



Barrahormid Trust Trustees' Annual Report

23 September 2023 to 30 September 2024



Barrahormid Trust

Scottish Charity Number: SC052849

Registered Office:

Asknish House

Lochgair

Lochgilphead

Argyll PA31 8SB

Email: Info@barrahordmidtrust.org

Website: Barrahormidtrust.org

Our Mission

- Protect and restore the unique natural habitats on the Barrahormid Estate and surrounding areas on the Tayvallich Peninsula, Argyll
- Provide land or buildings for rural or affordable housing, or for rural enterprises, to those in need
- Create opportunities for people to experience and be inspired by the nature on Barrahormid Estate

Charity Trustees

James Fraser

Victoria Fraser

Tabitha Fraser

Hamish Fraser

John Aitchison

Structure, governance and management

Type of governing document

The charity is set up under a formal constitution which sets out the purposes of the charity, the structure of the board and the powers of the trustees

Trustee recruitment and appointment

The founding trustees are four members of the Fraser family, and a representative of the local community on the Tayvallich peninsula, John Aitchison.

Achievements and performance

On 8th June 2024, the Barrahormid Trust was delighted to announce that it had acquired 1,686 acres of the Tayvallich Estate from Highlands Rewilding (HRL).

Our aims as a charity are to restore and protect in perpetuity the unique natural environment on this land including temperate rainforest, fen and species-rich grassland, whilst providing opportunities for local repopulation and employment.

Landscape scale restoration will be a centuries long process and we hope the extended management agreement we entered into with HRL at the same time will serve as a model for ecological conservation and restoration with community benefit in Scotland.

Environmental management plan

The charity is currently working on a plan for the conservation and restoration of the natural habitats on its land, which is being compiled on its behalf by experts from Highlands Rewilding, and in consultation with the local community, NatureScot and other stakeholders.

The first step in developing this plan has been to “baseline” the existing biodiversity on the estate. This allows us to understand the current range of species and habitats before we make any changes, and also ensures we don’t inadvertently damage one species in trying to encourage conservation of another.

The baseline surveys being carried out include a habitat classification using the British National Vegetation Classification system, breeding bird surveys in late spring and early summer, acoustic bird call sensors and bat sensors, malaise traps for invertebrates, marsh fritillary web and habitat surveys, and woodland site surveys. The results of these surveys should be available by the end of 2024.

Elsewhere on the Tayvallich Estate, HRL has also been conducting marine surveys of the intertidal margins, and the subtidal areas of Linne Mhuirich and Loch na Cille where it has found evidence of the rare native oyster and seagrass meadows.

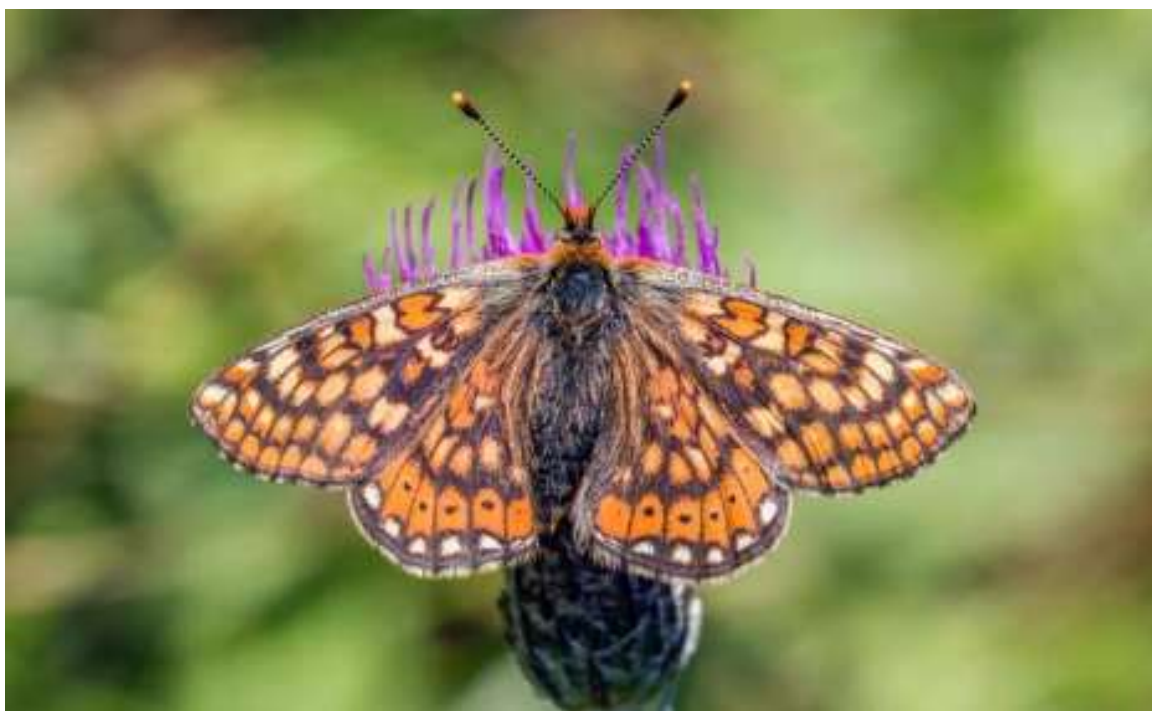


Figure 1: Marsh Fritillary (Photo: Highlands Rewilding)

Abandoned properties restoration plan

Alongside the Trust's objective to restore the natural environment on the Estate is its objective to support community development through repopulation of some of the abandoned settlements on its land.

There are at least eight of these old settlements on the Barraformid Estate which were occupied until well into the twentieth century. Only one of these, Barraformid Farmhouse, is still occupied currently by the farmer and ranger working on the land. The remaining properties consist of solid stone walls, many still with corrugated metal roofs.

The Trust plans to sell these empty buildings as affordable plots to buyers who will renovate them themselves with the hope that buyers will establish a rural enterprise on the surrounding land and buildings, and thus recreate a thriving local community.

The Trust has developed initial plans for the renovation of four of these settlements at Drimnagall, Barbae, Lower Fernoch, and Upper Fernoch which it believes can be restored into eight new homes, and

is seeking pre-application advice from Argyll and Bute Council and NatureScot.



Figure 2: The abandoned buildings at Lower Fernoch (Photo: Mary-Lou Aitchison)

Creating opportunities for people to experience and be inspired by nature

With the Trust's support, HRL have laid out a series of way-marked walks across the Estate which are available for all to use to enjoy the natural environment as it regenerates.

HRL have engaged with ecologists from many other organisations and universities to support scientific research on the wildlife on the Trust's land. In one such event



Plantlife kindly offered to run a training day on their Rapid Rainforest Assessment (RRA) tool at one of the patches of temperate rainforest at Barrahormid. The group included people from NatureScot, Scottish Forestry, and the local community. The training session was led by Dr Oliver Moore, Plantlife's Lichen and Bryophyte Specialist for Scotland. Oliver shared his expertise on all the elements that make up the rainforest, both big and small.



Figure 3: Using hand lenses to inspect lichens (Photo: Highlands Rewilding)

Financial review

Review of the year

Early in the year, the Charity was delighted to receive a large donation from the Fraser family as a permanent endowment that allowed it to acquire the Barrahormid Estate and commit to restoring and protecting its unique natural habitats for the benefit of the local community and the wider population in perpetuity. Any income from this endowment can be used for to cover the ongoing expenses of the charity.

Other smaller donations received in the year were used to cover the administrative costs of the charity.

Across the unrestricted funds and endowment together the charity recorded a surplus for the year of £102,987 comprising £1,210 in unrestricted funds and £102,987 in the permanent endowment. These surplus funds put the charity in a strong financial position

Statement of the charity's policy on reserves

It is the charity's policy to always retain at least six months' operating expenses as unrestricted reserves. This allows the charity to raise additional funds if it encounters unexpected costs, or to reduce its expenditure in a controlled way if necessary.

Future plans

Over the coming year the trustees hope that it will make further progress on the initiatives described above – in particular that it will complete the process of conducting the baseline surveys, and will obtain Planning Permission in Principle for the abandoned properties allowing it begin the process of finding potential buyers.

We also hope to be able to produce initial woodland regeneration plans which we will put out for consultation with the local community, NatureScot and other interested parties before finalising.



Figure 4: View looking North along the West Coast of the Barraholm Estate