quality as those coming out of Barcaldine.

The RAS plant has capacity for 12 million smolts a year and is currently producing 10 million smolts, from 120g to just under 200g. The next batch to leave will have an average weight of 220g, with some tanks at 280g, the biggest Scottish Sea Farms smolts yet.

With ongoing investment and continual improvements in freshwater, Conn’s leadership skills will clearly be an asset. In sales, he was often the public face of Scottish Sea Farms, and he has hosted his first ministerial visit at Barcaldine. But he said he will rely on his 25-strong workforce to share the spotlight.

‘I was very proud showing the minister around, not just in terms of the fantastic facilities but the freshwater team too.’

# Orkney film club back in business



Photo: Orkney film club

**The Screen on the Square in St Margaret's Hope might be modest compared to other film venues but it is one of the main social attractions of South Ronaldsay, Orkney.**

That is when the picture isn't blurred or the sound muffled, or the DVD player doesn't break half-way through a screening.

Despite the popularity of the local film club – held every month in the village hall in Cromarty Square – the technology can sometimes be a disappointment.

But not for much longer. The club has secured £5,000 from Scottish Sea Farms to upgrade its equipment and enable even more people to enjoy its film choices, which have ranged from the war film '2017' to 'Singing in the Rain'.

Club organiser Helen Butcher said the money from Scottish Sea Farms' Heart of the Community Trust will buy a new projector and lens with LED lighting.

'We won't need a bulb in the new projector, which is good because every now and then the bulb would go in the old projector and it had to be changed in the middle of a film.'

'We will also get a surround sound system – at the moment we've only got stereo so the sound gets crammed into the two speakers and it creates a muffling effect.'

'And we're planning to replace the screen which is from the 1940s! It's an amazing old thing that rolls down and absorbs a lot of the image so the picture is quite dull as well.'

The hall, built at the turn of the last century, seats up to 100 people but around 30 regularly attend the film

nights, and take turns choosing what to watch from supplier Moviola.

'We tried arty films but the audience numbers dropped off, so we've gone back to more feelgood films,' said Helen.

'It's a very sociable club and we missed it desperately during Covid, when there was nothing going on at all. The nearest cinema is in Kirkwall, which is 13 miles away.'

She said the club found out about the Heart of the Community fund through Voluntary Action Orkney, after unsuccessfully applying for Lottery funding.

'We want to thank Scottish Sea Farms for selecting us, we're really chuffed. Our audience are very long suffering and it will be wonderful to give them an experience where they can actually see and hear clearly.'

## Funding raises the roof for another generation



Photo: Ethel Johnstone, Learning & Development Coordinator

**The village hall in Appin has been a feature of community life for generations, playing a role in most major events in the village, from agricultural show ceilidhs to amateur dramatic festivals.**

But lately, anyone using the premises has had to negotiate buckets strategically placed to catch rainwater as the roof has fallen into a state of disrepair.

Fund-raising for a new roof was halted during the pandemic but now there is hope it will be fully restored, thanks in part to an award from the Heart of the Community Trust.

The hall committee applied to the Scottish Sea Farms fund as the company is well known in the local area, and was thrilled to receive £10,000.

Committee member Kathy King, who returned to Appin following her retirement, said they hoped to have a new roof in place by the winter.

'I was born and brought up in the village in the 1950s and the hall was always here,' she said. 'In a normal year, it's in constant use.'

'It's used for all sorts of things, from children's parties to wedding receptions and gatherings after funerals – it's right next door to the church. In recent years it has expanded to accommodate training courses and a craft fair too.'

'The hall is very much the hub of the community, providing a venue for social, cultural and educational activities. But the roof has been in a poor state for some time and will cost around £50,000 to replace.'

King said there is still about £15,000 to raise but other local employers have contributed, including an offer of help with building materials, so they are getting closer to the total.

'It's wonderful to have the support from Scottish Sea Farms. It's a good cause and, hopefully, will ensure the hall is here for another generation.'

