

Aultbea Revival! Update 2024 - Getting there!

2024 was a year of amazing achievements and unexpected frustrations. Progress continued to be made on the major task of repairing the steel supports, though meeting the regulatory requirements for these was more complex and took considerably longer to complete than we had planned. This, the most expensive part of the repair and refurbishment programme, was made possible by generous grants from the Regeneration Community Fund (through Highland Council), the National Lottery Awards for All Scotland Community Fund, the Hugh Fraser Foundation and the Sylvia Waddilove Foundation. We secured an additional grant from the North Highlands Initiative which helped to purchase energy-efficient heating and lighting equipment for the second (main hall) phase of the complete electrical upgrade.

We were delighted also that one of our longer-term plans, to improve the accessibility of entry and fire exit routes by re-ramping the path to the main door, clearing and levelling the ground outside the Hall, and broadening and gravelling the on-site parking and fire exit area, is going to happen sooner rather than later, thanks to the commitment of a grant from GAMS (Gairloch Aid and Mobility Support) and an individual, targetted donation.

The Crow's Nest

Our refurbished, upstairs function room has proved to be a welcome base for several activity groups, including regular yoga, singing and art sessions, and the monthly meetings of Aultbea Community Council. Various other local organisations have convened there, presenting a film show and delivering workshops and training sessions. One-off social events, including family and workplace parties, have been held successfully, and we are particularly delighted that youngsters have had the opportunity to enjoy themselves with an Easter Hunt, summer holiday drama and art organised by Highlife Highland, Halloween capers and Christmas festivities, including a visit from Santa Claus. The children of both Bualnaluib Nursery and Primary School provided the seasonal decorations for the Crow's Nest. Offering a warm and welcoming space for indoor recreation for our younger community members has always been a priority and a driving force for our endeavours. So, it has been rewarding to see this happening.

Fund-raising (and fun) community activities in 2024

All year round, the Facebook pages celebrated the spreading of our message as our iconic T-shirts were modelled across the world - from Alaska to Australia and from Iceland to the Sahara. A second fund-raising item was commissioned, thanks to generous sponsorship from Aultbea Hotel, and the Aultbea Hall Revival! tote bag brought in further revenue. Local shoppers continued to put their change, and often a folded note also, into the wee green

collection boxes in Aultbea Stores and Laide Post Office, raising a welcome £2000 towards the cause over the year.

The biggest fund-raiser by individual supporters was when four enthusiastic, appropriately clad, Revivalists! participated in the Edinburgh Kilt Walk in September. This brought in donations from 73 generous individuals and raised more than double the funding target.

And, finally, for the record - the committee organised three larger-scale community activities this year, contributing funds to the cause and demonstrating strong community engagement:

- Saturday 30 March: Easter Gathering and car boot sale
- Saturday 3 August: Summer Flotilla, tea tent & BBQ
- Friday 29 December: Family Festive Fun - games and raffle in the Crow's Nest.