

Tiree Tapestry Group

Inaugural meeting Friday 11th March 2011; 7.30pm An Talla

In Attendance and apologies – *see list below*

Notes

JM welcomed everyone and thanked An Talla committee for use of the hall free of charge. Jane outlined the vision of what the community Tiree Tapestry is about. Her address covered: birth of the idea; how the idea has grown in such a short space of time; what we have done so far; where we can draw design inspiration from previous community works, examples of which were on the display table; how the group would aspire to involving every aspect of the community in all stages of the design and “operation” processes; raising money including “Awards for All” applications and JJ’s 10k sponsorship run. The full transcript appears at the end of these notes.

Everyone was asked to complete a membership form and indicate at what level they would like to be involved i.e. management group; working group; or just to come along and sew!

Round the room were large sheets of paper which everyone was invited to record their ideas on several topics whilst tea and cakes were served. *See following pages for results.* Meanwhile JJ collected the membership forms and established who wished to be part of the management or working groups

JJ spoke about what happens next

- Management group to be formed by the following volunteers
Jane Macdonald, Fiona Dix, Hannah Wright, Jane Isaacson, Nataalka Busbridge and Jackie Jones
- Working groups will include Bella, Jane Mac, Jennie, Rachel, Wendy, Nataalka, Fiona MacRae, Eileen, Ulrike and Anna
- Both of these groups will be added to should additional people wish to come on board as the project progresses
- Membership list compiled
- Management Group to meet who will discuss the ideas put forward, pull together an action plan and report back at the next full meeting
- Communicate to everyone here the outcome plus date of the next meeting to launch the Tiree Tapestry Group action plan
- Commence fundraising, requesting donations, sponsorship and applying to the Tiree Development Trust Windfall fund (closing date 31st March)

There were no questions or queries. The raffle which raised £45 took place. Jane Mac thanked everyone for coming and for all their contributions in the form of ideas, baking and donations.

Attendees:-

Hannah Wright; Jane MacDonald; Jackie Jones; Bella Bremner; Sue Bottomley; Jane Isaacson; Fiona Dix; Maureen McMullen; Margaret Gorman; Jessie Gray; Natalka Busbridge; Wendy Jute; Fiona Macleod; Fiona Maxwell; Anna MacDonald; Eileen Tainsh; Susan Woodcock; Fiona MacRae; Rachel Gwilym; Jennie Niven; Alan Dix

Apologies:-

Clare Jones; Fiona MacKinnon; Sophie Isaacson; Kate MacCallum; Ulrike Rawson; Margo Jarvis; Andrea MacArthur; Sian Milne

Welcome Address from Jane MacDonald:-

“First of all, I’d like to welcome you and to thank you all for coming and to thank the Hall Committee for allowing us to use this room without charge. We really appreciate it and hope to earn our keep by making some beautiful tapestries to be displayed here and in other places on the island too.

As you will have read in An Tirisdeach, the purpose of this meeting is to invite you all to join the Tìree Tapestry Group. We want this to be a real community project, to make some beautiful banners for the community and for all sections of the community to have a hand in making them.

We are using the word tapestry in its loosest sense, not simply tapestry weaving but any kind of textile hanging, banner or panel to celebrate or commemorate any aspect of Tìree.

The idea of making a group textile of some kind for the Hall has been around, on and off, since An Talla was first built but we have never done anything about it until now. It came up again at one of the patchwork classes recently. To begin with, the idea was to make a single piece – or perhaps a set of pieces - in order to fit everything in about Tìree that we thought people might want to include. But within a couple of days, without a stitch being sewn, it had grown into a bigger idea - but also a simpler one.

Even if we made a set of, say, five panels or banners, it would still be hard to get everything in - so it was suggested that we keep the project open ended. We could make dozens if we wanted to (might take a few years!), to hang here, at the Rural Centre, at An Iodhlann, Resource Centre, and other places around the island too. We could have a Tìree Tapestry Trail.

The beauty of this idea is that if we don’t have to get everything there is to say about Tìree into a single piece or even a set of pieces then it frees us to start small with just one. And then, when that one’s finished, to start another one. If anything gets left out, well, we just make another! And one of the things we’d like to do tonight is to find out what your ideas are and what you would like to be included.

To start you off, one suggestion that has already been made is to depict a Tìree Day, from the fishermen going to catch the tide in the early morning, the posties emptying

the post-boxes, the school buses, right through to the staff on night shift in the Home or a crofter waiting up with a cow that's calving. We could have other days too: Show Day, Sale Day, Regatta Day, Remembrance Day. We could have pieces about crofting, fishing, Tìree history, music and dance, the weather, the landscape, flora and fauna, Gaelic.... We could have stitched pieces and felted pieces, woven ones and knitted ones and combinations of all of these and more. We want to hear all your ideas.

As most of you will know, there was another Tìree Community Textile Project in 1995 – some of you may well have taken part - and the wonderful map that was the result now hangs in the Resource Centre. If you get a chance, go and have a look at it – Rona has the key. Originally it also had two side panels which, sadly, had to be removed as it was too big for the space allocated to it, but we have brought some of the squares from those side panels for you to see. I don't think we have all of them by any means – so if anyone knows where the rest are – or what happened to them – I think some people may have been given back the squares they made – I know I was – we would be very happy to have them so that they can be re-united with the rest of the work.

One of the really nice things about the making of the map (and I was gutted to miss it) was how many different people got involved and enjoyed working on it together. We hope this will happen with this project too – that as well as producing some beautiful finished banners, we will enjoy the process of coming together to make them. We want to have workshops where we can learn old and new textile skills from one another. (Maybe I will finally learn to knit!) Our aim is to include everyone who wants to be involved – from the youngest to the oldest – as well as those who don't know they want to be involved yet! So we also want your ideas about how to get people involved. For example we thought there might be people who are housebound and not able to come to a workshop or a making session but who might still want to do something – well, we will go to them. Or perhaps we could have a session at the agricultural show, where visitors could come and add their stitch or two. The more ideas the better.

We will also need photographers – to record the project as well as to go out and capture images that we can use, researchers, fundraisers, record keepers and more. Someone (or a team) to look after all the sewing and craft supplies, help with organization and admin, tea makers and cake bakers. There is a job for you if you want one!

We have got some membership forms here. And plenty of biros! As well as your contact details, we have asked you to fill in what skills you can offer and what skills you would like to learn. We have also asked you to say whether you would like to be on the management group or maybe a smaller working group or whether you would just like to come along when you can and be involved. (None of this is set in stone, by the way.) If we have more than ten people volunteering to be on the management

group then we will have to take a vote and Jane I. will organize this. There is no fee for joining but if you do want to make a donation, there is a tin on the table.

OK, I think that's enough from me. Tea and cake time! And while you are drinking your tea and eating your cake we would like you to chat to one another about your ideas – one idea often leads to another – and to write them down, however mad or impossible on the big sheets of paper that are pinned to the wall/laid out on the tables. You can either use the pens provided or, if you would prefer, write your ideas on a post-it note and stick it up on the appropriate sheet. You will see there are several different headings. We want to know what you would like us to depict, what themes? What techniques and materials you would like to use? How to get people involved? Any ideas you have for fundraising or sponsorship and, finally, anything else you can think of that we haven't!

There is also a small display of some other community textile efforts that you might like to look at for inspiration. There is a wonderful calendar that shows the banners that were made by the Glasgow in Stitches Project in 1990, a record of a children's felt project, some photos of the Helmsdale Museum community artwork (Caithness) and a video loop of a Welsh community project in action. Plus glimpses of several more and some of the squares from the 1995 Tiree Map. If all these people can do it, so can we.

We will all come back together again in half an hour or so for a look at some of the ideas and any questions you may have.”

The following pages list the suggestions, ideas and contributions from all those in attendance

Themes, Topics, Ideas, Subject Matter, Aspects of Tíree

- Music/dance/song/Feis/Music Festival
- Gaidhlig and Island history/Tradition
- Cattle Market
- Pipe Band
- Show day
- Geese Formations
- Harvest/Planting etc.
- School Christmas service
- School sports day
- Crofting/ Crofters then and now
- Wildflowers
- Tíree Social Calendar
- Through the day
- Through the year
- Through the decades
- Through the centuries
- Townships/ Places on the island Scarinish Hynish etc
- Clearings
- Baking/ Cupcake sampler
- Same Scene then and now
- Fishermen mending creels and coming home with their catch
- Sea life
- Hares and Birds
- Skerryvore
- The beach in the different seasons – just the colours
- Life lines
- Song lines
- Blood lines
- Skylines – townships, silhouettes of houses
- Tidelines
- Fence lines
- Washing lines
- Seasons
- Tíree features: - e.g. Buildings; houses; Kenovara/Ben Hynish Hough etc.

Raw Materials; Resources; Media; Tools

- Ribbon Weaving
- Fimo clay
- Mirror work
- Free-style embroidery
- Stones
- Rope from beach/old creels
- Baby handprints
- Natural Dyes;- Lichen; seaweed; roots etc.
- Driftwood items on hangers
- Pressed flowers from Machair
- Feathers off the beach
- Tiree wool
- Tiree natural dyes
- Grasses
- Glass from beach
- Shells
- Digital print

Suggested Textile Related Techniques to use

- Silk screen printing
- Cross stitching
- Beads/Beading
- Sea pebbles
- Wrapping regular shapes – sewn together to make a picture or abstract idea e.g. elements; rocks; machair; sea etc.
- Knitted Afghan squares; family/personal inspiration or memories
- Printing photos and words/poems etc. on various textured fabrics for collage
- Weaving
- Felting
- Knitting and crochet with Tiree wool and Tiree natural dyes
- Feathers grasses, seaweed
- Twisting
- Plaiting
- Pleating
- French knitting on large cylinders(3D result)
- Potato printing
- Sunprints of plants, shells seaweeds
- Knotting/knots

How to Involve Different People/groups From the Whole Community

- Visit people have sessions in their houses
- Competitions
- Different times of day – not always evening
- Hold school kid sessions – teach them a skill and help them to develop their own ideas
- Ditto for Youth Club
- Transport for those who do not drive
- Huge knitting on the beach with people moving to make stitches (could use marine rope found on the beach)
- Tapestry committee attend other Tíre Committee Groups meetings to promote the project
- People producing something on their 4hr ferry journey
- Regular newsletter
- Regular column in the An Tirisdeach

Fundraising and Sponsorship Ideas

- Sponsored knit
- Craft sale
- Raffle of items handmade by the group
- Safari suppers
- Whist/ beetle drive
- Busking
- Baking to sell
- Sponsored walks
- Auction handmade items
- Curry and quiz evening

Anything Else

- Transport at night difficult for non-drivers
- Something outside... something BIG with nets and creels
- Or something to blow and dance in the wind