

2025
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2030



DEVELOPMENT PLAN BUILDING RESILIENCE FOR THE YEARS AHEAD

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A Word from our Chair

I am pleased to introduce Point and Sandwick Trust's (PST) 5-year Development Plan, which covers the period from 2025-2030.

The plan is guided by our founding principle as set out in our constitution and has been created following a thorough review of our past performance and community impact. This review is detailed in our Impact Report 2020-24, which is published as a separate document alongside this forward-looking Development Plan.

It is important that we at PST regularly review our operations to ensure that we stay true to our mission of supporting the well-being of our community. To achieve this, we need to be flexible in our interactions with stakeholders and ensure our resources are directed in a way that best meets the community's needs.

This is the third development plan that the Trust has published since our wind farm at Beinn Ghrideag was first energised in 2015. In that initial 10-year period, the Trust's success in delivering on its objectives, despite some significant setbacks, has been exceptional. With the publication of this plan the Trust is demonstrating that we are aware of the continuing challenges facing our community and that we are listening to our stakeholders. Over the next five years, we will continue to support our community across Point and Sandwick and the wider Western Isles by focusing our efforts on the priorities set out in Section 6 of this report.

In closing I would like to take this opportunity to thank Impact Hub Inverness, and particularly Karen Maclean-Yuille, for their guidance and support in preparing this plan.

Norman Mackenzie
Chair

1. Introduction

Thank you to everyone in the community for your engagement in the consultation process in Spring 2025 – it helped shape this new Community Development Plan.

At the heart of all our work is one guiding principle: to support the social, educational, cultural, and environmental well-being of the people of the Western Isles, with a focus on the communities of Point and Sandwick.

When our first plan was published in 2013, we identified two priorities for achieving this aim: that Point and Sandwick Trust (PST) investments should support job creation and help bring additional funding into the area. These priorities were carried forward into the 2020 plan and remain central to this new one.

All PST investments must also align with the organisation's charitable objects and meet at least one of our seven key areas of activity aimed at promoting community well-being:

- Promoting community development, including rural regeneration, following principles of sustainable development
- Providing assistance to people who are disadvantaged by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial or other disadvantage;
- Promoting education, including all forms of training for work and life skills;
- Advancing the arts, culture and heritage, including support for the Gaelic arts and the protection of buildings and sites of architectural or historic importance;
- Providing and supporting recreational activities for the community, especially for disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, such as young people or the disabled;
- Protecting and enhancing the natural heritage and environment;
- Through the relief of poverty in such ways as may be thought fit.

The findings from our latest Impact Report have directly informed the development of this plan, which reflects extensive consultation with the groups, organisations, and projects we support. It captures lessons learned over the past five years and sets out how these will shape our future direction. The plan also demonstrates how our aims align with national and regional priorities, including Community Wealth Building and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar’s Corporate Strategy 2022–2027.

Looking ahead, our focus over the next five years will be on building resilience, shaping our future, and diversifying PST’s income to secure long-term sustainability. In an increasingly uncertain landscape, we recognise the need to remain agile, and this plan may evolve as circumstances change.

To accompany this Development Plan, we have published our Impact Report 2020–2024, which provides a detailed summary of funding awarded during the previous plan period and demonstrates the difference it has made to the organisations and communities we support.



Point and Sandwick Trust, staff, board and consultants. Sept 2024. SandiePhotos.

2. PST Investment in Context

This section sets out our history, achievements, and the current operating environment. It also gives a socio-demographic profile of the Western Isles.

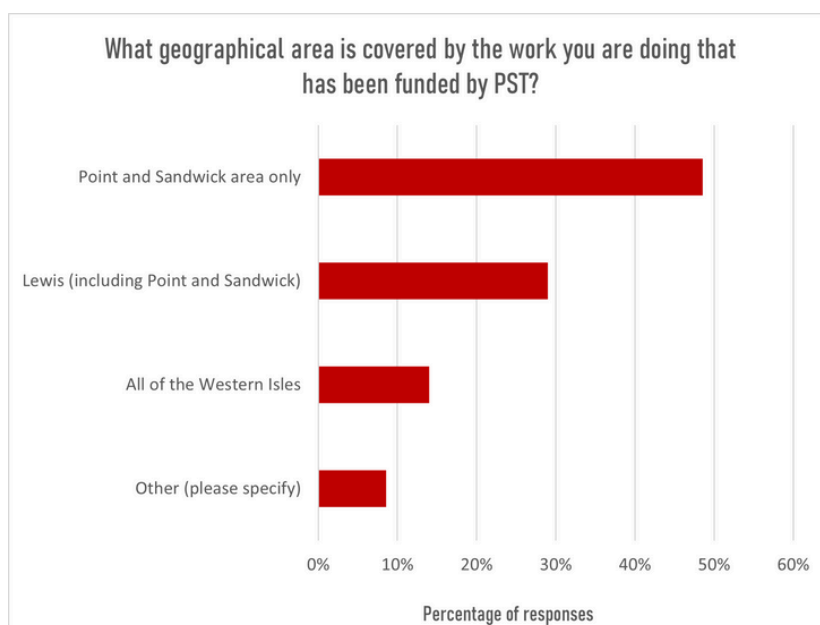
2.1 PST's achievements - the story so far

PST was set up in 2009 and is a multi-award-winning charity. Since 2015, we have provided £10 million in community benefit payments to community groups and organisations in the Point and Sandwick area and across the Western Isles. This investment has taken two forms: direct funding to local charities and community groups to help them deliver their aims, and indirect investment, which benefits the wider community.

None of this would be possible were we not the owners and operators of what is the UK's biggest community wind farm, Beinn Ghrideag, which continues to be one of the most successful income generators on the Western Isles.

Between 2009 and 2020, we reached several important milestones, which were detailed in our previous development plan. The last five years have seen our achievements, on behalf of the community we serve, continue.

Graph 1: Geographical area of organisations awarded funding



Key highlights from 2020 – 2024 include:

- Set up the Energy Support Unit (ESU), which replaced our previous LED project. The ESU employs 2.5 people and is delivered by Muirneag Consulting Ltd. When the energy crisis hit, PST wanted to respond in relevant and meaningful ways, and so far, **£310,000** of funding has been given to people in fuel poverty and over **900 fire alarms** have been fitted in 164 homes.
- Regular funding provided to eight organisations: Bethesda Hospice, Urras Gharraboist, Knock School (now known as Aros an Rubha), the Point and Sandwick Coastal Community Path, Point Community Council, Sandwick Community Council, The Western Isles Croft Woodland Project and the Energy Support Unit.
- 89 community grants to 51 different organisations totalling **£639,106**.
- Nearly half (**49%**) of all community grants were awarded to organisations operating exclusively in **Point and Sandwick**, 29% supported projects extending across wider Lewis, and 14% had an island-wide impact. This demonstrates that while the funding remains firmly rooted in the local community, it also delivers tangible benefits at both local and island-wide levels.
- Since 2020, local groups supported by PST funding and its community consultant programme have secured over **£2.8 million in additional external investment**.
- PST funding has directly **supported 26 jobs** (14 full-time and 12 part-time) and contributed to further indirect employment through local contractors, nurseries, and construction projects.
- Volunteering grew significantly, with 105 new positions created and 154 roles sustained, benefiting 189 staff and **262 volunteers** overall.
- Awarded **Best Community Energy Project**, Highlands and Islands Renewable Energy Awards 2021
- Named **Social Business Champion** in the UK-wide SE100 Social Business Awards 2023, run by Pioneers Post and NatWest Social & Community Capital. PST was also listed in the Top 100 list of social enterprise businesses for the fourth year running.

Resilience during Unexpected Challenges (2020-2024)

Between 2020 and 2024, PST faced significant and unforeseen challenges. In 2021, a break in the subsea cable took 11 months to repair, reducing both our income and grant-making capacity. This temporarily limited our growth, but it did not affect the organisations we typically support, thanks to a £500,000 fund created by SSE and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, which most of our grantees were able to access. In 2023, an insurance payout also helped restore our reserves.

During the COVID pandemic, we continued to distribute funding and responded directly to emerging needs (the flyer pictured below was delivered to households in our area). This included delivering up to 60 hot meals per day to local residents and providing £40,000 in support to NHS Western Isles.

Maintaining strong reserves has been crucial as it has allowed us to adapt quickly and continue supporting the community during times of crisis, a clear demonstration of PST's long-term resilience and stability.



Free Pick-up and Home Delivery

In partnership with:
Sandwick Community Council & Point Community Council

If you are self-isolating, unable to get to shops due to transport issues or disability we can help. Our drivers will safely pick up & deliver shopping that has been pre-paid from the following stores:

- » Blackhouse Bakery - 01851 702804
- » Buth an Rubha - 01851 870713
- » Charles Macleod Butcher - 01851 702445
- » Food Bank - 01851 706650
- » Good Food Boutique - 01851 701394
- » Islander Shellfish - 01851 706772
- » Macleod & Macleod Butchers - 01857 703384
- » SC Seafoods - 01851 704753
- » Stag Bakeries - 01851 702733
- » WJ Macdonald Butchers - 01851 702077

Free Delivery: 01851 871286

Between 9am-1pm, Mon-Fri

Make your order directly with the shop, advise them it's a PST delivery and then call us on the number above to confirm. Call before 1pm and we'll do our best to get the delivery to you on the same day.

Community Well-being Support

We also offer support to help ease lockdown loneliness through our telephone befriending service and can supply fresh, locally cooked meals to your door.

Just get in touch for yourself or on behalf of someone you know and we'll do our best to help (for free!)

Well-being Support: 07385711473

Between 9am-1pm, Mon-Fri

Covid-19 is highly contagious. We take every precaution to ensure we're only spreading kindness. Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly. Cover coughs and sneezes. Catch it, bin it, kill it. Avoid touching your face unless your hands are clean.



Point and Sandwick Trust is a registered Scottish Charity - SCO 41048

Morale boosting free doorstep photos taken by SandiePhotos (above left) and practical support offered during COVID.

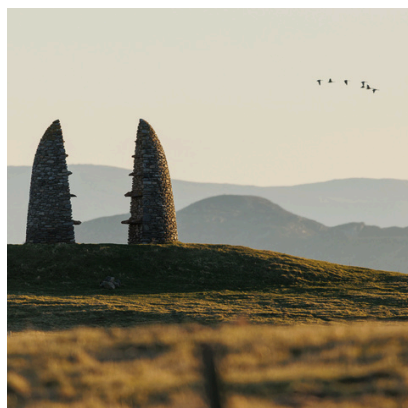
Garrabost Mill

PST has awarded £508,424 to Urras Gharraboist to restore the historic mill. The site is on track to open as a crofting community heritage centre, creating a lasting cultural asset for the area.



Point and Sandwick Trail

With PST's support, the Point & Sandwick Trail has developed into a high-quality, inclusive route, accessible to walkers, cyclists, mobility scooters, and those with limited mobility, benefiting the whole community.



2.2 Our fit with national strategies

While our operating context is local, the work we do aligns closely with the following national and regional strategies.

- The National Islands Plan (published December 2019) which provides a framework for action to meaningfully improve outcomes for island communities with 13 strategic objectives. The work of PST, through the investments that we make and the organisations we support, fits particularly closely with the following:

	Strategic Objective 1 To address population decline and ensure a healthy, balanced population profile
	Strategic Objective 5 To reduce levels of fuel poverty
	Strategic Objective 7 To improve and promote health, social care and wellbeing
	Strategic Objective 11 To support arts, culture and language

- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Corporate Strategy 2022 – 2027, which includes strategic priorities of supporting resilient communities and supporting children, families and young people.
- Community Wealth Building (CWB) is a place-based approach to local economic development which redirects wealth back into the local economy and places control and benefits into the hands of local people. It has been gaining traction in Scotland over a number of years, and a Community Wealth Building Bill was introduced by the Scottish Government in March 2025. CWB lies at the heart of what the Trust does and has done so before CWB became the recognised term it is today. Since the turbines came online in 2015, we have invested £10 million in our local and wider community.

- The approach we take to our investments matches the guiding principles and actions for enhancing community benefits from Community Benefit Funds (CBF) developed by Foundation Scotland and the University of Strathclyde, which are set out in its report of the same name. The four principles of a CBF are:
 - a) Grounded in a long-term flexible funding strategy that reflects a community's context and priorities.
 - b) Transparent, accountable, representative and professional
 - c) Targeted to support community wealth building
 - d) Evaluated against its community impact.

2.3 The current operating environment

As we reported in our previous development plan, wind farm income is naturally unpredictable due to changes in wind levels from month to month and year to year. Geopolitical factors also impact our operating environment in unexpected ways, particularly through the volatility in energy prices and the ongoing cost-of-living challenges.

These two things make it difficult to forecast what our income is likely to be over the next five years. However, over the last 10 years, we have, in a consistent way, hit a target of £900k average per annum and which includes the year of the cable break where no income was generated.

During the lifetime of this plan, in 2029, the financial agreement for our turbines will end, which is a significant milestone. The final settlement figure of £4.5m will be paid and the PST board will be prioritising discussion on the options open to us. These would include repowering (which would require an additional connection to handle the increased load).



2.4 The local context

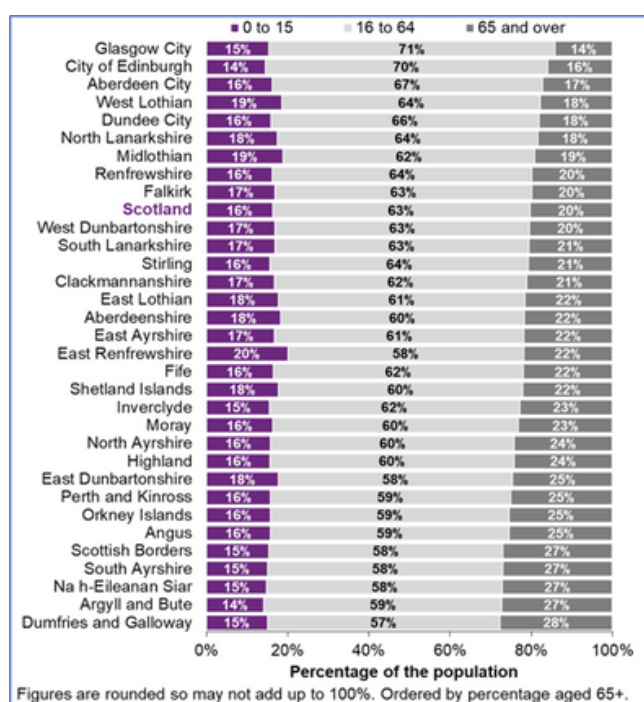
The welfare of our community in Point and Sandwick, which has around 1200 households, remains inextricably linked to that of the wider community in Lewis, Harris and, indeed, the whole of the Western Isles. The social, economic and cultural context we live in and the challenges we face are mirrored at a pan-Western Isles level. These were set out in the 2020-2025 Development Plan, and an updated analysis of our context for this new plan shows the situation remains much the same.

Population changes:

Figures from the Mid-2023 National Records of Scotland (Figure 1) show the population of the Outer Hebrides estimated as 26,030. This is a slight fall from the 2015 figures from our 2020- 2025 Development Plan of 27,070. Na h-Eileanan Siar is one of 7 council areas in Scotland, from a total of 25, where population levels fell between 2022 and 2023. Using updated population prediction, the islands are expecting to see a further drop of 8% by 2028, one of the biggest population decreases in Scotland [1].

In line with Scotland’s wider trend—particularly in rural areas—the Outer Hebrides is getting older. Our council area has the second-highest proportion of over-65s (Figure 1).

Figure 1: National Records of Scotland, age structure of Council areas 2024



[1] Effect of Demographic Change in the Western Isles, NHS Eileanan Siar Board Meeting Report August 2023 - <https://www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Item-9.3.1-23-133-Appendix-1-Effect-of-Demographic-Change-on-the-Western-Isles-v2-BM-30.08.23.pdf>

Furthermore, the Outer Hebrides has the lowest population density (9 people per square kilometre [2]) of all the local authorities in Scotland, which makes the delivery of, and access to services, more challenging. This challenge falls most heavily on those who are most vulnerable.

Combined, these factors continue to have significant implications for health and social care expenditure and recruitment, as well as social and economic consequences.

The economy and cost of living challenges:

The long-tail impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and geopolitical factors means that global and national recovery remains uncertain. Both these things impact the lives of people in the PST area.

The 2022 – 2027 Western Isles Council Corporate Strategy states the following [3]:

“The nature of the island’s economy is reliant, at present, on a small number of sectors. There are a significant number of people whose income is dependent on tourism and primary industries, including food and drink production, aquaculture, and fishing, the majority of whom are small businesses and/or self-employed. However, the economy of the islands is also supported by the public sector by up to 12an estimated 50%. Although rates of employment are higher in the Outer Hebrides than the Scottish average, GVA and average wages are noticeably lower.

While there are challenges and barriers to growth there are also significant opportunities. Assets such as our natural heritage and Gaelic language and culture, our communities and our overall quality of life are all highly rated and can be used to our economic advantage. Sectors that recognise the opportunities to use Gaelic as an asset are also likely to benefit economically.

The growth of the visitor economy, in part accelerated by the impact of the pandemic on international travel, and a resurgence in domestic tourism, requires the Comhairle to work with partners to shape the developments, impacts and opportunities that this growth presents.”

[2] <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/mid-2024-population-estimates/#fig4>

[3] <https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-08/Corporate-Strategy-2022-2027.pdf>

Fuel Poverty: A Critical Ongoing Priority

Fuel poverty remains one of the most urgent and deep-rooted challenges facing the Western Isles, with recent modelling from York University estimating that up to 80% of households are affected, which is the highest level in Scotland. These findings are reinforced by the 2023 Affordable Warmth at Home report by Tighean Innse Gall (TIG) [4], which showed that over 80% of households in the region spend more than 10% of their income on heating, and half spend over 20%. This means many households are rationing energy use because they simply cannot afford to heat their homes.

Data from the Energy Support Unit (ESU), delivered by Muirneag Consulting Ltd and funded by PST, further supports this. Of the clients supported through the ESU, over 83% were living in fuel poverty or extreme fuel poverty, with an average of 26% of household income spent on heating. The area faces a 'perfect storm' of challenges — an ageing housing stock (with 57% of homes built before 1975), and a high reliance on oil (48%) and electric heating (31%), both of which are costly and inefficient.

PST's support for the ESU, its home repair service, and wider fuel poverty work is playing a vital role in helping households stay warm and well. Tackling fuel poverty must remain a central priority in the next phase of the Trust's development strategy, both through direct support and by advocating for long-term policy and infrastructure solutions.



[4] <https://tighean.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Warmth-Booklet-2024.pdf>

Socioeconomic Context: Employment, Earnings, and Access

While the Western Isles do not contain any data zones ranked in the bottom 10% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) (Figure 3), several areas fall within the 20–40% most deprived range, primarily due to geographic access challenges, such as distance from essential services. It is important to note that SIMD is not an effective proxy for assessing fuel poverty in remote rural areas. Dispersed settlements, larger data zones, smaller population densities, and the difficulty in accounting for higher living costs can mask deeper levels of deprivation. Consequently, while SIMD provides an indicator, the conditions experienced on the ground are likely more severe.

This reflects the challenges of rural isolation rather than widespread socio-economic deprivation. Nevertheless, employment and household earnings remain significant concerns. According to the Outer Hebrides Local Child Poverty Action Report (2022–23), levels of pay and gross weekly salaries in the Western Isles are consistently lower than the national average (Figure 2). Combined with high living costs, these factors contribute to persistent hardship for many households. Income-related challenges in the region are often linked to fuel poverty, poor housing quality, and limited transport or digital infrastructure, highlighting the need for targeted interventions that address both financial and geographic barriers.

Figure 2: Employment and earnings data

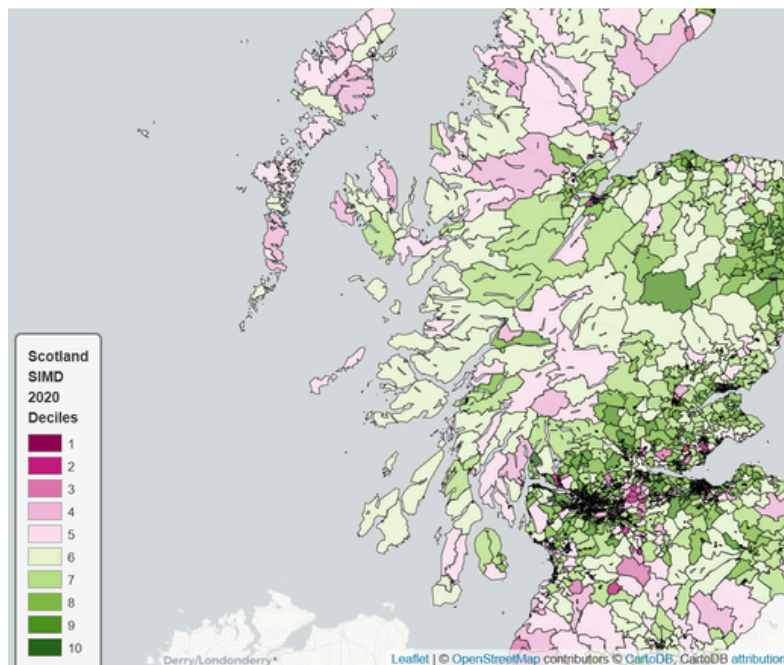


Where income or health factors are a concern, they are often linked with fuel poverty, housing quality, and isolation, as highlighted by local findings.

The most income- and employment-deprived rural data zones in Scotland are concentrated in areas like the Western Isles, Dumfries & Galloway, Orkney, and the Highlands.

Figure 3: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) Map of Scotland

The most deprived areas (decile 1) is coloured deep pink while the zones that are least deprived (decile 10) are dark green [5].



[5] <https://datamap-scotland.co.uk/simd-local-authorities/scotland-deprivation-zones-on-a-map/simd2020-overall-deprivation-map/>

3. Consultation Feedback on Community Needs and Priorities over the Next 5 Years

To help shape and inform the investment priorities for the next five years, we carried out extensive consultation with the community, PST grant recipients, including organisations that have had core funding over the last 4 years, stakeholders, and the PST Board. This involved a mix of surveys and one-to-one interviews, and there were good levels of engagement as summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Survey response rate

Survey	Response rate
Point and Sandwick Trust Community Survey	79 responses with 84% living in the PST area
The Western Isles Croft Woodland Project Survey. This is a partnership between Point and Sandwick Trust (PST), Woodland Trust Scotland, Scottish Forestry, and the Scottish Crofting Federation, working with crofters to plant native woodlands on their crofts.	32 survey responses (out of a total of 150), representing 21% response rate
Grant recipient survey	A survey was sent to all 51 organisations awarded grants. 35 responses were received (39% of all awards, and 68% of unique organisations).

In addition to the survey responses, one-to-one interviews were conducted with 10 members of the PST Board and several board members of Point and Sandwick Power.

Interviews were also held with 8 key stakeholders, including representatives from Community Energy Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, as well as with 12 grant-funded organisations and all 8 of the core-funded organisations.

The consultation focused on understanding three key areas:

- What people see as the community's main needs over the next five years
- What the funding priorities for PST should be, based on its seven core charitable aims
- Whether there are specific projects or initiatives that people feel PST should support.

The following sections outlines the key priorities and needs that emerged from this process.



3.1 Looking Ahead: Board Reflections and Strategic Priorities

The PST board recognises the significant impact the organisation has had over the past five years, particularly in areas such as fuel poverty, youth support, and community wellbeing.

Looking ahead, board members have identified several key priorities:

- Ensuring the Trust's long-term financial sustainability
- Strengthening succession planning for both leadership and day-to-day operations
- Maintaining clear and transparent governance

While the board is proud of the Trust's resilience through recent challenges, such as the cable break and Gift Aid disruption, there is a shared understanding that future success depends on building reserves, improving internal communication, and preparing for critical decisions about the wind turbine's future. These reflections highlight a board that is committed, but also aware of the need to adapt and plan strategically for the years ahead.

“It's actually very hard to plan for the next 5 years... we might need to change it quickly.”

- PST Board Member

“Should be looking to invest some to create a sort of legacy fund for the future.”

- PST Board Member

3.2 Community Priorities and Challenges for the Next Five Years

As part of the consultation process, community members were asked to identify the main challenges facing the Point and Sandwick area over the next five years as well as across the wider Western Isles. A total of 79 people responded, and there's strong overlap between the challenges identified for Point and Sandwick and those for the wider Western Isles, but there are also some clear differences in emphasis and local context.

Shared Priorities (Both Point & Sandwick and Western Isles)

- Cost of living – Top concern in both areas (81%).
- Ageing population – A major challenge across both geographies (76% Point & Sandwick, 84% Western Isles).
- Retaining or attracting young people – Seen as crucial in both areas (78% and 82% respectively).
- Depopulation – A widely recognised risk (51% Point & Sandwick, 70% Western Isles).
- Energy security – Consistently raised (53% vs. 58%).
- Social isolation – Noted in both, though slightly more prominent in Point & Sandwick.

Point and Sandwick: More Localised and Community-Focused Concerns

- More mentions of local infrastructure (e.g. maintenance of the Braighe, and the need for an alternative route when the causeway is impassable)
- Specific emphasis on childcare, youth services, and outdoor play spaces.
- References to PST's role in plugging service gaps, with some expressing concern that this should not be expected.



Western Isles: Broader Structural and Systemic Issues

- Stronger focus on system-level problems:
 - Local authority budget cuts
 - Loss of public services
 - Lack of affordable housing for families
 - Displacement due to tourism and short-term lets
- Clear concern about economic resilience:
 - Decline of Stornoway as a commercial hub
 - Ferry reliability
 - Food security and sustainability

These insights reflect a wide range of interconnected social, economic, and environmental concerns, and will help shape PST's priorities for the years ahead.

3.3 Consultation Findings on Future Investment Priorities

As part of its review of the community investment policy, PST asked local residents which priorities should guide funding decisions over the next five years. Respondents were invited to select all that applied. The results show strong support across several areas:

- Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people (76%)
- Providing recreational activities for young people and those with additional needs (76%)
- Relieving poverty in flexible and responsive ways (71%)
- Promoting education and training for life and work (65%)
- Promoting community development and rural regeneration (65%)
- Protecting the natural environment and heritage (53%)
- Supporting Gaelic arts, culture, and heritage (46%)

These results suggest the community wants PST to maintain a strong focus on social inclusion, education, and poverty reduction, while also valuing local regeneration, youth support, and the natural and cultural heritage of the area.

Table 2: PST Objectives, Community Needs, and priorities

PST Objectives to promote community wellbeing	Related community need	Priorities identified by survey respondents
Promoting community development, including rural regeneration, following principles of sustainable development	Transport & Safety Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers at both ends of the Braighe to improve safety • Create footpaths between villages (e.g. Garrabost to Shulishader) • Cruise tourism development • Development of Bayble Bay as a leisure area (slipway, moorings, sauna, Wi-Fi, etc.) • Picnic areas, benches, and toilets at Bayble Beach and Braighe • Future security for Eye Church • Continued support for Sgoil an Rubha
Providing assistance to people who are disadvantaged by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial or other disadvantage	Physical and Mental Health, Wellbeing, and Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued support for Bethesda Hospice • Warm hubs or multipurpose spaces for older and isolated people • More activities to help elderly people socialise • Meals on wheels service
Promoting education, including all forms of training for work and life skills	Training & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training in crofting, food production, and traditional skills • Short courses and PHD opportunities in environmental fields
Advancing the arts, culture and heritage, including support for the Gaelic arts and the protection of buildings and sites of architectural or historic importance	Heritage & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaelic learning, usage and promotion – encouraging young people to engage with it • People come to view cultural sites in Point. This could be supported more and made part of the local economy
Providing and supporting recreational activities for the community, especially for disadvantaged or vulnerable	Play Parks & Sports Community Spaces Paths and Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, inclusive playground in Knock (suitable for all ages and abilities) • Upgrades and upkeep of existing children’s play parks (e.g. Aird, Shulishader) • Play Park in the Braighe Dunes (similar to Ness)

Table 2 continued

PST Objectives to promote community wellbeing	Related community need	Priorities identified by survey respondents
<p>Continued from previous page</p>	<p>Play Parks & Sports</p> <p>Community Spaces</p> <p>Paths and Trails</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft play for younger children (like in Harris) • Saturday morning kids' club • Sensory playground or enclosed play area • Youth support worker to increase local youth activities • Subsidised driving lessons for young people • Completion of the coastal trail • Walking/cycling tours of the Point Trail
<p>Protecting and enhancing the natural heritage and environment</p>	<p>Climate resilience</p> <p>Nature-based infrastructure</p> <p>Environmental protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry stonewalling to create shelter belts for crops • Community polytunnels and allotments to grow food for those who can't afford their own • Help crofters meet Whole Farm Plan requirements (advice/support for BPS and grants) • Explore feasibility of farming food locally and how it fits with crofting • Tree and scrub regeneration along streams (protecting small coastal areas from grazing) • Logs for manufacturing (modelled on Isle of Eigg)
<p>Through the relief of poverty in such ways as may be thought fit</p>	<p>Cost of living crisis</p> <p>Rising Energy Costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying for reduced energy costs • Heating allowance for the elderly • Donation to each household to help with rising energy costs. • Paying out small grants to all members of the community. • Tackling Poverty-Related Housing Issues.

While these priorities reflect what respondents identified through the community survey, PST cannot address every issue directly. Our role is to act as an enabler, using capital and revenue funding to support initiatives that will have the greatest community impact.

Through our support for Regularly Funded Organisations and community partners, PST has already committed funding toward many of the areas identified, including health and social care, energy poverty, heritage and tourism.

4. A Framework for PST Development and Investment for the Next 5 Years

As with the previous development plan, the consultation has confirmed that PST's seven charitable purposes remain relevant and strongly supported by the community. The Board will therefore continue to focus its investment around these core areas. These purposes are well aligned with both the key themes raised in the consultation and the specific project ideas and priorities put forward by residents and organisations.

Over the next five years, PST's strategic focus will be on building community and organisational resilience. This will include continued local investment, alongside efforts to achieve greater diversification for PST itself.

One example of this forward-looking approach is the redevelopment of Knock Mission Hall (pictured below). To lead the project, PST has recently created an arm's-length organisation called PS Tourism Limited. The redevelopment will feature a Gaelic cultural centre, performance and exhibition space, and a tourism offering designed to generate income for reinvestment. As part of this, the Trust has already purchased a 16-seater minibus to support small group tours and wider community use.



4.1 Existing investment commitments

Most of PST's revenue funding commitments will continue into the next plan period, ensuring stability for ongoing projects and services. The number of Regularly Funded Organisations has decreased since the last plan. This reflects a tighter focus on core priorities while continuing to support others on a project-by-project basis.

At present, there are only three Regularly Funded Organisations (RFOs) formally agreed:

- Bethesda Hospice, for palliative and end-of-life care
- The Western Isles Croft Woodland Project (CWP), supporting biodiversity and land management through community-based planting initiatives
- Energy Support Unit (ESU), tackling fuel poverty through personalised energy advice and grants.

Other commitments include:

- PS Tourism Limited – In partnership with Urras Gharraboist, Eye Church, and Portnaguran Amenities, this initiative aims to create local jobs through a new community-owned enterprise. It will encourage community collaboration, address an emerging tourism gap, and preserve and celebrate the social history of crofting for future generations.
- Sandwickhill School and Hall Redevelopment – Working with Sandwickhill Development Trust to develop a community hub for residents and visitors, offering financially sustainable facilities, new employment opportunities, and a broader range of recreational and social activities.

These core partnerships reflect PST's focus on delivering long-term social and environmental benefits. Additional revenue funding will be awarded on a case-by-case basis, where alignment with community needs and charitable objectives can be clearly demonstrated.

4.2 Creating jobs and maximising income in the community

Alongside maintaining existing commitments, PST is also focused on increasing local economic benefits through job creation and by leveraging additional funding. We employ two local investment consultants to help us deliver our priorities. They do this by working with other local community organisations to help develop their plans and to make external funding applications. This service has been widely welcomed and has had a considerable impact on the groups they have worked with. Therefore, we aim to continue this support over the next five years. Feedback from organisations highlighted the value of this service:

“As well as financial assistance, PST have provided practical support through their officers to find other funding and technical assistance in preparing planning applications.”

- Point Sport and Recreation Association

“Without PST’s early support and guidance, we wouldn’t have had the confidence—or the capacity—to move forward. Their consultants helped us shape a realistic plan and find funding to make it happen.”

- Urras Stòras An Rubha

“The consultants were instrumental in helping us with applications and project delivery. Their local knowledge and technical expertise meant we could progress much faster and more effectively.”

- Point and Sandwick Coastal Community Path

These testimonials underline the strategic value of continuing investment in expert support to strengthen capacity, unlock funding, and ensure projects are well-designed and delivered efficiently.

5. Review of Previous Plan and Focus for 2025-2030

Over the past five years, PST has remained committed to its core principles and charitable aims while navigating significant change and uncertainty.

The table on the next page reviews progress against each of the strategic intentions set out in the 2020–2025 Development Plan and outlines how this will evolve in the new plan.



Table 3: What We Achieved (2020-2025) and What Comes Next (2025-2030)

Previous Intention (2020–2025)	Has It Been Achieved?	Next Steps (2025–2030)
Steer investment decisions in line with our seven charitable aims.	Yes – All funding decisions have aligned with the seven aims.	Continue using the aims as a framework, linked to community priorities identified through consultation.
Increase membership from 400 to 745.	No – Membership numbers have not grown as capacity to focus on this area has been limited.	Renew focus on communication and engagement with wider community.
Support five key investment areas (Bethesda, College Innovation Centre, Knock Hub, CWP, energy project).	Yes – All five areas have received sustained support	Continue to fund Bethesda Hospice, Energy Support Unit, The Western Isles Croft Woodland Project and re-evaluate others for future inclusion.
Be flexible on new projects due to uncertainty in energy market.	Yes – For example: purchased minibus for tourism; Knock Mission Hall redevelopment; continued ESU support.	Maintain flexible approach with regular reviews of income and reserves to adapt where needed.
Maximise job creation and leverage external income.	Yes – Consultants employed to support bids; community groups have accessed significant external funding.	Continue to prioritise this, and explore new models like earned income from Knock Hall
Support organisations, not individuals.	Yes – Policy upheld throughout the period.	Maintain this principle.
Retain three-tier grant structure.	Partially – Structure broadly used, but application and delivery varied.	Review structure to ensure accessibility, simplicity, and alignment with capacity of small groups.
Provide expert assistance through contractors.	Yes – Two local consultants have supported planning and fundraising across multiple groups.	Continue funding consultancy support.
Explore new areas (e.g. light industry, vertical farming, community development officer).	Partially – Ideas explored; some (e.g. Knock Hall tourism) progressed. Others paused	Reassess priorities and viability, keeping space in the plan for responsive, innovative ideas. Create income streams for PST through tourism-related investment.
Support organisations to embed monitoring and evaluation.	No – Limited progress as most groups still rely on basic reporting.	Build this into funding agreements and provide light-touch training/support.
Work with local and national partners.	Yes – Relationships with funders, local groups, and community partners have been crucial. For example, have recently become members of SCOTO.	Continue to strengthen these relationships and actively seek new partnerships where they are aligned with PST’s aims.

6. Conclusions

Point and Sandwick Trust (PST) has built a strong track record of delivering lasting benefits for the community, investing £10 million to date and helping to create jobs, improve services, protect heritage, and tackle urgent challenges such as fuel poverty. This has been achieved despite significant setbacks, including the subsea cable break and the wider cost-of-living crisis, and is a testament to the resilience and commitment of our board, staff, and partners.

This success rests on our guiding principle to support the social, educational, cultural, and environmental well-being of the people of the Western Isles, with a focus on the communities of Point and Sandwick.

The next five years will bring both opportunities and uncertainties. The end of our turbine finance agreement in 2029 will require careful consideration of options for repowering or alternative investment. At the same time, we will continue to address the challenges of an ageing population, depopulation, rising living costs, and the need to attract and retain younger people.



Our plan for 2025–2030 will therefore focus on:

- **Maintaining** our core commitments to key community assets such as Bethesda Hospice, the Energy Support Unit (ESU), and The Western Isles Croft Woodland Project (CWP).
- **Diversifying** and strengthening PST's income so we are less dependent on a single revenue source, including exploring new models such as earned income from Knock Hall and other tourism related investments.
- **Maximising** community benefit and resilience by providing grant funding to help organisations deliver projects that make a local difference, create and sustain jobs, and support them in securing additional external funding — acting as an enabler by using both capital and revenue funding to back initiatives with the greatest impact.
- **Continuing** to fund consultancy support to help local organisations plan, develop, and secure funding for their projects.
- **Embedding** monitoring and evaluation into funding agreements and providing light-touch training to strengthen capacity.
- **Reassessing** priorities and keeping space in the plan for innovative, responsive ideas.
- **Strengthening** existing partnerships and actively seeking new ones where they align with PST's aims, to leverage resources and amplify our impact.

By staying true to our guiding principle, **remaining flexible** in the face of change, and keeping the community's needs at the heart of our decisions, PST will continue to **build resilience** and deliver **meaningful, long-term benefits** for Point and Sandwick, and the wider Western Isles.



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All photographs used in this report feature Point and Sandwick Trust, or projects and organisations supported by the Trust, unless otherwise stated.