



# Eilean Ratharsair

A Five Year Community  
Development Plan for the  
Island of Raasay

## Executive Summary

Raasay Development Trust (RDT) first produced a Development Plan for Raasay in 2012 and it has been periodically updated ever since. This version refreshes the Plan for the next 5 years (2018-23). It has been informed by community consultation and takes into account what is “BEST” for Raasay. It puts an emphasis on local **Business** development, our **Environment**, the **Social Welfare** of our residents and **Tourism**.

**It’s vision is to establish Raasay as the “BEST” small island in the world**, where people are able to enjoy multiple opportunities whether they are aged 1 or 100, set up projects that interest them, contribute to the community and safeguard the island’s environment and heritage.

To date, much has been achieved with progress evident on ten out of the twelve projects in the 2016 Plan. Over the next five years, RDT will work with the community to:

- Build affordable homes
- Secure a local goods delivery system.
- Develop sustainable energy solutions including consolidating the Woodfuel Project and exploring the feasibility of a Biomass Boiler for Raasay House.
- Install a pontoon and renovate the Boathouse.

These projects will generate revenue which will be utilised to the benefit of the island and its residents, supporting initiatives that increase our ac-

cess to health and social care, improve infrastructure and safeguard the environment.

They are, however, just a fraction of the projects taken forward by the range of individuals and organisations on Raasay including:

- ♦ **Local community bodies:** Raasay House Community Company, Raasay Primary School, Raasay Community Association, Raasay Heritage Trust, Raasay Community Council, Raasay Crofters’ Association, Community of Raasay Retail Association and our Fire & Rescue Services
- ♦ **Local groups:** Pancake People, Lunch Club, Am Bratach and Made in Raasay
- ♦ **Local businesses:** Raasay Outdoor Centre, Isle of Raasay Distillery, Raasay Sawmill, the B & Bs and accommodation providers, Silver Grasshopper, Manitoba Construction, DDK Design and Hugh Mackay Plant Hire
- ♦ **Local residents:** all of us who volunteer formally and informally to care for each other and our environment

This Development Plan does not just belong to RDT— it belongs to the whole community. Projects will only be successful if we all work together and with our external partners to realise them.

Thank you to our Local Development Officers: Rosemarie McNee for drafting this Plan and giving us strong foundations and Elizabeth Macleod for supporting the projects as they go forward.

# 1. Current reality



## POPULATION

	Total residents	<16	16-44	45-64	65+
2011	161	23%	19%	32%	26%
2018	168	11%	19%	39%	31%

Ours is an **ageing population**. The NHS predicts that by 2035, 30% of the population in Highlands will be aged 65 and over, putting additional pressure on services. Raasay, like many remote rural communities, has already surpassed this figure. Furthermore, whilst the overall number of Raasay residents is increasing, the proportion of residents aged 16-44 has remained static since 2011 at 19%. The proportion of those aged under 16 has more than halved from 23% in 2011 to 11% today.

## SCHOOL ROLLS

Raasay Primary School rolls are steadily **declining**:

	2001	2011	2018	2023
Nursery	?	?	1	0
Primary	17	11	8	5

## FUEL POVERTY

**44% of households report living in fuel poverty\*.**

\* From Raasay Household Survey undertaken by the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust in 2017.

## HOUSING

**Long-term Lets: 2% of housing stock; Social Housing: 7% of housing stock; Holiday Homes: 40% of housing stock.**

One of the biggest obstacles to Raasay's development is the availability of suitable and affordable housing. Young people and families struggles to find somewhere to rent or buy and older people struggle to move or adapt their existing homes to meet changing needs.

## Employment & Enterprise

**Over 12 FTE permanent jobs created on Raasay in 2017-18, mainly in the private sector.**

Job creation, whether by businesses, community bodies or individual entrepreneurship has been a major positive force on Raasay.

## Tourism & Infrastructure

**16% increase in passengers and cars between 2016 and 2017.** (Official Calmac figures)

There has been a year-on-year increase in foot-fall on Raasay. This brings many opportunities. It also puts pressure on our island infrastructure.

## 2. Development Priorities 2018-23



### **Business Growth & Entrepreneurship**

We want to create an environment that facilitates business growth and entrepreneurship. We want to attract people with different skills that are needed on the island. We want to ensure employment on Raasay enables people to support themselves, their families and the community.



### **Environment**

We want to safeguard our environment for future generations. We want to explore renewable energy schemes and reduce our carbon footprint. We want to support crofting and ensure both residents and visitors have every opportunity to enjoy our island through better land management.



### **Social Welfare**

We want to plan services that meet the changing needs of an older population. We want to build homes, address fuel poverty and attract families with children to Raasay. We want to create opportunities for residents to come together as a community, whether for volunteering or for recreation.



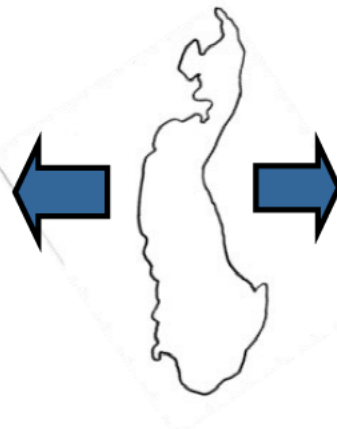
### **Tourism & Infrastructure**

We want to attract more tourists to the island but we also want to ensure that our infrastructure - transport, parking, facilities etc. - is well designed and able to cope with the increasing footfall on Raasay.

## 3. What holds us back & what helps us forward

### **Holding us back**

1. Small population—limited time and skills
2. Lack of housing stock
3. Business infrastructure (e.g. high set-up costs, distance from markets)
4. Tourism infrastructure (parking, facilities etc.)
5. Lack of cohesion in how community bodies align their work
6. Over-reliance on external funders



### **Helping us forward**

1. Our natural resources—beautiful environment, renewables potential
2. Strong community values
3. Community-held assets
4. Volunteer commitment (formal and informal volunteering)
5. Growing businesses, especially the private sector and individual entrepreneurship
6. Good reputation with external stakeholders (HIE, funders etc.)

## 4. Phase 1 and Ongoing Projects for 2018-23

RDT has secured funding from Highlands & Island Enterprise (HIE) for a part-time Local Development Officer (LDO) until March 2019. HIE's condition of funding this post is that the LDO must focus on projects that generate income, address major development obstacles and fit with B.E.S.T. **Revenue Generating Projects will therefore be the focus of Phase 1 of the 2018-23 Plan.** These are:

- ◆ **Building high-spec affordable homes** (Business & Enterprise, Social Welfare): We will work with the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust and Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association to build a range of properties on land we hope to purchase from North Raasay Sheep Stock Club.
- ◆ **Installing a pontoon and renovating the Boathouse** (Business & Enterprise, Tourism, Social Welfare): We will seek to establish Raasay as a marine tourism destination through installing a pontoon. The Boathouse will become a multi-use facility for both residents and visitors.
- ◆ **Developing renewable energy solutions** (Environment, Social Welfare): We will continue to develop the Woodfuel project and in partnership with Raasay House Community Company, we will look into installing a biomass heating system for Raasay House.
- ◆ **Securing a local goods delivery system** (Business & Enterprise): We will work with Calmac to ensure this service continues to be available for Raasay businesses and residents.

Furthermore, in the short-term, the seven **ONGOING** projects from the 2016 Development Plan that are not listed in Phase 1 above will continue under relevant leads:

2016 Project	Status	Lead
Hydro	ON HOLD	RDT
Pontoons	ONGOING	RDT (listed in Phase 1)
Community Fund	ONGOING	RHCC
Boathouse	ONGOING	RDT (listed in Phase 1)
Boat Building	ON HOLD	RDT
Heritage Centre	ONGOING	Heritage Trust
Path Network	ONGOING	RDT
Raasay House Walled Garden	ONGOING	RHCC/ Walled Garden Action Group
Lunch Club	COMPLETE	RCA
Keep Raasay Tidy	ONGOING	?
Hall Upgrade	ONGOING	RCA
Invasive species eradication	ONGOING	RDT

## 5. Phase 2 Projects for 2018-23

Revenue from Phase 1 Projects will be utilised to further Phase 2 Projects. **Phase 2 will include some of the projects identified through the community consultation process which informed this Plan but which did not make it into Phase 1** e.g. Investing in Volunteers, implementing a Woodland Plan for Raasay and creating more recreational opportunities for all ages.

Further community consultation as part of the ongoing review of this Plan is likely to identify additional, specific initiatives that increase our access to health and social care, strengthen our infrastructure and safeguard the environment.

## 6. Other Community Projects 2018-23

Sections 4 and 5 of this document outline some of the projects that have been identified as priorities by the community and which the community is committed to supporting.

They are, however, just a fraction of the projects that are being taken forward by the various organisations and individuals on the Island. It is not possible to list them all but they include, for example, the work of the Community Council to improve roads and healthcare on the island; the work of local businesses to create attractive and rewarding working conditions for their employees; the work of the Am Bratach and Raasay.com Groups to improve island communications and the work of Made in Raasay to promote local artisans. **All these projects are equally important in achieving the Plan's vision.**

## 7. Achieving our vision

The Plan's vision - **"to make Raasay the BEST small island in the world"**- is a direct quote by a young (Pancake) person who took part in the consultation. At its heart is the desire that Raasay is a happy, prosperous place to live in and in which to make a living. To achieve this, we need to become more self-sufficient in meeting the care needs of our residents and the development needs of our businesses, local entrepreneurs and community bodies. To that end, we need to attract and retain a larger, more diverse population - people of difference ages, skills and experience who will enrich our community.



## 8. Next steps

### A. Improving the way we work together

This Development Plan is different to previous ones in that it provides a baseline which will enable us to measure the difference we are making over time. It also provides the beginnings of a shared vision for Raasay. This will be debated and refined but ultimately, it should be adopted by all organisations, businesses and individuals on the island to guide our work. We need to all pull in the same direction to become successful.

One of the forums for exploring how we can maximise our collective resources, especially community-owned assets, is the **Community Groups' Round-Table Meetings**. These meetings are currently restricted to community bodies and an ongoing discussion is how we become better at keeping community focus, sharing skills and developing collaborative working solutions. The question of whether we restructure some of our community bodies has been on the table for a number of years. Various models have been proposed including (a) keeping the status quo (b) keeping bodies separate but creating a new enterprise to provide business support or (c) merging some of the bodies. This question will be resolved within the lifespan of this Plan.

### B. Ongoing Community Engagement

Wider community engagement remains the most important driver for implementing this Plan. This will continue through whole-community consultation events and the establishment of Action Groups involving residents, community bodies and businesses. Regular updates in Am Bratach will ensure residents are up-to-date on where we are with projects.

### C. Implementing the projects

The community's LDO has produced **Action Plans for each of the RDT-led Phase 1 projects**. These can be found at RDT's offices and read by anyone interested. Action Groups have been set up for the Pontoons and Boathouse projects. Additional Groups and/or community consultation events will be set up for the Housing, Biomass and Goods Delivery projects.

Information about smaller-scale RDT-led projects, e.g. the Island Path Network, will be provided to residents to advertise opportunities to become involved.

Projects led by other community bodies or businesses, some of which are listed in this Plan, will also be progressed.

### D. The final word

Change is an inevitable constant. How we embrace change is something that requires curiosity, openness, a degree of risk, and enough energy to make things happen.

The next 5 years for Raasay will bring challenges, but ones the island is ready for. Like most things in life, however much you plan, things can often go off in other directions. The community and RDT will work together to keep things on course, bringing about positive change and creating strong foundations for Raasay's future.

**We welcome your feedback on this Plan. Please contact our LDO or drop in to see her at the office. Thank you!**

Raasay Development Trust

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