

## **Item: 14**

**Development and Infrastructure Committee: 30 March 2021.**

### **Archaeological Investigations.**

**Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure.**

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

To consider the allocation of funding for Archaeological Investigations for the 2021 season.

#### **2. Recommendations**

The Committee is invited to note:

##### **2.1.**

That eight applications for financial assistance have been received in respect of archaeological investigation projects to be undertaken during the 2021 season, comprising five mainland-based projects and three island-based projects, with total project costs of £402,215.

##### **2.2.**

That the projects, referred to at paragraph 2.1 above, can only proceed as proposed should COVID-19 restrictions be relaxed and/or removed, thereby allowing excavations to take place, however the applicants have proposed alternative projects which can progress regardless of COVID-19 restrictions, at total project costs of £327,464, as detailed in section 5 of this report.

##### **2.3.**

That the eight applications request assistance totalling £80,981, which exceeds the available budget of £40,000 by approximately 102%, with the alternative projects totalling £82,260, which exceeds the available budget by approximately 106%.

##### **2.4.**

The proposed offers of grant, based on the existing allocated budget of £40,000, as detailed in Annex A to this report.

##### **2.5.**

The proposal that, due to the uncertainty surrounding the level of COVID-19 restrictions which may be in place as the 2021 excavation season approaches, powers be delegated to the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure to determine the funding awards, dependent on which projects can be implemented, in line with the existing policy of 50/50 between island and mainland applications, as outlined in Annex A to this report.

**It is recommended:**

**2.6.**

That, subject to an appropriate annual budget for 2021/22 being made available to the Committee, a sum of up to £40,000 be allocated within the Economic Development Grants budget in respect of archaeological investigations.

**2.7.**

That, subject to the annual budget for 2021/22 being confirmed, powers be delegated to the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure to determine the award of grant funding in respect of archaeological investigations for the 2021 season which can proceed in accordance with COVID-19 restrictions and maintaining existing policy of 50/50 island/mainland budget allocation, based on the recommendations detailed in Annex A to this report.

### **3. Introduction**

**3.1.**

On 24 March 2011, when considering amendments to levels of assistance and grant conditions, the Development and Regeneration Committee noted that payment of grants awarded annually in terms of the Fund for Archaeological Investigations was conditional upon receipt of an interim report within one year and a Data Structure Report being submitted within three years of completion of the project.

**3.2.**

The Committee recommended, inter alia, that, in terms of the Fund for Archaeological Investigations, with effect from the 2012 season, all claims for payment of grant, accompanied by an interim investigations report, should be submitted within 18 months from the date of offer of grant assistance and a final Data Structure Report submitted within three years of the offer of assistance.

**3.3.**

Undertaking large fieldwork projects will, in many cases, be impossible if COVID-19 restrictions continue when the 2021 Archaeological Investigations commence this summer. Therefore, in order to maintain the impetus of Orkney's renowned project-based archaeology, it was necessary to mitigate the possible closure of excavations by inviting "Covid Alternative" projects from applicants which will produce appropriate outcomes. Five of the eight applicants have submitted "Covid Alternative" projects for consideration, with three mainland projects which can be taken forward regardless of whether COVID-19 restrictions are in place or not.

### **4. Background**

**4.1.**

The scheme of assistance for Archaeological Investigations, with a present budget of £40,000, was originally set up to assist the creation of sustainable communities by

supporting and promoting survival through archaeological excavations which, in turn, raise the profile of Orkney and stimulate tourism. This was achieved despite COVID-19 restrictions severely affecting the excavations for 2020. The marketing benefit arising annually from the archaeological investigations has continued to produce widespread publicity through a range of media for the archaeological projects and for Orkney in general demonstrating excellent value for money.

#### **4.2.**

The three mainland and three island projects for 2020 were all disrupted by the pandemic. As the year progressed, only one of the fieldwork projects, Newark, Deerness, was able to complete in accordance with the original application. The other projects were able to continue in a modified form on the same sites. One project, Swandro 2020, indicated that it was not in a position to take up the grant in any form but would apply again. The Ness of Brodgar, Landscapes of Change and The Cairns projects increased the speed of post-excavation work on previously excavated material and updated or improved websites and published material to continue to maintain Orkney's international archaeological profile. It is presently anticipated that the archaeological grant offers made in 2020 will underspent by £10,000, being the allocations to the Swandro and Tressness projects.

#### **4.3.**

The island communities receive focussed support through £20,000, being ring-fenced to assist island projects. It is envisaged that the cumulative effect of island archaeological work will assist to disperse tourism and therefore generate an economic return to the isles.

#### **4.4.**

Post-excavation work should be considered as important as actual excavation.

#### **4.5.**

The Archaeological Investigations allocation panel, which comprises representatives from the Arts, Museums and Heritage service, including the County Archaeologist, and Development and Infrastructure, meets annually to consider applications.

#### **4.6.**

The Council adopted the Scottish Museums Archaeologists' "Minimum Standards for the transfer of archaeological assemblages to museums in Scotland" as a condition of contract for all new fieldwork receiving Council funding or permission. This includes the need for Data Structure Reports (interim reports) to be supplied within one year of project completion to the County Archaeologist and the Museums Service, and full reports to be submitted when available, but within three years of completion at the latest.

## **5. Applications for 2021 Season**

### **5.1.**

Eight applications, comprising five mainland projects and three island projects, have been received for the 2021 season, with full details provided in Annex A to this report. This is an increase of two applications on the six applications received in 2020 (three mainland and three island).

### **5.2.**

Overall, it is becoming increasingly difficult for universities and individuals to submit an application as the sources of match funding are few, and greater costs are involved for academics (for example, use of own time in some institutions). It is regarded by the Archaeological Investigations allocation panel as significant how many academics from outwith Orkney participate in excavations in Orkney, considering the increased pressure on external research funds. Despite these academic funding cuts, generally there is still a good spread of projects through time, and between the islands planned for the 2021 season, even with the uncertainty regarding the level of COVID-19 restrictions which may be in place as the excavation season begins in July.

### **5.3.**

The Archaeological Investigations allocation panel met on 9 March 2021 and suggested that all of the eight applications received are worthy of assistance at the levels detailed in Annex A. The actual projects to be taken forward is dependent on COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time.

### **5.4.**

The leverage of external funding which will be achieved through the proposed assistance is approximately 10:1, with a 8:1 ratio if the "Covid Alternative" projects are undertaken. The leverage for the 2020 season, had the projects gone ahead as planned, would have been approximately 11:1.

### **5.5.**

It is envisaged that the proposed projects for the 2021 season will provide interpretation and knowledge which will enhance that gleaned from the sites previously excavated. It is also envisaged that these digs will again result in significant media coverage which will not only continually raise the awareness of the rich archaeology of Orkney but promote Orkney to a global audience. This media promotion will be supported and enhanced by the Orkney Marketing Programme managed in partnership between the Council and Highland and Islands Enterprise..

### **5.6.**

The 2017 Orkney Visitor Survey found that 62% of visitors were motivated to visit Orkney by history and culture including archaeology. The previous Visitor Survey in 2013 found that 51% of those visitors surveyed referred to archaeology as the principal reason for their visit. It would appear that the historic aspect of Orkney's

attraction is increasingly important to the decision-making process of the visitor. The extensive volume of media coverage resulting from the archaeological investigations is likely to be making a significant contribution to raising the awareness of the county's past and spans multiple medium from newspapers to television documentaries.

### **5.7.**

The Archaeological Investigations Allocation Panel considered that the applications received again reflected a good balance of substantial projects across the Mainland and islands but exceeds the core budget of £40,000 by approximately 102% and 106% respectively, depending on which project set can be undertaken.

### **5.8.**

Due to the uncertainty surrounding the level of COVID-19 restrictions which may be in place as the excavation season 2021 approaches, it is proposed to delegate powers to the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure to determine funding decisions once it is known which projects can go ahead, in line with the existing policy of 50/50 island/mainland budget allocation.

### **5.9.**

Strong social media coverage resulted from Orkney archaeology undertaken during the 2020 season even though the digs themselves were unable to proceed. This coverage is listed in Annex B to this report.

## **6. Links to Council Plan**

### **6.1.**

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan strategic priority theme of Enterprising Communities.

### **6.2.**

The proposals in this report support Priority 4.7 – Implement and review the Orkney Volume Tourism Study Actions, and Priority 4.8 – Develop and Implement a World Heritage Site Strategic Masterplan.

## **7. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan**

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities of Strong Communities and A Vibrant Economy.

## **8. Financial Implications**

### **8.1.**

The Economic Development Grant budget originally approved as £300,200 for financial year 2020/21 includes an allocation of £40,000 towards Archaeology. At time of writing this report, it is anticipated that the allocation of funds to Archaeology will be maintained at the existing level for financial year 2021/22.

### **8.2.**

On the basis that the recommendations outlined in Annex A to this report refers to the allocation of resources in future years, it should be noted that this would still be subject to an appropriate annual Committee budget being made available as part of the Council's annual budget setting process.

## **9. Legal Aspects**

### **9.1.**

Pursuant to section 20(1) of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the Council has the power to do anything that it considers is likely to promote or improve the well-being of its area and persons within that area, or either of those. This power is subject to the limits set out in section 22 of the same Act.

### **9.2.**

If grant assistance is to be provided by the Council, a legally-binding agreement will require to be entered into between the Council and the recipient setting out the terms on which the funding is being provided.

## **10. Contact Officers**

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## **11. Annexes**

Annex A: List of applications for 2021 season.

Annex B: Marketing / Media Coverage – Excavation Season 2020.

## Archaeological Investigations – 2021 Season

### Summary of applications and recommendations.

Number.	Applicant / Project Director.	Project name.	Total cost (£).	Amount requested (£).	Percentage request (%).	Recommended award (£).	Percentage award (%).	Rationale.
<b>Mainland.</b>								
A.	The John Rae Society. c/o Andrew Appleby, Fursbreck Pottery, Harray.	The Hall of Clestrain; Environs and Landscape.	£9,941.35.	£5,073.95.	51.03	£885.00.	8.90.	Interesting project meriting support. Investigating the archaeological context of John Rae's Hall of Clestrain. The project will support interpretation in the future.  <b>Project period: Historical.</b>
B.	Friends of St Ninian's. c/o Anne D Mitchell, Park House, Deerness.	Newark GIS Project.	£9,496.24.	£1,113.54	11.72	£1,100.00.	11.58.	Newark cemetery contains burials from the 9 <sup>th</sup> to 14 <sup>th</sup> centuries AD and has long suffered coastal erosion. This Geographical Information Systems (GIS) project will support the generation of a digital and queryable GIS resource. As this will be a resource accessible by the public it will enhance the available archaeological and historical content for Deerness and Orkney. This project is part of a substantial ongoing project related to the erosion of this Viking cemetery. <b>Project period: Pictish / Viking to present.</b>
C.	Daniel Lee, Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology. UHI Archaeology Institute, Orkney College, East Road, Kirkwall.	HMS Tern – Pilot Archaeology Survey.	£9,105.60.	£5,005.60	54.97.	£2,000.00.	21.96.	This is a pilot survey on a significant WWII site which aims to support the conservation efforts of The Birsay Heritage Trust.  <b>Project period: Historical.</b>
<b>Projects A, B, C can occur regardless of Covid-19 restrictions.</b>			£28,543.19.	£11,193.09.		£3,985.		

1.	Nick Card (Director of the Ness of Brodgar and Senior Projects Manager), Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology. Archaeology Institute UHI, Orkney College, East Road, Kirkwall.	Ness of Brodgar Excavations, 2021.	£230,940.00.	£20,000.00.	8.66.	£9,515.00.	4.12.	As in previous excavation seasons this excavation has been demonstrated to be a key driver in the visitor economy. The project management team raises most of the project funds from outwith the islands. The excavation is well run, has open access and continues to attract a great deal of media attention. The short term local economic value of this project is exceptionally high and the long-term awareness raising potential is enormous.  <b>Project period: Neolithic.</b>
1.a.	Nick Card (Director of the Ness of Brodgar and Senior Projects Manager), Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology. Archaeology Institute UHI, Orkney College, East Road, Kirkwall.	Covid Alternative - Ness of Brodgar 2021.	£203,150.00.	£20,000.00.	9.84.	£9,515.00.	4.68.	A recently redesigned website has generated further interest in Ness of Brodgar gaining worldwide followers. This project will build on the success of this work by promoting created articles and papers on the Ness of Brodgar and the Orkney Neolithic story. It is envisaged that there will be 2 television programmes during 2021 which will be amplified by this website.  <b>Project period: Neolithic.</b>
2.	Martin Carruthers, Director of Fieldwork. Archaeology Institute, Orkney College UHI, East Road, Kirkwall.	The Cairns / Windwick Bay Archaeological Field Project (2021 Season).	£34,699.00.	£15,249.00.	43.94.	£6,500.00.	18.73.	Promotion of the heritage of outlying areas such as South Ronaldsay is key to the distribution of visitors to Orkney. This excavation continues to increase in popularity and is a popular project through digital media communication attracting high numbers of 'hits'. Visitor numbers continue to increase annually. The plan for this year's project is to excavate the floor of the broch which has the potential to produce more exciting discoveries as per a previous year's find of a 2,000 year old wooden bowl. The finds in relation to the first Scandinavian Orkney contact remains one of the features of this site. It seems likely that when the Vikings first settled in Orkney, some inhabited brochs. Further evidence is likely to be uncovered regarding the Pictish/Viking interface.  <b>Project period: Iron Age.</b>

2.a.	Martin Carruthers, Director of Fieldwork. Archaeology Institute, Orkney College UHI, East Road, Kirkwall.	Covid Alternative - The Cairns / Windwick Bay Archaeological (2021 Season).	£39,941.	£22,441.	56.18.	£6,500	16.27	This project concentrates on techniques of scientific analysis of finds discovered during previous seasons and will update websites with newsworthy items eg bead analysis proving long distance trading contacts.  <b>Project period: Iron Age.</b>
<b>Mainland Budget.</b>						<b>£20,000</b>		

Number.	Applicant / Project Director.	Project name.	Total cost (£).	Amount requested (£).	Percentage request (%).	Recommended award (£).	Percentage award (%).	Rationale.
<b>Islands.</b>								
3.	Stephen James Dockrill. Swandro Orkney Coastal Archaeology Trust, Bayview, Birsay.	Swandro 2021 (part of 'Orkney Gateway to the Atlantic: Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre: An Archaeological Study of Resource Exploitation, Sustainability and Resilience from the Neolithic to the Late Norse').	£22,700.	£5,000.	22.02.	£4,500.00.	19.82.	Swandro is an impressive multi period site spanning late Bronze Age – Viking period. The Pictish smithy discovered eroding on the shore is the most complete example of such ever discovered. This project continues to work and shed light on important questions about Pictish/Viking relationships.  <b>Project period: Neolithic through to Late Norse.</b>
3.a.	Stephen James Dockrill. Swandro Orkney Coastal Archaeology Trust, Bayview, Birsay.	Covid Alternative - Swandro 2021	£4,000.	£2,000.	50.00.	2,000.00.	50.00.	This project is for post excavation work the content of which is to be used of academic publication, inclusion in a Rousay guidebook and visitor interpretation.  <b>Project period: Neolithic through to Late Norse.</b>

Number.	Applicant / Project Director.	Project name.	Total cost (£).	Amount requested (£).	Percentage request (%).	Recommended award (£).	Percentage award (%).	Rationale.
4.	Dr Ingrid Mainland (Lecturer) and Dan Lee (Lifelong Learning and Outreach Archaeologist). UHI Archaeology Institute, Orkney College, East Road, Kirkwall.	Landscapes of Change: Archaeologies of the Rousay Clearances and the Westness estate.	£48,743.40.	£23,539.60.	48.29.	£10,000.00.	20.51.	This project sheds light on the story of Rousay including the Viking Saga chieftains, Earls of Orkney through the establishment of estates in the middle ages and includes the Rousay clearances.  <b>Project period: Viking to present.</b>
4.a.	Dr Ingrid Mainland (Lecturer) and Dan Lee (Lifelong Learning and Outreach Archaeologist). UHI Archaeology Institute, Orkney College, East Road, Kirkwall.	Covid Alternative - Landscapes of Change: Archaeologies of the Rousay Clearances and the Westness estate.	£48,729.80	£23,525.80.	48.27.	£16,100.00.	33.03.	Continuing the outreach work to develop sustainable tourism by undertaking surveys of the standing buildings, recording, post excavation and fieldwork. This work will be incorporated into digital outputs including The Westness Walk podcast, video content and upgrade web content.  <b>Project period: Viking to present.</b>
5.	Professor Vicki Cummings, School of Forensic and Applied Science. University of Central Lancashire, Preston.	Excavations at Tresness, Sanday: Community involvement and legacy tourism.	£36,590.00.	£6,000.00.	16.39.	£5,500.00.	15.03.	In this 2021 season this project will recover human remains and artefacts. It is envisaged that this project will excite strong media attention. The project will also produce a lasting legacy for the Sanday Heritage Centre.  <b>Project period: Neolithic to Viking.</b>
5.a.	Professor Vicki Cummings, School of Forensic and Applied Science. University of Central Lancashire, Preston.	Covid Alternative - Excavations at Tresness, Sanday: Community involvement and legacy tourism.	£3,100.	£3,100.	100.	£1,900.00.	62.29	This project will produce a 3D model of Tresness printed and developed from photogrammetry completed on site. This will be exhibited in the Sanday Heritage Centre along with replica pots, stone tools which will also be development  <b>Project period: Neolithic to Viking</b>
<b>Islands Budget.</b>						<b>£20,000</b>		

	<b>Total Cost (£).</b>	<b>Amount Requested (£).</b>	<b>Recommended Award (£).</b>	<b>Notes.</b>
<b>Standard Excavation Projects.</b>				
All Mainland Projects.	294,182.19.	46,442.09.	20,000.	Including projects A, B, C.
All Island Projects.	108,033.34.	34,539.60.	20,000.	-
Total Standard Excavations.	402,215.59.	80,981.69.	40,000.	-
<b>Covid Alternative Projects.</b>				
All Mainland Covid Alternative Projects.	271,634.19.	53,634.09.	20,000.	Including projects A, B, C.
All Island Covid Alternative Projects.	55,829.80.	28,625.80.	20,000.	-
Total Covid Alternative Projects.	327,463.99.	82,259.59.	40,000.	-

Archaeological work in Orkney continues to fascinate and draw the attention of interested parties all over the world. Despite the lack of excavation due to Covid-19 in 2020, a drive to keep online activity running meant the focus remained firmly on the county.

Visitor numbers to the University of the Highlands and Islands blog, archaeologyorkney.com, took a dip in 2020 but by the end of February 2021, was approaching half of 2020's total number of page views. Changes to Ness of Brodgar website radically increased page views.

#### Archaeology Orkney Visitor Figures

	Page Views	Visitors
2016	52,667	30,032
2017	55,354	34,335
2018	49,137	29,011
2019	65,477	44,646
2020	52,231	35,563
2021 (to end Feb)	22,635	17,543
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>297,501</b>	<b>191,130</b>

It is important to stress that both large and small excavations attract attention. At archaeologyorkney.com, the four most popular posts since 2016 to the present were:

- Pictish Carved Stone Discovered in Orkney Cliff (Newark, Deerness).
- Decorated rock discovered at Orkney's Bay of Skail.
- Norse Hall Discovered at Skail, Rousay, Orkney.
- Nine Possible Bronze Age Figurines Unearthed at Substation Excavation in Orkney? (Firth)

#### Social Media

##### Twitter

4,717 followers

	No of Tweets	Impressions	Profile Visits	Mentions
<b>February (MTD)</b>	10	62500	854	71
<b>Jan</b>	14	25500	944	90
<b>Dec</b>	12	23800	716	115
<b>November</b>	17	30200	340	92
<b>October</b>	19	35300	386	57
<b>September</b>	15	18200	286	66



## Social Media

**Twitter** 4,182 followers

	<b>No of Tweets</b>	<b>Impressions</b>	<b>Profile Visits</b>	<b>Mentions</b>
<b>February</b>	14	94,100	1,139	81
<b>Jan</b>	9	24,900	557	35
<b>Dec</b>	24	39,700	692	24
<b>November</b>	22	52,700	720	61
<b>October</b>	18	42,600	315	22
<b>September</b>	21	45,600	186	25
<b>August</b>	39	124,000	447	51

**Facebook** 5,831 page followers

Avg weekly post views 4,800

Post reach varies from 1,000 - 8,000

Facebook only provides activity data for previous 28 days.

**Instagram** 6,480 followers

## Traditional media

The international online reach is matched by the traditional media of newspapers, magazines and television, with coverage across the world – e.g. New York Times, The Times, The Independent, Smithsonian Magazine, Seattle Times, SBS Australia. Naturally the wider Orcadian context is a vital part of the articles, and these act to raise Orkney's profile more generally.

The excavation of an Iron Age broch at The Cairns, South Ronaldsay, has featured in 41 newspaper and magazine articles, while the excavation at Cata Sand, Sanday, and Skail, Rousay, appeared in UK news bulletins and television documentaries including the BBC's *Digging for Britain*.

At the Ness of Brodgar, the media interest is unparalleled. Between 2016 and 2020 the Ness of Brodgar excavations/Neolithic Orkney appeared more than 600 times in the national and international media.

Television programmes originally filmed in 2012 (Orkney’s Stone Age Temple, A History of Ancient Britain Special) and 2016 three-part Britain’s Ancient Capital; *Secrets of Orkney* series are still regularly repeated – each screening resulting in a noticeable increase in interest. Filming for two programmes is planned for this spring.

The site featured in numerous documentaries in 2018 – from Germany to Japan – and in 2019 was filmed for a BBC Alba feature.

**Swandro**

This site is an example of an OIC grant supported excavation in Rousay, that is not a UHI site, hence numbers are measured slightly differently: The excavation was not active in 2020.

	Page Views	Visitors	Sessions	
2019	47,695	11,705	18,356	103 nationalities 46% UK, 28% USA, 5% Australia, 4% Canada
2020	8,818	3,735	4,668	82 nationalities (breakdown as above)
Facebook Post reach:		62,213	2019	
		13,214	2020	