

Dunstaffnage marine farm, Loch Linnhe



## Holistic health and welfare strategy helps drive up survival rates

**Scottish Sea Farms saw a significant improvement in fish health last year with a 41 per cent reduction in mortality over the previous year, following increased investment in mitigation strategies and a focus on preventative measures.**

Survival rates returned to historically high levels, up to 90 per cent from 82 per cent in 2023, as the warmer seawater temperatures that had brought sector-wide challenges for two years gave way to better biological conditions and improved gill health.

The past 12 months also marked a big increase in harvesting volumes, up to 40,400 gutted weight tonnes from 24,900 gwt in 2023, and higher harvest weights.

‘We’re back to where we should be but we’re not complacent,’ said Head of Fish Health and Welfare Ralph Bickerdike. ‘We certainly learned from the challenges of 2022-23 and have reviewed all our operations, but we want to see even higher survival.’

Key to improved performance is the company’s breeding programme which, in collaboration with AquaGen Scotland, has produced broodstock from Scottish Sea Farms salmon selected for their robustness in the Scottish environment.

‘It takes three years to get fish up to broodstock size and the first crops from these fish, harvested in 2024, did really well. Every year we’re selecting fish from our farms which will then be used for broodstock. Hopefully, by doing this over successive generations, we will see even more improvement in the climate resilience of our fish.’

Feeding was also reviewed and diets altered to help meet the seasonal nutritional requirements for fish health and welfare.

‘We worked with our feed supplier to adapt the composition of the feed in Q3, when fish health is most likely to be compromised, and the early results are very encouraging.’

Temporary feed withdrawal during times of challenge as mitigation further contributed to survival, by keeping fish away from the surface when harmful jellyfish and plankton were in the water, which is positive for fish welfare.

Technological advances in the supply chain also continued to aid fish health across the Scottish Sea Farms estate, enabling earlier detection of disease and quicker interventions, added Bickerdike.

‘We’ve been evaluating the latest underwater biomass cameras, which monitor individual fish for weight estimation and assess the condition of the fish without us having to handle them. They can give us real-time indications of welfare parameters, which we can then investigate and act on if necessary.’

And the use of modern diagnostics, such as PCR swabs for amoebic gill disease (AGD), has led to better informed treatment decisions, as have daily water

sampling and surveillance, which provide a timely record of environmental changes.

All regions have also benefited from new biosecurity checks, pioneered by the team in Shetland, which have minimised the introduction of potential disease with an air table-based app that logs the inspection of vessels or equipment.

Also making a difference are the two wellboats Scottish Sea Farms secured last year, both fitted with reverse osmosis for freshwater treatments and FLS delousing systems, allowing fish to be treated for

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AGD and sea lice at the same time, reducing the need for fish handling for improved fish welfare.

Mainland Regional Production Manager Innes Weir said the combination of the extra resources, lower lice levels and less jellyfish presence last year, plus cooler water, 'allowed our fish to recover, survive and grow'.

'We now have more understanding of what works and what doesn't work. We took decisions to move some farms, within the same area but to more suitable locations with improved water exchange and better access for the wellboats.

'And we continued to upgrade farms with fewer but bigger pens - by April this year every farm in mainland Scotland will have moved to larger pens, with an average size of 120m. Going from 12 pens in a mooring grid to five creates a different hydrological dynamic around the farm that helps to promote growth and performance.'

The new farm layouts have gone hand in hand with revised training programmes for the continued improvement of fish husbandry, and Weir paid tribute to the farm teams.

'Our people were instrumental in the turnaround last year, handling multiple challenges and delivering, in some cases, the best crops we've ever had.'

Going forward, Scottish Sea Farms is increasing secondary predator netting for farms which have a higher risk of interaction with seals; further evaluating cleaner fish deployment; upgrading freshwater facilities; and collaborating in a new raft of R&D projects to help understanding of fish health and welfare issues.

'Not only did we come through last year with better survival but we came through it with zero antibiotic use in our production farms,' said Bickerdike.

'We have become better at sharing best practice across our farming estate, with farm managers and support services meeting weekly to review fish welfare and biological performance. It's an important gathering of information that allows us to look ahead. It doesn't mean something won't come out of the left field, but we're in a very much better place to meet challenges now.'

Innes Weir



# Smooth operators oversee Orkney upgrades

**A modernisation programme in Orkney has seen increased production and improved sustainability, with four out of the company's nine farms upgraded over the past two years and a fifth awaiting the go-ahead from planners.**

At Bring Head, the farm has been moved slightly further out to a deeper, higher energy location, providing optimal growing conditions. A new £2.2M workboat, on order from Nauplius, will complete the £6M development, which includes twelve 120m pens, replacing 80m pens, as well as a new £1.7M 300-tonne feed barge.

Bigger pens of 120m have replaced 80m pens at Toyness too, supporting a doubling of production at the farm, which has also been relocated to faster moving waters.

Meanwhile, Wyre and Puldrite have been upgraded with new layouts and fewer, bigger pens (from twelve 100m to nine 120m pens and from ten 80m pens to seven 100m pens respectively), part of the company's strategy to improve fish health and welfare and drive efficiency.

Orkney Regional Manager Duane Coetzer, who has overseen the changes since joining the company two and a half years ago, said Orkney has gained 2,500 tonnes of additional consent overall, with plans for further expansion.

'The changes, with a lot of support from our farming teams in implementing them, have been positive and helped us address challenges in Orkney, which are similar to other regions.

'The company has increased our resources and with the use of different technologies, such as the two wellboats with freshwater and the FLS system, we have been successful in mitigating sea lice and AGD issues.

'The increase in environmental blooms is causing stress to stocks sector-wide and we don't have a perfect solution for that yet.

'The key focus for us is a better understanding of what is happening in the environment we farm in and how we can learn to predict incoming challenges, such as barbed-wire jellyfish (*Apolemia uvaria*) or micro jellyfish (*Muggiaea atlantica*).

'Aeration systems trialled on the mainland will be installed on two farms

in Orkney for the 2025 season and all sites have been working with our Fish Health and Welfare Manager, Amanda Smith, taking daily samples and mitigating these new challenges where possible.

'In 2025, we'll also see the last of our manually-fed farms go to automatic feeding, resulting in fewer days of lost feeding due to bad weather.'

Critical to the smooth operation of the Orkney estate is Ross Stevenson who, in the newly created role of Vessel and Infrastructure Manager, coordinates all the logistics, as well as certification, delivery of pens, and much more for the farm teams.

A former Farm Manager, most recently at Westerbister, Stevenson said his 'office job' suits him as he likes problem solving.

Ross Stevenson



'We now have dedicated Orkney vessels, the Laurence Knight and Fair Isle, plus a net washing boat and all the site workboats. With the changes we've seen in the environment and the handling we have to do, we thought it was important to have someone ensuring we get the best utilisation of these assets.

'It was a struggle for site managers to keep on top of all the infrastructure but now, with me making sure everything is up to spec, they can focus on the fish. And Duane, Will Scott (Area Support Manager) and Amanda Smith have more time to concentrate on other areas of the business.'



# Embarking upon a new sustainability approach

**Scottish Sea Farms is getting ready for potentially having to comply with EU sustainability standards, which would enhance transparency across its operations and value chain.**

Under the initially proposed EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), the company would have to report on its impact on people and the planet, as well as how sustainability factors influence its operations.

That would mean disclosing everything from its environmental interactions to sourcing policies, and from how it treats employees and suppliers to its impact on communities.

Scottish Sea Farms Principal Sustainability Officer Amanda Tresise said navigating the process – and the changing landscape of standards to adhere to – could be challenging but would mean that Scottish Sea Farms then gets a head start in terms of potential mandatory requirements in the future.

‘As we have two Norwegian parent companies, we began our sustainability journey two years ago, planning to align with best practice voluntary standards to ensure compliance with future mandatory standards.

‘At the end of last year, the Norwegian

government took the decision to align its sustainability reporting with the EU standards, which demand mandatory detailed disclosures on environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices.

‘While EU requirements – and subsequent Norwegian ones – may change, we are getting ready for all eventualities.

‘Everyone’s input will inform our sustainability strategy and the more responses we get, the more confidence we will have that we’re focusing on what’s most important.’

To help shape the new sustainability approach, a survey will be sent to all employees this month, as well as to external stakeholders, including suppliers, partners, media, community organisations, academics, and regulators.

The survey, which is voluntary, will be sent out to internal and external stakeholders in early March and the responses analysed by independent consultants, who will present their findings in May.



## Work experience offers insight into salmon farming

**High school pupils in Shetland and Orkney are being given an opportunity to work alongside salmon farmers in a work experience programme first trialled in Argyll.**

The scheme, tailored by Scottish Sea Farms for youngsters considering a career in the sector, has been approved by councils in the Northern Isles and will recruit its first cohort this summer.

Pupils from S5 and S6 will be able to tour shore bases and go aboard work boats at the company’s farming locations in Orkney and Shetland as part of the work experience.

Scottish Sea Farms Talent Development Business Partner Irene Pozo, who helped set up the initiative, running for the past two years in Mull, said it was a great way to showcase the sector.

‘This will be an introduction to salmon farming and to the variety of different roles in the company. These young people could be our future workforce and it’s good for us to be able to raise awareness of the opportunities early on.

‘Thanks to Will Scott, Area Support Manager in Orkney, and Robbie Coutts, Area Support Manager in Shetland, who have liaised with the local councils, we can now start working with schools for the launch of the programme in June.’



## Survey finds what women want from the workplace



**The first Women in the Workplace survey conducted by Scottish Sea Farms has produced a clutch of ‘quick wins’ aimed at improving experiences across the company.**

The survey, launched last year, attracted a response rate of 54 per cent of female employees, similar to the all-company survey of 2024.

It found that 74 per cent of respondents would recommend Scottish Sea Farms as an employer and that many of the improvements identified for women would also benefit the whole company.

Questions covered the business’s culture of diversity and inclusion, management practices, and career advancement opportunities, as well as how Scottish Sea Farms compares to other employers.

Areas for improvement included enhancing menopause support and fertility support policies, annual DEI training, and encouraging further

participation with events for school-aged pupils.

As a result of the exercise, there have already been a number of changes including more formalised careers and STEM engagement to be introduced; DEI training will be updated online and also be included in line manager training; staff will be reminded that the updated handbook can be found on the HR SharePoint; and the survey will be conducted annually.

Decisions on longer term goals, such as reviewing the Personal Development Review (PDR) and induction processes, are expected by the end of Q1.

# Forging partnerships with Highlands vets



Vets on a visit, Orkney

## Rural vet practices could play a role in farmed fish health under a new initiative spearheaded by Scottish Sea Farms.

The government-funded Highlands and Islands Veterinary Scheme currently supports livestock producers but to date has not been involved in aquaculture.

A future collaboration could be mutually beneficial, with private practices accruing valuable CPD (continuing professional development) hours and fish farms gaining access to independent veterinary oversight in, for example, inspections or audits.

Scottish Sea Farms has already engaged the services of a veterinary practice in Orkney, in a pilot programme to enhance

fish health check-ups in remote locations.

Vets at Kirkwall-based Northvet, a mixed practice that typically cares for pet cats and dogs, cattle, sheep and horses, were shown how a salmon farm operates and given training in identifying fish diseases and the responses to them.

Scottish Sea Farms Head of Veterinary Services Ronnie Soutar, who trained the Orkney team, said he had long wanted to integrate more with practices near the company's remote farms, adding that the proposal was well received when discussed with vets at a recent

Highlands and Islands Veterinary Scheme conference in Inverness.

'Scottish Sea Farms has the largest in-house vet team in the sector but we still sometimes have a need for external vets.

'If we had people we knew and trusted in local practices we could call on them to ensure veterinary attention is always available.

'I am happy to do training with practices because it's in our interests in the long-term to have more vets who are informed about salmon farming, even if they don't all end up working with the sector.'

## SAIC aims for big impact from small workshops



The Sustainable Aquaculture Innovation Centre (SAIC) is planning a programme of four themed workshops over the next 12 months, each focusing on a topic critical to the sector.

The format will be based on small groups (around 40 to 50 people) of invited participants with an emphasis on Q&As and discussion between the speakers and their fellow professionals.

'We wanted to create a space for targeted discussions, where people feel they have an impact and can make a difference,' said SAIC Knowledge Exchange Officer Hazel Peat.

'As well as our sector network, we will invite other players, including regulators and the Marine Directorate, so they have sight of the research and innovation most needed.

'Sometimes in bigger conferences there is not enough time for input from the people you really want to hear from and we hope these sessions will address that by bringing all the experts together.'

Details of the full programme and venues are still being finalised but the first workshop will take place at the end of April, at the new SRUC School of Veterinary Medicine in Inverness, and will shine a light on prevention in improving fish health.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine

learning, shellfish farming and responding to climate change are likely to be covered in future workshops, but the programme is flexible and SAIC said it would welcome ideas from the sector as plans are developed.

SAIC Head of Research and Innovation Sarah Riddle said: 'We want people to come away thinking not only was that a top-quality event but we've got a tangible outcome, something solid we can take back to our individual businesses to help embed innovation and further sector research as well.'



# Sector ahead on welfare standards

**The Rural Affairs and Islands Committee (RAIC), which investigated the salmon sector last year, has called for additional regulations and official guidance under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 to set specific standards for the welfare of farmed fish.**

The sector said it would welcome updated legislation as it already meets the highest welfare standards and did not foresee change being required if new rules were introduced.

Scottish salmon farming companies have a legal duty to ensure the welfare of their fish under the terms of the act and all harvest stations are independently certified by RSPCA Assured.

‘Over a very long time, welfare standards

have been constantly improving, in line with updated knowledge and driven in part by our retail customers, so there is unlikely to be any resistance in the sector to existing voluntary guidance carrying more legal weight,’ said Scottish Sea Farms Head of Veterinary Services Ronnie Soutar.

‘We compare very well with other animal farming sectors and we are ahead of anything that is likely to be covered by legislation.’

Soutar, who addressed a recent Scottish parliamentary reception organised by animal welfare campaigners demanding the legal protection of fish at slaughter, said there was a clear recognition of fish sentience within the sector and all Scottish salmon are stunned prior to humane harvesting.

Sector body Salmon Scotland is now working with the government to update and improve species-specific voluntary guidance.



Beach clean, Orkney



## Protocols aim to keep shared marine space safe

**A spate of recent whale entanglements in Scottish waters has focused attention on marine debris and what is being done to keep the seas clean.**

Salmon farmers have been at the forefront of these efforts for years but now have more coordinated schemes in place which allow easier reporting, and therefore retrieval, of marine litter.

Sector body Salmon Scotland has a dedicated webpage for members of the public to report any marine debris if they think it may have come from a fish farm.

At Scottish Sea Farms, farm teams regularly pick up litter from other marine users, as well as general waste, along their shorelines and take part in the annual nationwide Great British Beach Clean, run by the Marine Conservation Society, as well as more localised campaigns throughout the year.

Out at sea, where marine debris can present a greater threat, the company encourages marine users concerned about potential entanglements to contact them or use the Salmon Scotland reporting procedure.

Preventing incidents is key to maintaining

safe marine spaces and Scottish Sea Farms continually updates its farm infrastructure to ensure it is resilient during storms.

Additionally, the company undertakes seabed inspections using ROVs (remotely operated vehicles) to allow for the identification and then collection of historic debris. These have now become a routine practice when setting up new farms or returning to old leases.

Scottish Sea Farms can be contacted directly on [community@scottishseafarms.com](mailto:community@scottishseafarms.com), or through the local farm teams who will take appropriate immediate action, where possible, for all areas in which they operate.

For Shetland in particular, more specific reporting protocols have been established, due to its high concentration of marine industries. Marine users can also report debris through the SFA (Shetland Fishermen's Association) or Shetland Shellfish Management

Organisation (SSMO).

Once made aware of any potential fish farm related obstructions outwith approved lease areas, the company will attempt recovery, weather permitting.

Scottish Sea Farms Head of Sustainability Anne Anderson said: ‘Salmon farmers take their environmental stewardship very seriously and have a duty of care to remove marine debris when notified.

‘The work we’re doing aims to minimise entanglements and clear up historical infrastructure that is not necessarily our own. Importantly, to minimise potential entanglements we encourage marine users to remain outside our leased areas, we can’t be held responsible if individuals choose to fish within our leased areas.

‘We believe greater collaboration between all marine users would go even further in capturing plastics, protecting marine wildlife and keeping the seas safe for everyone.’



# People on the move

## Bringing you up to date with the latest internal promotions

The new year has seen some fantastic career advancements within the Scottish Sea Farms team, highlighting the company's commitment to professional growth and internal opportunities.

Within Engineering, Gary Campbell has been promoted from Field Engineer to Lead Engineer in Mainland Marine.

Meanwhile, an internal appointment sees Rhanna Turberville, previously Fish Health and Welfare Manager in Shetland, relocating to the mainland to become Fish Health and Welfare Manager for the Marine (North) team.

And also moving south is Llewellyn Wiggins, who has embarked on a secondment, transitioning from his role as Quality Monitor at the Lerwick facility to Internal Auditor at the Mainland Processing facility in South Shian.

These transitions not only celebrate the hard work and dedication of Scottish Sea Farms employees, but also showcase the exciting career progression opportunities.



Gary Campbell



Rhanna Turberville



Llewellyn Wiggins

# Celebrating on-the-job learning with 80-plus apprenticeships

## Scottish Apprenticeship Week, celebrated at the beginning of March, highlights the benefits that work-based learning brings to businesses and people.

It's a skills route embedded in Scottish Sea Farms' culture, with more than 80 employees currently enrolled on Modern Apprenticeships.

Combining on-the-job training with college course work - through UHI Shetland, Inverness or Argyll - is a tried and tested formula for developing the workforce.

Scottish Sea Farms is supporting 74 Modern Apprenticeships in Aquaculture, plus nine Engineering Apprenticeships, across a range of levels, from the Northern Isles to the mainland.

'We invest in our people because it benefits the company as well as the individual, retaining talent while helping people work their way up through their roles,' said Learning and Development Coordinator Erin MacAulay, who completed a Modern Apprenticeship (SVQ Level 3) herself, in Business and Administration.

'I began at Scottish Sea Farms straight from school as a cleaner and later joined the HR team. Like a lot of people, I wanted to work and earn money as well and I was encouraged to do a Modern Apprenticeship.

'After completing it, I made up my mind that this was definitely what I wanted to do career-wise and the confidence I gained I've been able to invest in my work.'

There is no age barrier for apprenticeships and the current cohort span 18-year-old school leavers to long-serving staff.

One of the latter is Jarek Cimoszuk, Processing Engineer at Shian, who has just completed a SVQ Level 3 in

**'We invest in our people because it benefits the company as well as the individual, retaining talent while helping people work their way up through their roles.'**



Erin MacAulay

Engineering, having first started at Scottish Sea Farms almost 20 years ago and worked in harvesting, processing, freshwater and marine.

'I'd always been interested in mechanics so when a role came up in Processing Engineering, I applied for it and was enrolled on the apprenticeship.

'Some days were challenging but most of the knowledge was acquired through everyday tasks, working with the experienced engineers here, and with the tutor from Inverness visiting the site.

'I'm now considering further qualifications, possibly in programming because automation will be a big part of our business in the future. I want to stay ahead and evolve and the company is 100 per cent supportive.'

# Ambassadors needed to hit STEM goal of 25 for '25

**With 20 STEM ambassadors already registered, Scottish Sea Farms' goal of 25 ambassadors for 2025 could be within sight.**

STEM ambassadors are recruited from across the company, regardless of their skills or job, as part of a drive to raise awareness of the salmon sector.

Ambassadors' tasks can range from giving talks in schools to hosting work experience and visits to farms, with the aim being to inspire young people to pursue STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) careers.

Last year, Scottish Sea Farms ambassadors carried out more than 80 STEM activities and logged nearly 600 volunteer hours.

Scottish Sea Farms Talent Development Business Partner Irene Pozo, who is behind the initiative - part of a nationwide scheme run by Scotland Food and Drink, said more employees could sign up as they are already carrying out STEM related tasks.



'We have had people volunteering as ambassadors from all departments and all age groups. Once they realise that they don't necessarily need to have a scientific background, they are keen to get involved.'

So far, the STEM ambassadors have taken part in job fairs, mentoring, farm tours and aquaculture careers days. The scheme is flexible and ambassadors can do as much, or as little, as they want.

'Our ambassadors help us challenge perceptions of the sector and show the variety of STEM jobs available in aquaculture. And for them, the experience has its own rewards as they seem to enjoy engaging with the local community and explaining what salmon farming is all about.'

If you are interested in registering as a STEM ambassador, contact [irene.pozo@scottishseafarms.com](mailto:irene.pozo@scottishseafarms.com)

## Logistics teams go the distance in go kart fundraiser

**Racers from across the aquaculture logistics network competed in the biennial Go Kart Challenge last month, organised by Scottish Sea Farms.**

Seven teams took part in the event, which raised a total of £5,000 for two charities: Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland (CHSS) and Scottish Action for Mental Health (SAMH).

Each team lined up for a 60 minute endurance race, with driver changeovers, following a pre-race practice session to allocate grid positions.

Businesses including Fergusons, DFDS, O'Toole Transport and D&J Campbell, who donated £750 per team, tested their driving skills alongside Scottish Sea Farms' Supply Chain teams, while Northwards and Schenker also sponsored teams.

The event, held this year at Xtreme Karting, Falkirk, was followed by a raffle and silent auction - with prizes generously donated by Edinburgh Zoo, Celtic Football Club, Clydeside Distillery, Tobermory Distillery and many others.

Supply Chain Coordinator Lyndsay Foster, whose idea it was to resurrect the

competition two years ago and also put together this year's event, was thrilled with the response.

'The day is more than just a get together with our suppliers across the transport network, it is an opportunity to get to know others in aquaculture, including current suppliers as well as potential future ones.

'I contacted hauliers who work with the sector and got a great response, as well as prizes for the silent auction. I also emailed about 100 businesses for raffle prizes and was overwhelmed with their support.'

First, second and third prizes were awarded to The Boy Racers (Fergusons), Quick Finishers (D&J Campbell), and Speedy Snails (Scottish Sea Farms), while fastest lap honours went to Keir Mackintosh (Speedy Snails). O'Toole scooped the inaugural Best Team Spirit award, The Boy Racers won the Most Destructive, and DFDS saw off tough competition for the Last Place trophy.

## Career spotlight



**Eline Blom,**  
Payroll and HR Administrator

### What does your role involve?

I manage all company benefits, process the monthly payroll and assist with HR projects.

### What's your background?

Originally from Holland, I moved to Scotland at 18 to be with my partner. I've always liked numbers, even as a child, and I rediscovered my passion when I moved here. I studied HND Accounting at Forth Valley College, then obtained my BA in Accounting and Finance from UHI during Covid. I began working in payroll at a recruitment agency before joining Scottish Sea Farms in September 2022.

### Why did you choose this job?

Although I knew nothing about the sector, I was drawn to Scottish Sea Farms because I wanted to work for a bigger company, with more responsibilities, in a role I could make my own.

### What are the biggest challenges?

Learning about the business - there are so many different areas, jobs and terms. The company is complex with many moving parts, so it takes a long time to see how it all fits together. It was only six months ago when I realised staff at the 'net store' weren't actually involved in IT!

### And the greatest rewards?

One of the greatest rewards in my job has been the sense of belonging within the company, along with the chance to meet new people through my daily work and as a member of the Young Person's Council, where I've been able to share my opinions and feel heard.



# Men's sheds play role in care home happiness

**An initiative to improve the wellbeing and happiness of elderly men is being rolled out across Orkney's three mainland care homes.**

With help from the Orkney Men's Shed charity and local businesses, male residents at Hamnavoe House in Stromness, Smiddybrae in Dounby and St Rognvalds in Kirkwall will be able to enjoy activities and games, outings and social events tailored specifically to their interests.

With many of the events in care homes better suited to female residents, care home workers thought the men were missing out and needed something they could get involved in. So, they came up with the idea of dedicated men's sheds.

The men's shed movement, which originated in Australia during the

1980s, aims to provide a focus point for older men to socialise and engage in stimulating projects.

Naomi MacDonald, Hamnavoe House Activities Facilitator, said the three men's sheds in Orkney will meet once a month and residents will decide what they want to do.

'We had an initial meeting with the Orkney Men's Shed, who brought materials and gave us some ideas on how to get started, and the residents who attended put forward some ideas of their own.

'We are purchasing tools and upcycling materials, some games, and possibly a magic table, and will fund outings for our male residents, such as to the lifeboat stations and island hopping, and organise social activities and lunches.

'Each month we will have planned projects and we will be welcoming family members to join in. We know that life doesn't end when you move into a care home and mental stimulation is just as essential to people's quality of life as other means of care.'

MacDonald said setting up the men's sheds had been a community effort, with generous support from Orkney College and local firms, including Scottish Sea Farms, which donated £2,000 from its Heart of the Community Fund.

'This will get us on our way with buying extra materials and planning for trips for the guys, and anything else we should need. We are all really hoping that this is something positive for our male residents and that it will have a great impact on their social, physical, and mental wellbeing.'



Hamnavoe House, Stromness

## Talented footballer in a league of her own



Shetland footballer Krissi Tulloch

**Young Shetland footballer Krissi Tulloch is balancing school lessons with top level coaching sessions after being selected for both the Scottish Football Association (SFA) and Aberdeen FC under-13 girls' squads.**

Aged just 11, Krissi's potential was spotted during trials on the mainland and she was quickly signed up as an emerging talent.

For the Scalloway schoolgirl, it's a dream come true but for her family, while naturally very proud, the travelling is a challenge, said dad Gary.

'She has played for Whitedale FC and Shetland Girls FC and now we want to give her the best opportunity so she can fulfil her ambition to one day play football professionally.

'Living in the isles, there are loads of opportunities for kids to do sport but once they progress to a certain level they have to travel to the mainland to compete.'

This involves Gary, a shift worker at Sullum Voe Terminal, and Krissi living in a flat in Aberdeen for three-week periods so she can attend training sessions. Classwork is prepared in advance by Scalloway Primary

School, with Gary supervising.

'The traveling and splitting up the family are not easy and the cost is prohibitive. But we've been very fortunate, with the flexibility of my job and the school, which has been brilliant. We couldn't have done it without their support and the sponsorship from local businesses.'

A donation from Scottish Sea Farms' Heart of the Community fund and discounts from NorthLink Ferries are helping to support Krissi who, says Gary, is taking the new routine in her stride.

'She is very down to earth and gets on with normal activities when she's at home. She is one of four girls and our youngest, aged seven, is now starting to show an interest in football too. We'll just have to see how that goes.'

### Heart of the Community at a glance



**2025** so far  
**47** grants and donations given  
**£35,047** given

**All time** (2011-present)  
**1,162** grants and donations given  
**£2,057,591** given

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