



Planning Matters

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Edited By Austin Taylor, Heritage Manager

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Why Planning Matters

- Caroline Miller – Councillor for Lerwick North and Planning Board Member

Until I became a member of the Planning Board I viewed Planning as a necessary and somewhat lengthy process which had to be endured to achieve one's final goal of being able to build or utilise a building for the purpose required.

However in a few short months I have discovered the other face of planning - the creative face - with vision and commitment to the development and protection of our heritage for generations to come. Obtaining this goal is achievable through co-operation, commitment and understanding between developers and officials. Balancing affordability with design and quality of life over the bottom line.

Planning matters because it is not only the legal means to control development in the public interest but it is also the means whereby we can encourage and promote developments which enhance our enjoyment of our Islands - and not be the carbuncle at the end of the road.

A Core Paths Plan for Shetland

- Emma Georgeson – Outdoor Access Officer

In Shetland there has been a longstanding tradition of freedom of access to the countryside, though there were a number of barriers to accessing many routes and areas of Shetland's countryside and there were very few identified routes. In 2003 Shetland Islands Council started an Access Improvement Scheme and has developed over 200 routes throughout Shetland in the period since.

The Core Paths Plan is intended to satisfy basic path needs of local people and visitors for recreation, exercise and transit. Core paths planning forms a key component of outdoor access provision, guided by Shetland's Outdoor Access Strategy and by public objectives in relation to health, recreation, sustainable transport and tourism. The identified core paths have surfaces ranging from natural ground through to high specification constructed paths, and cater for a range of users including walkers, cyclists, horse riders and people with disabilities - although not every path is designed or managed for every type of user.

At the moment there are 200 managed routes, roughly equal to 560km, in Shetland. For the future, the Council's priority is to have all core paths signed, way marked and accessible by 2011 and we hope to be able to develop a further 2 new routes each year; these would be aimed at specific user-groups, such as horse riders, mountain bikers or wheelchair/ pushchair users.

For more information, see:

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/developmentplans/ShetlandCountrysideAccess.asp>

Staffing Update

- Austin Taylor – Heritage Manager

There have been big changes since Newsletter 3, with a number of staff moving to pastures new, a number of new staff and internal reorganisation resulting in staff transfers both within and into the Planning Service.

Roger Tait, Vic Hawthorne and **Matthew Taylor** have all left Shetland for pastures new – Roger has gone to Stockton on Tees, Vic to the Isle of Skye and Matthew to Borders Council. Meanwhile, **Rick Nickerson** has left the Heritage Service – because he was elected to the Council as Councillor for Shetland South.

During his time with SIC, Roger promoted access to the countryside and later worked with many community groups and Community Councils helping them implement environmental improvements in their areas. Vic preceded Roger in the implementation Officer post before he headed up the Development Plans Team. In that role he managed strategic planning, the Housing Zone Review, Access, Flooding and a whole lot more. Matthew spent his short time in Shetland working in the Development management section, processing planning applications etc. Our thanks to them all for the work and good company during their time with us – and we wish them all the very best for the future.

Rick is well known as the man who developed KIMO into a major voice for coastal local authorities bordering northern seas fighting the scourge of marine pollution. Under his guiding hand and tireless negotiating he oversaw an increase in membership from a dozen or so to well over a hundred local authorities. Also during his time he negotiated a role for KIMO on many important negotiating forums, including the North Sea Commission, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and OSPAR (an international commission concerned with protecting the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic). Well done Rick and very many thanks, from us all. Rick retains an interest in marine pollution issues and has managed the final months of the 3-year Fishing for Litter project as an independent consultant – see his item “Fishing for Litter Scotland Hits targets”, below.

Suzanne Shearer came back to Development Plans Team after a period of maternity leave and **Hannah Nelson** took over as Development Plans Manager at the turn of the year – she’s concentrating the team’s efforts on the new Local Development Plan following a reorganisation and transfer of some roles to the Heritage Service.

In Building Standards, **Alan Dawson** took over as Service Manager, **Martyn Robertson, Alan Goudie** and **Kevin Finlay** have been recruited as Building Standards Surveyors.

There has been a lot of change over the past year and one of the biggest for the Planning Service has been a radical change in the provision of technical and administrative support. Following the successful pilot of dedicated

administrative staff for Building Standards – **Julie Rosie** - and Development Management – **Dawn Stewart** – the concept has now been extended to Development Plans, with **Claire Linton** joining that team and **Marie Robertson** joining Heritage to give dedicated support to the KIMO Secretariat.

Another big shake up has been to the roles and responsibilities of the Heritage Service. To the existing responsibilities of Built Heritage, Natural Heritage, Energy Management and KIMO Secretariat, have been added Outdoor Access, Flooding and Coast Protection and Council-wide Technical, Mapping and Graphic Support. Since Newsletter 3 Technical Officer **Tracey-Anne Anderson** has returned from maternity leave, **Jessy Edara** provided her maternity cover and has now left the Council whilst **Lucy Wheeler** has been taken on to provide additional technical support for a fixed term. **Sheila Johnson** has moved over from Technical to part-time Outdoor Access Officer and she joined **Emma Georgeson**, also a part-time Outdoor Access Officer. **John Carolan**, joining us from the NHS, has just taken up his post as the new Technical Officer and will take the lead on technical matters on behalf of the Service.

Last year **Kelda Hudson** joined us from Yorkshire as Natural Heritage Officer, helping the Council meet its biodiversity obligations and take forward the Living Shetland process. In a first for the Planning Service (and exceptional for the Council as a whole), Kelda is based at the Heritage Centre in Haroldswick, Unst in a partnership with the Heritage Centre Trust. Elsewhere in this Newsletter Kelda has written a note about her work with Living Shetland and I discuss some of the benefits and issues arising from these novel employment arrangements.

After a long period of trying and some initial set backs with recruitment to this post, **Jonathan Duncan** has taken up the post of trainee Coastal Engineer in an arrangement with Roads Service whereby he is part of the Planning Service but spends much of his time at Roads in order to receive the necessary engineering mentoring and guidance. Jonathan is also based in the Heritage Service.

Also in Heritage, the Council appointed **John Mouat** as its Environmental Liaison Officer to provide the secretariat service to KIMO and coordinate the Council's nuclear policy development. See the item "*Council appoints new Marine Pollution Specialist*" below for more details. Finally for this update **Rebeca Lopez** has been appointed Graduate Placement for a year to undertake specific research projects for KIMO concerned with marine litter. See "KIMO undertakes marine litter research" by Rebeca, below, for more details of the work she's doing.

Who's Who in Heritage and What We Do

- Austin Taylor, Heritage Manager

The Heritage Section is responsible for the development, management and implementation of strategies and policies concerned with the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of Shetland's environment; this includes the built and natural heritage, outdoor access and flooding and coast protection advice

and grants. The Section influences the development of national and international policy aimed at reducing marine pollution; develops the Council's policy on nuclear issues, manages the Council's energy use contracts and promotes energy conservation throughout the Council and by the wider community. The Section also provides technical Support services and advice on behalf of Infrastructure Services

Planning Officer Conservation Gwenan Hughes	Environmental Liaison Officer (John Mouat) (KIMO)		Energy Manager John Simpson	Technical Officer John Carolan
Natural Heritage Officer Kelda Hudson	Administration Assistant Marie Robertson	Heritage Manager Austin Taylor	Energy Assistant Tracey Saunders	Technician Tracey-Anne Anderson
Outdoor Access Officer (P/T) Sheila Johnson	Outdoor Access Officer (P/T) Emma Georgeson	Graduate Placement Rebeca Lopez	Coastal Planning Engineer Jonathan Duncan	Technical Assistant Lucy Wheeler

Major work areas and projects

Built Heritage Conservation

- *Planning policy formulation and specialist advice for the range of statutory functions relating to conservation areas, listed buildings and archaeology in terms of development planning and development management including advice direct to the public and developers*
- *Operation of the Conservation Grant scheme for buildings of historic interest*

Natural Heritage Conservation

- *Planning policy formulation and specialist advice in respect of the natural heritage, including special areas (e.g. designated sites), the wider landscape and biological recording*
- *Natural heritage policy development and implementation, Living Shetland – the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and EIA*

Environmental Liaison

- *Develop the Council's input to KIMO, provide the KIMO Secretariat and provide support to Council Members involved with the organisation*
- *Manage the Fishing for Litter Project and other projects that directly target marine litter*
- *Develop Council policy on nuclear issues and provide support to Council Members involved with Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA)*

Energy Unit

- *Develop, direct and control energy management, efficiency and conservation strategies and systems to secure optimum savings in Council energy costs.*
- *Implement the objectives set out in the Shetland Energy Plan and Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) reports*

Outdoor Access

- *Outdoor access policy and project implementation, duties under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and protection and maintenance of the core paths networks*

Coast Protection and Flooding

- *Auditing and overseeing the implementation of flooding and coast protection works, responding to flooding and coast protection incidents and managing advice and grants assistance*
- *Preparing the Biennial Flood Report and submitting it to the Scottish Government; and developing and maintaining the Council's Coast Protection and Flooding Policy framework*

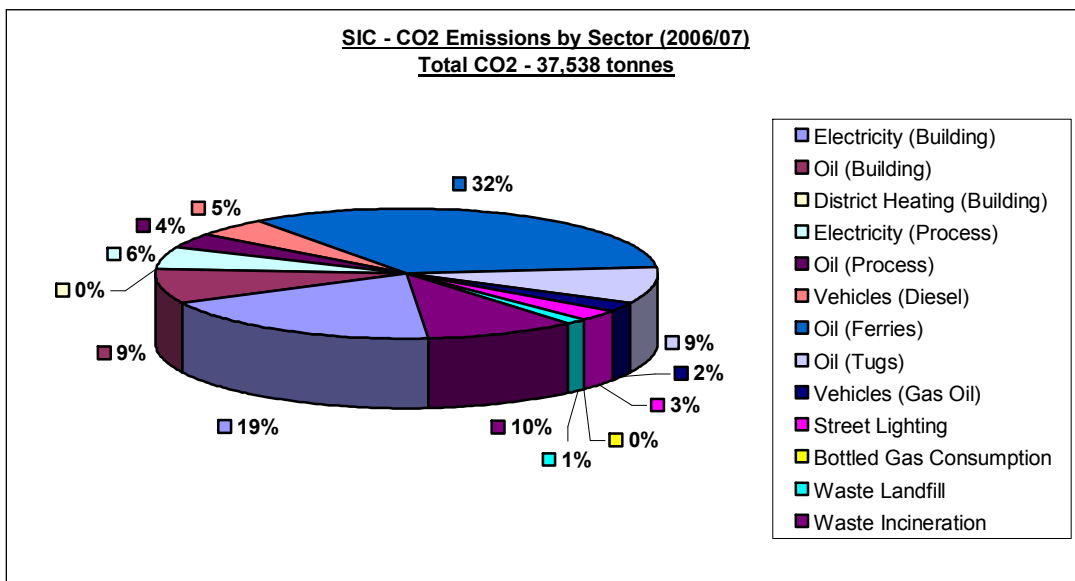
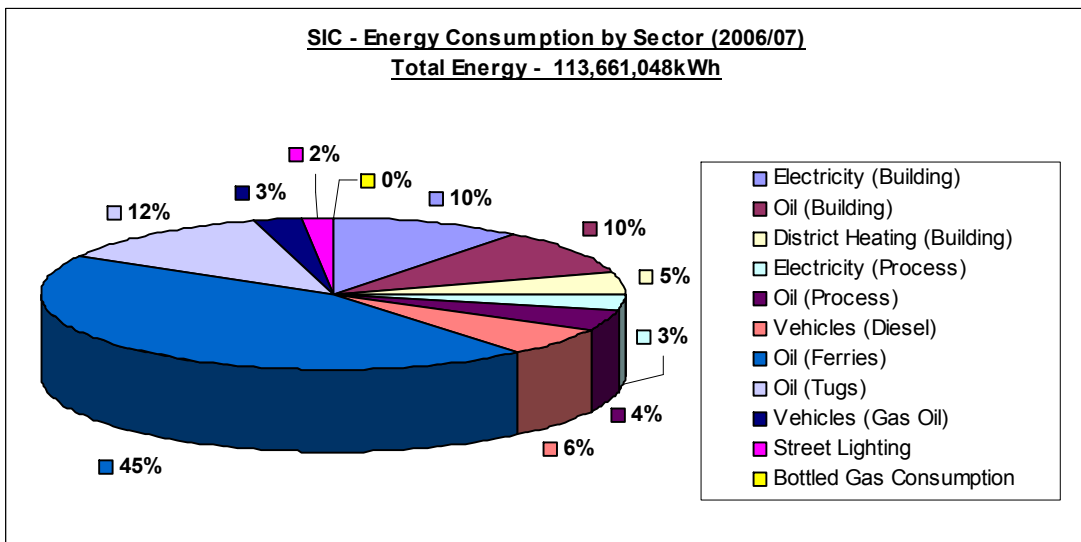
Technical Support Service

- *Administer and support Geographical Information System and Ordnance Survey Mapping.*
- *Provide reprographics support/ design service and general ICT desktop support.*

Local Authority Carbon Management

- John Simpson – Energy Manager

The Council is currently taking part in the 5th Local Authority Carbon Management (LACM) Programme run by the Carbon Trust. The purpose of the Programme is to produce a Council carbon management strategy drawn up by a Project Team of officers representing all the main Council energy consuming sectors. It will have clear actions and targets for the short, medium and long term leading towards overall reduction in energy consumption and, hence, liberation of carbon to the atmosphere. The Programme will be annually updated (or in response to changes in relevant local or national policy) and will lead to a coordinated approach to carbon management, thereby helping to raise the profile of the subject, both within the Council and to the Community as a whole. The targets will be based on the Council's baseline consumption usage for the 2006/07 financial year, which are shown on the following charts.



The main omissions at this point are employee travel to and from work, water consumption and employee travel outwith Shetland. These figures will be built in when the necessary information becomes available.

The main aim of the Strategy is to reduce energy consumption, CO₂ emissions and costs across all SIC services, whilst also taking into account community developments e.g. the Lerwick district heating scheme, with an initial target year of 2020. It will also look at options that extend past 2020 thereby outlining actions required in the short to medium term.

Council appoints new Marine Pollution Specialist

- John Mouat – Environmental Liaison Officer

As part of its long-standing commitment to KIMO (Local Authorities International Environmental Organisation) the Council has appointed John Mouat as its Environmental Liaison Officer fulfilling its contract to provide a secretariat to the organisation. KIMO, of which the Council is a founding member, represents 116 Local Authorities in 9 countries on marine pollution issues and has observer status at several international conventions, including OSPAR. As well as representing KIMO, John also co-ordinates the development of the Council's nuclear policy, advises the Council on environmental issues and acts as its representative on external bodies working in these fields.

Mr Mouat graduated from Edinburgh University with a BSc Hons in Environmental Chemistry and an MSc in Environmental Protection and Management. He has been working directly for KIMO for the past 4 years as a project officer responsible for coordinating KIMO commitments in the award winning Save the North Sea project and, more recently, for implementing the successful Fishing for Litter Scotland project. Mr Mouat took up his new post at the beginning of July 2007.

Baltic Expansion is the Next Step for KIMO

- John Mouat – Environmental Liaison Officer

KIMO International is increasing its remit to include all the countries around the Baltic Sea in the biggest expansion in its 17-year history. Representatives from KIMO and Baltic Municipalities met in Simrishamn, on the Swedish Baltic Coast, on the 29-30th October 2007, to discuss how they could cooperate on marine pollution issues in the Baltic Sea. 17 Municipalities from Sweden, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia attended the event resulting in a commitment to establish a KIMO International Baltic Forum within the KIMO Network.

KIMO International Secretariat John Mouat said: "I can see many parallels between the situation in the North Sea that led to the formation of KIMO back in 1990 and the situation in the Baltic today. With almost 100 million inhabitants living around the Baltic and challenges such as over fertilisation, coastal erosion, chemical and nuclear emissions, algal blooms, and increased shipping there is the same need for municipalities to take action. As pollution obeys no boundaries it is essential to develop international co-operation to tackle these problems at the local as well as the international level and I am happy that so many municipalities share this view."

KIMO undertakes marine litter research

- Rebeca Lopez - KIMO Graduate Placement

I am working as a graduate placement at the KIMO secretariat. I am involved in two projects:

- The Economic Impacts of Marine Litter on Coastal Communities
- OSPAR/UNEP Review of Marine Litter in the OSPAR area

I am updating the project undertaken by Rick Nickerson and Karen Hall in 2000 ("The Economic and Social Impacts of Marine Litter on Coastal Communities"), this time only the economic costs are undertaken.

I have developed questionnaires for Local Authorities and a range different organisations to identify the economic cost of marine litter to them. I am also trying to extend the contacts to Spain and Portugal. Once the questionnaires are returned the pilot project will be updated with the collected information.

I am also involved in the review of marine litter in the OSPAR area for the United Nations Environment Programme. This is a pilot project for the assessment of the marine litter problem in the North-East Atlantic region. We are going to break down the information of the project into the five different sea regions of the OSPAR area.

The project is carrying out in line with the Memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the OSPAR Commission (OSPAR) and The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the agreement of the OSPAR Commission 2007.

Fishing for Litter Scotland Hits targets

- Rick Nickerson – Environmental Consultant

A project organised by Shetland based KIMO UK, which sits within the Planning Service, has hit many of its targets with over 100 fishing vessels participating in 15 Scottish harbours. The Fishing for Litter scheme involves issuing commercial fishing boats with large bags that are used to collect rubbish that is hauled in with the catch. The project benefits both the environment and the fishing industry, as both are victims of marine litter. As well as causing problems to wildlife such as seabirds, through entanglement and swallowing, marine debris can cause damage to fishing gear and catches.

The Fishing for Litter Scotland Project was launched in 2005 within Shetland (Lerwick & Scalloway) and is part of a network of harbours around Scotland. The scheme also operates in Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Lerwick, Scalloway, Eyemouth, Mallaig, Kinlochbervie, Tarbert, Scrabster, Ullapool, Pittenweem and Stornoway.

Plastics can persist in the sea for up to 1,000 years and never disappear, simply breaking down into smaller and smaller pieces. One study in the North Sea found that 19 out of 20 dead fulmars, a bird that feeds at sea, had plastic in

their stomachs. This can cause death by obstruction, starvation and poisoning or lead to poor condition affecting breeding success and survival rates.

Old paint tins or oil filters can contaminate the fish catch and larger items can damage gear. Some estimates put the cost of marine litter for the UK fishing industry at over £23 million a year (Environment Agency 2002). A KIMO report (Hall 2000) estimated the cost to the local fishing industry as over £4 million a year.

The Scottish Government, KIMO UK, Scottish Natural Heritage, The Crown Estate, HIE Shetland and others currently support fishing for Litter Scotland. However, in addition to the large hardwearing bags issued, there are costs involved in collecting and disposing of rubbish. Organisers hope that raising the profile of work already underway will help establish longer-term support for the project.

Fishing for litter initiatives are also in place in the Netherlands, Belgium and Isle of Man.



Scottish Water Investment

- Bessie Barron

On the 21st and 22nd of November representative of Scottish Water gave three presentations to Council Members, Planners and Building Standards Surveyors, and architects, agents and developers.

The presentations showed Scottish Water has spent and will continue to spend many millions of pounds in Shetland, upgrading and renewing the existing water and wastewater infrastructure. In the period from now until 2010 the budget is over £17m.

The main message from the sessions was that Scottish Water's Glasgow office, **419 Balmore Road, Glasgow G22 6NU**, is now the main point of contact. Developers should consult with Scottish Water at an early stage and definitely before submitting a planning application. Information sheets giving contact names and details for relevant Scottish Water staff were distributed at the meeting. The Scottish Water website gives details; go to the connections tab on the website at; <http://www.scottishwater.co.uk>

Living Shetland

- Kelda Hudson – Natural Heritage Officer

Living Shetland is the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) for Shetland. It sets out the strategic priorities for biodiversity in Shetland and is comprised of a core document, which outlines the LBAP process, the aim and objectives of Living Shetland, and information regarding biodiversity in Shetland. This core document is accompanied by a series of different species, habitat, community and sectoral action plans. Living Shetland aims to engage communities in local biodiversity action and contribute to sustainable development in Shetland. The functions of Living Shetland are to:

- Translate national targets for species and habitats, as specified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, into effective action at the local level;
- Stimulate effective working partnerships to ensure that programmes for biodiversity conservation are developed and maintained;
- Raise awareness of the need for biodiversity conservation and enhancement in the local context;
- Identify biodiversity priorities and resources in Shetland;
- Identify priorities for the conservation of important local species and habitats, including both the rare and the common, according to local circumstances;
- Ensure that delivery mechanisms for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity resources are promoted and understood at a local level; and
- Provide a local basis for monitoring progress in biodiversity conservation.

There are currently four Habitat Action Plan (HAPs), eight Species Action Plans (SAPs) and five grouped Species Action Plans, whilst five areas in Shetland have community BAPs (Yell, Fetlar, Sandwick, Bressay and Bigton). Sectoral action plans have also been published for the agriculture and roads sectors. The aim is for these plans to be implemented by members of the relevant sectors and used as guidelines for working practices.

Over the coming months these action plans will be reviewed in order to ensure that they are kept up to date and that the information in them is relevant and to monitor progress against the original actions.

For more information on Living Shetland contact **Kelda Hudson, Natural Heritage Officer** on 01957 711528

Talc Alf's - University of Commonsense

- Jon Molloy – Implementation Officer



It is not the fact that the responsibility of planning and delivering sustainable developments – as well as the whole ecological agenda in buildings - is “daunting”- it’s the fact that it is being made more complicated than it need be.

The sustainable advice therefore is simple. Trust your traditional instincts to do the straightforward thing first and be wary of strangers (sales reps.) bearing gifts. Much of ecological design lies in the identification and revival of commonsense and good practice - although it often requires new knowledge and insight to underpin it. It also needs for us to go back and question all the new man-made and often "magical solution" materials that have been rushed into buildings over the past decades.

What’s needed is to identify the nature of the problem and undertake effective analysis first, apply good quality scientific thinking, without pre-empting the solution. The holistic approach (ubiquitous sustainability cliché) is also probably the most ignored, especially by those who quite often arrive at mono-technological solutions.

This may appear to be a criticism of eco-technology solutions. It is not. It is a plea for commonsense and rigour to triumph, and for each solution to be the result of clear, efficient and realistic analysis. If it makes sound environmental and economic sense - then use it, but if not don’t, e.g. micro wind turbines!

With passive design and if we doubled our new home insulation, glazed appropriately and tested all our houses for tightness. Houses that breathe like a ‘Gortex’ jacket are correctly ventilated and then we end up with a very low heating requirement if any!

Unlike Talc Alf who has almost the opposite problems of how to keep his Uni. Buildings cool by day and warm at night, he needs to go underground and use the thermal mass of the earth with passive ventilation stacks to light and ventilate.

Nature is good at conservation - of energy, water and materials. It is an exemplar of passive design and it looks after its own economy not just locally but globally.

E – Planning Efficient Government Programme

- Lucy Wheeler, Technical Assistant

The E-planning Efficient Government Programme is a vital element of the modernization and reform of the planning system. The programme is a change management initiative to move the planning system from paper based to electronic processes. It is led by the Scottish Executive and involves all Local Authorities.

The e-planning project has 5 main streams; we are involved in 3 of them.

- **OPIS** - Online Planning Information System (we are not involved as we have fast Planning/ Control)
- **OAA** - Online Applications and Appeals (National Hub/website for Members of the public to load planning applications and appeals, we will be taking a manual approach to any data provision for SIC from the hub due to low quantities involved)
- **OLP** - Online Local Plans - Interactive website to promote and develop the local plan, this will include online mapping, and links to policies and planning zones, etc. We will be involved in this.
- **e-Consultation** - we already do this.

For members of the public who do not have internet access at home we will have a computer in the Grantfield reception where they will be able to download all the relevant maps and submit their application.

We will be providing training for staff that will be using the new equipment and software.

Once e-planning is up and running it should benefit us greatly as it will reduce the amount of paperwork and time needed to process planning applications.

We will be holding a workshop in the near future to help promote and identify e-planning type issues/ risks, benefits, etc. Input from planning officers and other members of staff would be useful at this point.

For further information on the E-planning Efficient Government Programme please contact the project team:

Iain McDiarmid – Head of Planning

Austin Taylor – Heritage Manager

Lucy Wheeler – Technical Assistant

Michael Coutts – Network Analyst & e-Planning Project Manager (ICT Service)

Doors Open Days

Gwenan Hughes

During September some of Shetland's most interesting buildings opened their doors to visitors, as part of the sixth Shetland Doors Open Days event.

Highlights of the programme included guided tours of historic Belmont House in Unst, which is currently being restored by the Belmont Trust; and the opportunity to visit the recently refurbished Hay's Dock Storehouse, now part of the new Shetland Museum and Archives.

Other buildings participating in the event included Lunna House, Easthouse Croft at Duncansclate, the Midden Court in Symbister, the Lerwick Coastguard and Lifeboat Stations, and Shetland Amenity Trust's Horticultural Unit and Nursery. Visitors could also see behind the scenes of two of Shetland Islands Council's ferries, the MV Daggri and the MV Linga.

Organised locally by the Council's Planning Service, Doors Open Days celebrate Scotland's architectural heritage, culture and enterprise by offering access to properties that are usually closed to the public.

The Doors Open Days programme has been running in Scotland for 18 years, and this year over 930 events took place across the country. It is also Scotland's contribution to European Heritage Days. This joint initiative between the Council of Europe and the European Union aims to give people a greater understanding of each other through exploring and sharing cultural heritage. 48 countries across Europe hold similar celebrations - involving over 20 million people.

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