

Sanday Development Trust

enhancing quality of life



# Press Release

Sanday Development Trust has commissioned a team of architects, The Idea of North, to carry out a value mapping exercise of the island. Essentially, the team will gather the views of the islanders through questionnaires and community workshops to define the genius loci – the essential spirit of a place – of Sanday, what makes it a special place to live. They will also seek to identify which areas should be protected, where and how future development and housing could be sited, and perhaps what could be removed. The aim is to produce a report that the island community, through its elected members, can make use of in future when dealing with planning issues and Orkney Islands Council regarding future projects and buildings on Sanday. It will be presented to Orkney Islands Council for endorsement and inclusion in the new Orkney Plan.

The Sanday exercise is the first stage of a wider project that the architectural team plans to carry out throughout rural Scotland. The larger project looks at the design of Scotland's rural landscape, its towns and its small communities and how communities might develop targets for their own economic sustainability through locally driven initiatives. Sanday is a vibrant community with a good school, a fairly stable population and the potential to develop into a model Scottish island with a future sustained through its own initiatives. Sanday is a good example to illustrate to the world at large how a dispersed community can work cooperatively to achieve what it needs communally, on the one hand, while on the other, retaining its individual characteristics, and that strong personal independence it exudes. Both the Scottish Executive and Scottish Enterprise have expressed interest in the project.

The Sanday study is being undertaken in response to concerns about planning policy expressed by islanders to the Sanday Community Council and Sanday Development Trust over the last couple of years. In that time there has been an unprecedented number of planning applications and new builds on the island. Many of these have elicited letters of objection to planning officials, and the airing of views in local newspapers. A letter from Master of the Queen's Music and Sanday resident, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, published first in *The Orcadian* and then featured in *The Sunday Times*, drew the interest of Fred Smith of the Mackintosh School of Architecture, and an offer to help.

A preliminary visit to the island by Emeritus Professor Andy MacMillan, former head of the Mackintosh School of Architecture, and Fred Smith, laid the ground for more detailed work by a team especially set up for the project. A visit to Sanday Junior High School led to an immediate and enthusiastic response. Pupils in various classes spent the last afternoon of term plotting where they live and play and their favourite places on maps, writing, recording discussions, producing a leaflet and drawing posters and representations on the topic "My Sanday". These activities – capturing the views of the young people of the island - will form part of the study. And all islanders are invited to get involved from the start by picking up blank postcards from venues around the island throughout October and to say or show, in any medium, what Sanday means to them. All postcards will be put on public display during the architecture team's next visit to Sanday from Monday, 30 October to Wednesday, 1 November.

Over the next week, every Sanday household will receive a letter asking for responses to a short set of questions about Sanday. On 31 October and 1 November, the team of architects will run a workshop in Sanday, involving a wide cross section of the community, to discuss some key topics in detail. All findings will be on public display on the afternoon of 1 November, for further comment and discussion and there will be a public presentation in the evening.

All the information gathered will be compiled into a report for the benefit of everyone who lives on Sanday or who has an interest in Sanday. This will be circulated to all interested parties for comment prior to publication in early 2007.

The pilot study will cost of the order of £15,000, funded in part by £4,000 from Community Scotland's New Ideas Fund, £7,862 from LEADER+ and £2,458 of work "in kind" from the architects themselves.

Dr Stephen Clackson, chair of the Sanday Community Council comments, "This is a golden opportunity for the Sanday community to arrive democratically at a solution to a potentially divisive problem, and I urge everyone on the island to

make an input. Successor to Capability Brown, Sir Humphry Repton (1752 – 1818) once said: 'All rational improvement of grounds is necessarily founded on a due attention to the character and situation of the place to be improved; the former teaches us what is advisable, and the latter what is possible to be done'. As the Mackintosh School architects pay attention, it is up to us to present to them Sanday's character (e.g. landmarks, views that should remain unspoilt, parts of the island we especially cherish, favourite vernacular building styles) and to make them aware of our particular situation (e.g. dearth of affordable housing, speculative building, ruins in need of renovation). Founded on this information, they should be able to teach us what is advisable and what is possible to be done to improve this island for everybody, for now and for the future.

Chair of Sanday Development Trust, William Sichel adds, "This exciting project turns what appeared to be negative concerns about a recent spate of property development, into an innovative and forward-thinking process of community consultation which will lead to agreed planning guidelines to favourably influence future developments on the island."

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Notes for editors:

**Sanday Community Council** exists to promote closer links between the Sanday community and the local authorities for its area. The Community Council plays an important role in local democracy by representing local views which can influence decisions in planning and the provision of local services. The role of locally elected councillors is to provide an effective, strong voice within Sanday, offering sound, local advice on a range of community issues. Current councilors are listed on the Orkney Islands Council website - [http://www.orkney.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a\\_id=893](http://www.orkney.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=893)

**Sanday Development Trust** was launched in March 2004, prior to Sanday's inclusion in Initiative at the Edge in October that year. The Trust is a company limited by guarantee and has charitable status. It is run by volunteers. The Trust exists to encourage and support local people to take responsibility for the renewal of their own community. Projects currently being worked on by sub-groups are outlined on the Trust's website. <http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/SANDAY/index.asp?pageid=1023>