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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

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**REPORT**

**ON THE SPOT EXPERT APPRAISAL OF THE  
FAIR ISLE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA  
(SHETLAND, UNITED KINGDOM)**

26-29 August 2019

*Document prepared  
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## Table of Contents

<b>1. Preface</b> .....	3
<b>2. Available documents</b> .....	3
<b>3. Site description</b> .....	3
<b>4. Appraisal</b> .....	6
4.1 European interest .....	6
4.2 Conservation measures.....	6
4.3 Management .....	7
4.4 Uses and socio-economic activities.....	8
4.5 Connectivity of the area .....	9
<b>5. Conditions and Recommendations 2010</b> .....	9
<b>6. Conclusions</b> .....	9
<b>7. Renewal of the Diploma</b> .....	10
<b>8. Acknowledgement</b> .....	10

## 1. Preface

The on-the-spot appraisal was carried out in August 2019 for the first time since 2004(!). The site was awarded the European Diploma in 1985 and regularly renewed since then. The latest renewal of the Diploma to the Fair Isle National Scenic Area<sup>1</sup> has been granted until 21 September 2020 (Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)10, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 September 2010) without prior appraisal and applies to the island's surface. The visit took place on 27 and 28 August 2019. One day was added due to the weather conditions. The northern part of the Fair Isle is also registered as Natura 2000 site of community importance. The site is managed by the Inverness office of the National Trust for Scotland.

Fair Isle is probably the most remote island of the Shetland archipelago, about 37 km south of Sumburgh Head on Shetland mainland and half way between the Orkney and the Shetland Islands. It can be accessed from Tingwall Airport near Lerwick (Shetland) six days a week in summer by aircraft or three times a week by boat, though both transportations depend very much on the weather conditions.

It is a particularity of the Diploma site, that protection of nature and natural processes go hand in hand with the living conditions for the whole island's community. However, the people on Fair Isle are fully aware of this situation.

## 2. Available documents

Official documents on the European Diploma include the on-the-spot appraisal report 2004<sup>2</sup>, the resolution on the renewal 2010<sup>3</sup> and the annual reports for the years 2017 and 2018. Further documents can be found on the Council of Europe website.<sup>4</sup> The management plan was provided by the National Trust for Scotland, additional information on the marine protected area came from Scottish Natural Heritage.

## 3. Site description

Fair Isle is a small island between the Orkney and Shetland archipelagos, where the Atlantic to the West and the North Sea to the East meet. It stretches less than 5 km from North to South and about 2.5 km in east-west-direction, covering only about 770 hectares, with the highest point (Ward Hill) at 217 m. The Natura 2000 area in the northern part makes 560 hectares. The isle may have been settled almost 5,000 years ago by Neolithic people. The small population of about 60 inhabitants nowadays makes its living mainly from sheep farming, fishery, knitting and tourism.

Fair Isle is also world-famous for its bird observatory, or at least was. Co-founded in 1948 by George Waterston, former Scottish Director of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the building was replaced in 2010 by a new house, which unfortunately burnt down in March 2019. The observatory is going to be rebuilt and the re-opening is scheduled for spring 2021. George Waterston also temporarily owned the island, which he bought after World War II and sold to the National Trust in 1954.

Fair Isle has an oceanic climate with cool summers and mild winters. The mean temperature in January is 4° C, in July 12° C, the precipitation around 1,000 mm, with the maximum in late autumn. The average humidity comes to 89 %. Snow falls on 70 days in average but is becoming less and snow does not lie long. It is one of the foggiest low-level places in the UK because of the cooler Atlantic Ocean and the warmer North Sea. Severe weather can cut off the island for weeks in winter. However, as Dave Wheeler, the meteorologist on Fair Isle told, the number of severe storms is less than it was previously. The temperature of the sea in summer and autumn is rising. So far, there are no records about changes in the salinity of the ocean.

The geology is Old Red Sandstone, and there is a Geological Conservation Review (GCR) site on Bu Ness, which contains the remains of primitive fossil plants including a species not recorded elsewhere in Great Britain.

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<sup>1</sup> Where it appears to the Scottish Ministers that an area is of outstanding scenic value in a national context and that the special protection measures specified in subsection (2) are appropriate for it, they may by direction designate the area as a National Scenic Area Cit.: Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 (asp 17)

<sup>2</sup> Report PE-S-DE(2005)2

<sup>3</sup> CM/ResDip(2010)10

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/bern-convention/-/fair-isle-national-scenic-ar-1>

Fair Isle's Natura 2000 designation lists dry heath and vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts as important habitats. The coastal character is dominated by high rock cliffs and the coastline is fragmented with dramatic cliff scenery and many stacks and geos.

Fair Isle has also an extensive and impressive network of underwater reefs, caves and surge gullies. Some of these submarine caves penetrate more than 100 m into the isle, which collapse from time to time. Underwater reefs and caves are a European Habitats Directive priority habitat, but Fair Isle was not afforded SAC status because Papa Stour was selected as the best Shetland example.<sup>5</sup>

### **Habitats and species**

Terrestrial habitats are still in favourable condition, but the amount of land managed as arable has declined markedly with major knock on effects for arable plants. Marine ecosystems are functioning in a parlous state, as the trophic chain is near to collapse with the impact of warming waters. Knowledge of benthic marine habitats is limited but offshore gravel plains will be heavily disturbed by bottom trawling.

The central part of the area is covered by short heathland plants, mainly Common Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*) and Crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*). An important feature of the heathland, particularly towards the eastern side of the island, is the abundance of Prostrate Juniper (*Juniperus communis alpine*), an evergreen shrub, which is nationally scarce.

Fair Isle supports internationally important numbers of breeding seabirds, with nine seabird species nesting in numbers greater than 1% of the respective British populations, although there have been declines in the populations of some species, most notably Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) and Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*). Whereas in the 1980s ornithologists counted 16,000 pairs of Kittiwake, their number is now only a few hundreds. This applies also for the Shag. Arctic Terns (*Sterna paradisaea*) are in an unfavourable condition and the decline in these species has been linked to a reduction in food supply as Sandeels (*Ammodytes*) become scarce. Conversely, the breeding population of Great Skua (Bonxie) (*Stercorarius skua*), is stable with approximately 75 pairs. Recently, there are 37 breeding bird species on the island and new species are found nearly every year.

The Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*) population, a flagship species of Fair Isle is also shrinking because of the decline of the Sandeel population, the most important food resource for many seabirds and especially for puffins, due to rising sea temperature and as a consequence less plankton to feed the Sandeels. Other threats on the bird life are the result of climate change, too. Insects are moving further north, waves are more frequent and higher causing physical damage to the coastline and to breeding places.

Its own sub-species or races of the Winter Wren (Fair Isle Wren, *Troglodytes troglodytes fridariensis*), Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and Wood Mouse (Fair Isle Field Mouse, *Apodemus sylvaticus fridarensis*) exhibit the island's ecological isolation. Grey Seals (*Halichoerus grypus*) and Common Seals (*Phoca vitulina*) are frequently seen, with Harbour Porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) mostly in summer. Whales and dolphins come close to the shore.

Nationally scarce plants occurring on the site are Oysterplant (*Mertensia maritima*), a species of Eyebright (*Euphrasia foulaensis*) and Small Adder's Tongue (*Ophioglossum azoricum*). Of local importance are Rusty Sallow (*Salix cinerea oleifolia*) and Lesser Marshwort (*Apium inundatum*), which are rare elsewhere in Shetland and Spear-leaved Orache (*Atriplex prostrata*), which only occurs on Fair Isle. Arctic-alpine species such as Alpine Bistort (*Bistorta vivipara*) and Dwarf Willow (*Salix herbacea*) also occur on Ward Hill but might be losing their habitat as they have almost reached the peak of the island. With the rising global temperature, some plants might disappear in the next decades.

Nationally scarce invertebrates include a water bug (*Corixa iberica*), seven types of ground beetle and two species of spider.

Lobster catching is still ongoing in the water around Fair Isle and the catch is monitored through the Shetland Shellfish Monitoring Organisation but public access to the data is unavailable because of their "commercially sensitive" nature.

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<sup>5</sup> However, there is a wide acceptance amongst ecologists that habitat conservation relies on more than one protected site - for stability and as insurance against unpredicted damage or loss to the priority site.

According to the Fair Isle management plan, “the rabbit population in Fair Isle is high and appears to be increasing. Rabbits pose a conservation risk by damaging the island’s nationally important archaeology sites and by causing erosion, particularly on free draining slopes with shallow soil – the deterioration of the habitat having negative consequences for the wildlife. Increasing rabbit numbers also have an impact on vegetables and arable crops and to a lesser extent they compete with sheep over the grazing”.<sup>6</sup> However, recent observations show a declining or rather stable situation. Stray cats also cause threats on the bird life.

### **Marine Protected Area (MPA)<sup>7</sup>**

Marine habitats are not included in the Diploma holding area. Nevertheless, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe included a condition addressing the Government of the United Kingdom and Scotland to establish a marine protected area. Proposals were elaborated and presented. Three years ago, the implementation started with a Demonstration & Research Marine Protected Area. For about 100 years until 1984 trawlers were prohibited within a three miles zone of the island and ended because an abundance of fish was asserted. The recent lack of fish could be an argument to re-implement the three miles zone.

Officially declared in October 2016, the Demonstration and Research Marine Protected Area (D&R MPA) is the only such MPA of its kind in Scotland and the UK. It took a substantial amount of effort and included providing evidence for the proposal<sup>8</sup>, gaining written support from all parties, consultation events, socio- economic impact study etc. all of which Fair Isle paid a pivotal role in.

The successful proposal was based on having a collaborative Advisory group to oversee the work. This group includes Fair Isle residents, Marine Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the National Trust for Scotland, Flora & Fauna International, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the Shetland Islands Council and fisheries stakeholders such as the Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation. The D&R MPA has support from Scottish Government and was launched by Tavish Scott MSP

So far, the Advisory Group has met twice yearly. There are two main work streams in this early stage:

- 1) Setting up a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) and related administration activities such that a project officer can be employed;  
SCIO status has now been achieved; some funding has been secured with other options identified;  
A small amount of funding from MS helped develop the SCIO with the remaining hoped to be used on small bits of equipment and producing some guides to encourage citizen science.
- 2) Identifying and facilitating key research required to underpin the main aims of the MPA.  
A prioritised list of research has been produced – this includes not only ecological research topics but socio-economic topics as well; Some funding has been secured through SNH to undertake some of the research, In kind contributions (eg boat time) from Advisory group members.

### **Research underway or planned:<sup>9</sup>**

- Ongoing work of Fair Isle Bird Observatory (FIBO) plus extension to some work streams to support the MPA. This includes supporting related work from other organisations such as the BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) and the RSPB.
- 2019 – Investigation into the abundance and distribution of breeding habitats of Storm Petrels *Hydrobates pelagicus* and predation risks (final title to be decided);  
2018 - Effect of disturbance on nesting pattern of Great Skua and great skua responses to aircraft.  
2017 - The Fair Isle Demonstration & Research Marine Protected Area: A platform for investigating the foraging areas important to breeding seabirds in the northern North Sea and their interaction with commercial fisheries  
All three studies were done by Master Sciences students

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<sup>6</sup> National Trust for Scotland, Fair Isle Management Plan 2009-2019, p. 18

<sup>7</sup> Detailed information on the status of the project provided by Karen Hall, Scottish Natural Heritage

<sup>8</sup> A first detailed proposal was published in 2011: Riddiford, N.J. & Riddiford, E.A. (eds.). 2011.

Proposal for a Marine Protected Area for the Waters around Fair Isle. FICA, FIBOT & NTS. FIMETI Fair Isle.

<sup>9</sup> More on [www2.gov.scot/Topics/marine/marine-environment/mpanetwork/DandRMPAs/FairIsleDRMPA](http://www2.gov.scot/Topics/marine/marine-environment/mpanetwork/DandRMPAs/FairIsleDRMPA)

- Preliminary investigations into the type, number and biological importance of sea caves. This is to provide a priority list for diver survey during 2020 to provide evidence that may support future SAC designation
- Preparatory work to include Fair Isle within any research planned for shellfisheries in Shetland eg. lobster tag and release, brown crab measurements
- Setting up a WDC Whale & Dolphin Conservation Shore watch site on Fair Isle: this is a location where regular short sea watches are undertaken to record cetaceans thus building up effort-based data which is poor throughout Shetland. This will also feed into the Shetland marine spatial plan.
- Securing a C-POD (device name acoustic receiver which picks up porpoise and dolphin clicks) for Fair Isle. This still needs to be deployed at the Shorewatch site.

## 4. Appraisal

### 4.1 European interest

Fair Isle is situated right at an important flight-path from Scandinavia, Iceland or Faroe Islands and reports most first sightings of birds all-over the United Kingdom. It is a cross-road between the north-south flyway from and to Scandinavia and as a landfall site for vagrants from Siberia to the east and from North America to the west, although of lesser significance. The well-known bird observatory has been collecting bird migration data for more than 70 years, although some observations were reported even before. Important studies are made on the island, e.g. changes in migration patterns, revealing both earlier and later arrivals, probably influenced by the climate change.

Fair Isle offers an outstanding scenery. A coastal landscape of cliffs, dramatic geos (narrow inlets), offshore stacks, totally undisturbed by human artefacts and of highest scenic value, giving the isle a wilderness aspect.

Fair Isle is a peculiar habitat in a unique situation. It sounds strange that an island a little north of Scotland can be cut-off from the world for weeks. However, it has developed a fascinating biotope and sociotope.

### 4.2 Conservation measures

#### *Legal protection*

In 1963 the Nature Conservancy declared the whole island a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a national designation. Following the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981, the SSSI was re-notified in 1984, but only the north of the island, the coastline and all offshore stacks and skerries were included, a total of 592.48 ha<sup>10</sup>. The crofting and in-bye areas were excluded.

The whole island is owned by the National Trust with a few small exceptions and declared inalienable in 1975. The boundaries of the Diploma holding area remained unchanged since the latest renewal.

#### *Supervision and warding*

Most of the inhabitants on Fair Isle are very much dedicated to nature and nature protection in any form. The bird observatory was and after rebuilding will be not only a place for ornithologists and bird lovers but also a meeting point for scientists and nature lovers. Some former wardens still live on the island and are supporting and helping with their knowledge. A specific institutionalised supervision is not necessary.

#### *State of conservation*

The island is partly a cultural landscape with sheep farming as the dominating form of land use and partly a close-to-wilderness environment.<sup>11</sup> Extensive agricultural management has positive effects on species and habitat as Waxcap (*Hygrocybe*) and Entoloma (*Blue-gill*) fungi, which are on rapid decline elsewhere due to agricultural intensification. Without pressure on the land use from any side the status of the environment of the Diploma holding site is satisfying. However, this cannot be confirmed for the marine habitats, which by the way are not part of the Diploma awarded area.

#### *Land use*

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<sup>10</sup> Data later updated to 561 ha

<sup>11</sup> See also the following paragraph

As the whole island is owned by the National Trust for Scotland, the inhabitants are tenants to the NTS. The majority of the of the island falls under crofting<sup>12</sup> tenure. Crofting is a system of landholding which is unique to Scotland and is an integral part of life in the Highlands & Islands. A croft is a relatively small agricultural land holding which is normally held in tenancy and which may or may not have buildings or a house associated with it. Crofts range in size from less than 1/2 hectare (ha) to more than 50ha but an average croft is nearer 5 ha.

Crofting can deliver a wealth of benefits to crofters and the crofting community in the Highlands and Islands and other designated parts of Scotland.

This applies also to housing, which was reported to be not effective and action in restoring and renovation is sometimes hampered by a slow response from the Trust.

### **4.3 Management**

#### ***Management plan***

The latest management plan was published 2009 for a period of ten years and is still the basis for the management but should be replaced or at least updated soon. No management plan exists for the Natura 2000 site of community interest. According to the Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (status March 2019) no Natura 2000 Management Plan exists.

Managing Fair Isle includes all aspects of administration, including social and economic development as well as the protection of the natural and cultural heritage. The Fair Isle management plan was elaborated by the National Trust for Scotland and the Fair Isle Committee, representing the Fair Isle residents, jointly. The National Trust does not have permanent staff on the island.

Under these circumstances, the management plan differs significantly from those of other protected areas awarded the European Diploma. None of the other sites has to deal with the building of airstrips, improving telecommunication or with health services and housing. Unfortunately, contacts with the responsible organisation, the National Trust for Scotland were possible only via e-mail.

A review of the management plan, foreseen in 2018, is still not finished and a new management plan is obviously under preparation.

#### ***Capacities***

As mentioned, the National Trust for Scotland does not have staff on Fair Isle. Development initiatives and supervision are coming from the local community and the Fair Isle Bird Observatory.

#### ***Financial resources and budget***

No data were made available, though these are kept confidential.

#### ***Research and monitoring programmes***

The Fair Isle as probably other British islands in a similar situation is a welcomed subject for research, in the Fair Isle case often from universities in Scotland. The Fair Isle Bird Observatory is documenting the bird life on Fair Isle since more than 60 years.

#### ***Relationship between the body responsible for the area and the other stakeholders (local elected representatives, socio-economic actors, NGOs)***

To understand the situation of Fair Isle and its inhabitants better, it is needful to have a closer look on arrangements made to organise the living and the relation to the landowner, the National Trust of Scotland. Various committees on Fair Isle discuss various themes and build the link between the landowner, the NTS and the inhabitants. The later show a great interest to participate in one or more of these Committees and to keep them running.

The committee structure ensures an effective decision-making process. The Fair Isle Committee is the main island committee. There are several sub-committees that report to the Fair Isle Committee every three months. Three of these, each comprising five island residents, have a formal constitution. They are the Grazing's Committee, Hall Committee and George Waterston Memorial Centre Committee. All the Committees meet as often as is required.

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<sup>12</sup> For more information visit [www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk/crofting](http://www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk/crofting)

The Fair Isle Development Company (FIDC) is a charity set up and run by elected members of the island community. The members meet once a month to discuss progress, look at funding opportunities and keep plans and projects moving along. Early funding for the FIDC has come from Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE). Initiatives through FIDC include broadband and power projects, the power project in particular have been a success in bringing green energy to the isle. Other issues pursued by FIDC include pro-active efforts to see improvements to:

- Travel and transport, including surveys and questionnaires and input into the Shetland Islands Council's transport strategy review.
- Promoting Fair Isle, including refreshing and redesigning the [www.fairisle.org.uk](http://www.fairisle.org.uk) website; press releases; creating and maintaining a press archive of print, online articles and other media featuring Fair Isle; participating in HIE Digital Tourism "webinars".
- Social improvement, including funding opportunities to renew and increase the housing stock and investigate business opportunities, both measures identified as crucial to maintaining and incrementing the island population.

FIDC feeds back to the island community via the quarterly island meetings, through email communication at any time for specific items and at the annual general meeting, attended by adult members of the island community.

A Housing Forum was initiated in 1993 to determine the housing needs of Fair Isle in accordance with the Management Plan, to provide a forum for discussion and feedback on the future of housing and population on the island, to discuss specific needs or applications and to act in a consultative role to the Trust's decision making process on housing and related matters. Housing is apparently an important topic in the life of the islanders and therefore addressed in the recommendations for the Diploma renewal.

#### ***Public services, including waste management and use of renewable energy systems***

Any waste is collected all over the area and carried to Shetland mainland by boat for further treatment. More problems arise from materials, mainly plastic, swept ashore and its origin out of control of the island's community.

Fair Isle is nearly pollution free. There are cars, but their range is limited. Electric energy comes either from wind turbines or photovoltaic systems and is stored in a system of batteries. It covers about 95 % of the energy consumption. Diesel generators are used just in exceptional situations. Heating is based on gas and electric energy. The Fair Isle Electricity Company manages this Fair Isle Renewable Energy Scheme and its move to Low Carbon Energy has already received a national accolade, winning the Judges Award for Outstanding Project Across all Categories at the Scottish Green Energy Awards 2018.

#### **4.4 Uses and socio-economic activities**

Uses and socio-economic activities are appropriate to the site and do not have impacts on the protected area. Knitting in the famous Fair Isle décor, nowadays using knitting machines, of course, but also other crafts is done mainly in the small private houses, which are typical for the island. Some people criticised a lack of appropriate working places providing better working conditions for the entrepreneurs as well as employees.

#### ***Tourism / leisure activities***

Accessibility limits tourism on the island. The small aircraft has about eight seats and the boat, the Good Shepherd can carry 12 passengers, both very much depending on weather conditions. Cruise ships are too large to enter Fair Isle's small harbour, so passengers are shuttled ashore by launch, if the weather allows. Cruise tourists contribute about 30,000 GBP to the island's economy, mainly for knitwear. However, without the bird observatory accommodation is limited. The arrival of private sailing boats or yachts make North Harbour on Fair Isle Shetland's second busiest harbour.

#### ***Awareness-raising information/education resources and activities***

Information is or was provided by the bird observatory, which also offered guided tours on the island. Leaflets and brochures explain the nature as well as the living on the isle. The European Diploma logo is not used frequently.



### ***Human occupation***

The small population is used to living under exposed conditions but in harmony with the environment.

### ***Cultural heritage***

Human occupation on Fair Isle goes back about 5,000 years. Dwellings and other structures are from the late Neolithic, the Bronze and the Iron Age. Fair Isle always was dangerous for ships and many wrecked, the most famous the El Gran Grifon, a support ship of the Spanish Armada in 1588.

## **4.5 Connectivity of the area**

### ***Ecological connectivity with other areas***

Being an island, the ecological connectivity of Fair Isle is represented by its geographical situation along fly-paths.

## **5. Conditions and Recommendations 2010**

The last appraisal took place in 2004. In 2010, one condition and two recommendations were added to the resolution concerning the renewal of the European Diploma.<sup>13</sup>

*Condition 1: in recognition of the internationally important seabird colonies and associated marine environment currently experiencing severe pressure, the United Kingdom and Scottish Governments should use the powers invested in them through the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 to establish the protected marine area which has been called for in successive diploma renewals. A new protected marine area should be in conformity with the Fair Isle Marine Action Plan (FIMP);*

With the decision to establish a Demonstration and Research Marine Protected Area (D&R MPA) in October 2016, the condition was fulfilled. More to be read in the chapter Marine Protected Area.

*Recommendation 1: the needs and aspirations of the local community, as detailed in the FIMP, should be fully taken into account, as should the fragile socio-economic situation;*

Remarkable progress was made through the Fair Isle Unified Low Carbon Electricity Storage and Generation Project to provide clean and sustainably produced energy to the households. Efforts were made to improve the communication to the 4g standard. School (four children) and health service are well established. One problem addressed by several inhabitants was the slow reaction of the National Trust concerning housing, e.g. restoration, repairs or rentals.

*Recommendation 2: all efforts should be made to solve the problem of the disposal of plastic in general and agricultural baling plastic in particular.*

Whereas waste treatment is handled perfectly, the biggest problem is the plastic waste in the landscape and on beaches. An annual cleaning, the Voar Redd Up event is organised by children and helps to reduce plastic waste, which can also be a risk for birds and sea mammals.

## **6. Conclusions**

The visit was an unexpected experience. A small but vibrant community living on a small island, often cut off from contacts with other communities. The visit was accompanied by numerous representatives of the islands providing information in the different roles they have in this tiny community.

The site itself offered an impressive insight into a fascinating and mostly undisturbed environment. The inhabitants are very much dedicated to nature and environment and in general have a good feeling for the preservation of the island. An outstanding bird life is a trademark of the area. The limited access due to natural barriers ensures an undisturbed development of nature.

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<sup>13</sup> CM/ResDip(2010)10

## **7. Renewal of the Diploma**

It is recommended to renew the European Diploma for the Fair Isle Scenic Area for the period 2020 to 2030, taking into consideration the following conditions and recommendations:

### **Conditions**

1. Review the 2010-2019 management plan as was foreseen for 2018 and elaborate a new management plan as soon as possible to secure a continuous development and management of the Fair Isle Scenic Area, considering the conditions and recommendations of this appraisal report and including specific provisions dedicated to climate change and how to address this issue in relation to the long-term conservation of endemic and bird species.
2. Make more intensive use of the European Diploma logo in all information material and brochures and explain the relevance of the Diploma wherever useful.

### **Recommendations**

1. Consider a ban of fishing and catching of lobster within the Development and Research Marine Protected Area or at least in a scientifically defined area;
2. Consider the inclusion of the Marine Protected Area into the European Diploma site;
3. Improve the housing-related quality of life through appropriate measures, mainly concerning renovation and restoration and consider the peculiar conditions of the local business and improve working conditions through installation of appropriate manufacturing locations;
4. Give the European Diploma a prominent place in or at the new bird observatory.

## **8. Acknowledgement**

The visit was perfectly organised by Nick J. Riddiford on behalf of the National Trust for Scotland, who provided more information than could be read. Special thanks go to all the many people I met for the experience they shared, their hospitality and many cups of tea and to the four schoolchildren engaged in identifying moths. I am sure, I would not be able to compile a full list of names, there are too many.