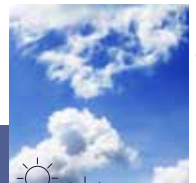


SSEN Transmission Newsletter

Community News Round-up
Sep/Oct 2026

We want to keep communities across the Western Isles informed about our work and what it means for the islands. This newsletter brings together the latest from SSEN Transmission including project updates, key milestones, local opportunities and community initiatives.



Building a career close to home

For many young people, starting a career can mean leaving home. For Uilleam Morrison, a Graduate Apprenticeship with RJ McLeod offered the chance to build a career while staying connected to the Western Isles.

Now studying Civil Engineering through the University of the Highlands and Islands, Uilleam is gaining hands-on experience on the Lewis Hub project while developing skills that will support his future career.

Uilleam's story is just one example of the opportunities being created through Lewis Hub so far, with SSEN Transmission, RJ MacLeod, Balfour Beatty, Linxon and their extensive supply chains helping local people develop new skills, build careers and stay connected to the communities they call home.

7 Construction, civil engineering and plant operations and business admin apprentices

2 Graduate apprentice roles in engineering and quantity surveying

2 Trainee site and project management roles



Creating a housing legacy for Lewis



One of the most common questions raised by residents has been how major projects can be delivered without placing additional pressure on local housing and impacting tourism.

To help address this challenge, SSEN Transmission is supporting housing initiatives across the Western Isles. This includes a £17 million investment in housing at Melbost, where 73 homes are being delivered. Construction firm O'Mac remains on track to erect over 20 homes by Christmas and we recently visited the site to see the fantastic progress being made.

Discussions are also underway regarding increasing the £3.2m initial works support given to the housing development at the Sandwick site (Airport), helping create a lasting housing legacy that extends well beyond our project.

Across all of our accommodation, we are keen to continue engagement with local groups to explore opportunities for collaboration around sports, social, and wellbeing initiatives – creating more than just a housing legacy.

Thank you for your feedback on the Stornoway Grid Supply Point Upgrade

A big thank you to everyone who attended our recent Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) event in August for the proposed Stornoway Grid Supply Point Upgrade.

The event provided an opportunity for local residents, businesses and stakeholders to learn more about the proposals, ask questions and share their views with the project team. We were pleased to welcome so many people and would like to thank everyone who took the time to speak with us and provide feedback.

We appreciate the continued interest in the project and look forward to keeping the community updated as plans progress.

Project update

We continue to work with local communities, stakeholders and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, as we progress further ground investigations and seek to secure the approvals needed to discharge our planning conditions.



Supporting local households with fuel poverty

SSEN Transmission has awarded **£390,000** Tighean Innse Gall (TIG) through its Regional Community Benefit Fund to help tackle fuel poverty across the Western Isles.

As a community-focused organisation working across the islands, Tighean Innse Gall (TIG) is helping deliver support where it is needed most, assisting households to reduce energy costs, improve home comfort and access advice and support.

Alongside investment in housing, roads and community initiatives, SSEN Transmission continues to support projects, facilities and services that help communities thrive and leave a lasting legacy across the Western Isles. More than **£1.3 million** has already been awarded through the Regional Community Benefit Fund, with additional funds being targeted through a dedicated Western Isles Local Community Benefit fund, opening soon. Recent awards include:

- **£350k** towards the new Screen Machine mobile cinema serving Highland and Island communities.
- **£341k** to Comann Eachdraidh Eirisgeidh to transform the former Eriskay school into a community and heritage hub.
- **£141k** to Islands Book Trust for a new digital heritage hub in Balallan.
- **£110k** to expand the Uist Unearthed project into Barra in partnership with UHI North, West and Hebrides.

£1.3m

Awarded through Regional Community Benefit Fund

Western Isles businesses at the heart of delivery

From haulage companies and accommodation providers to fencing contractors, mechanics, electricians and engineering firms, more than 40 Western Isles businesses are already supporting project activities.

With more than £125 million of local spend targeted across the wider programme, the aim is to keep investment within island communities and help local companies build skills, capacity, capability, and long-term opportunities for growth.

The project is creating opportunities for businesses of all sizes, helping strengthen the local supply chain while supporting jobs and economic activity across the Western Isles. Our principal contractors, such as RJ McLeod, are looking to maximise the use of local workforce, particularly during the upcoming earthworks phase.

£125m

Target spend with local businesses

40+

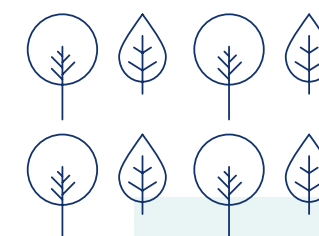
Local businesses engaged in the supply chain

Listening and responding on road safety

Local communities often tell us that road safety is a key concern.

After speaking with community councils, elected representatives and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, plans to manage traffic during the first phase have been accepted. They include a proposed lower speed limit on the A859. We are now planning phase two, including a new site access from the A859 and better routes for walking and cycling nearby. We look to engage, discuss and refine plans in the coming months.

We are pleased with Stornoway Port Authority's progress on the Arnish road upgrade, which we supported with a **£3.4 million** contribution.



Lewis Hub – at a glance

Economic and social impact targets

£125m

Target spend with local businesses

200-240

Local jobs supported

+70

Apprenticeships and trainee opportunities

30

Local direct jobs created

Economic and social impact achieved to date

+40

Local businesses engaged in the supply chain

+200

Local jobs already supported

+30

Apprenticeships and trainee opportunities

16

Local direct jobs created

Housing and community legacy

£17m

Investment at Melbost

73

Affordable homes supported, with more to come

Refurbished hotel

20

rooms at the Caley Hotel

£3.4m

Arnish Road upgrade

Strong focus on local supply chain participation

Focus on apprenticeships, training and STEM pathways

Permanent housing investment across local housing developments

1st Direct connection of the Western Isles to GB transmission network

1.8GW Capacity

- Creating a lasting housing legacy
- Protecting island connectivity
- Creating career opportunities closer to home
- Helping local businesses grow and invest
- Supporting safe, responsible delivery for the community
- Investing in community priorities

Lewis Hub is **creating jobs, supporting local businesses and delivering long-term benefits for the Western Isles**. With further SSEN Transmission projects planned across Lewis, even more opportunities for local people, apprentices and businesses are expected in the years ahead. These numbers are projections over the course of the project and longer term legacy investments.

*200-240 local jobs excludes apprenticeships



New chapter for the Caley

For nearly 15 years, the Caledonian Hotel has sat empty on Stornoway's waterfront. Now, one of the town's best-known buildings is getting a new lease of life.

Work is underway to transform the building, with plans for around 20 rooms, a new bar, restaurant and modern facilities. While it will provide accommodation during construction, we are exploring ways for multi-use to allow locals and visitors to enjoy the refurbished facilities too.

If all goes to plan, the hotel will reopen in 2027. Led by local owners, the Macarthur family, the refurbishment will support local jobs and businesses during construction and operation.

For many people, seeing the Caley come back to life will be a welcome sight, bringing new energy to a familiar part of Stornoway's waterfront; and the 3D rendered images show the intended high quality space that is planned.

The refurbishment also forms part of a wider accommodation strategy, with discussions ongoing to fund further refurbishments, increasing the number of available beds rather than taking up existing capacity.



School pupils get a closer look at Lewis Hub careers

Local sixth-year pupils recently spent a week with our Lewis Hub contractor Balfour Beatty, gaining first-hand experience of the different careers involved in delivering the project.

The placement is just one example of the opportunities being created through the Lewis Hub. We continue to work with partners, including Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Macaulay College and the Nicolson Institute, as well as taking part in Developing the Young Workforce initiatives and school events to help connect young people with future opportunities.

Alongside work experience placements, SSEN Transmission and its principal contractors are supporting apprenticeships, trainee roles, STEM engagement activities and careers events, helping local young people develop new skills, explore future career paths and build opportunities closer to home.

Helping keep our communities safe and welcoming

As project activity continues across the Western Isles, we remain committed to supporting the communities in which we work. Alongside our contractors, we are developing workforce standards and measures well in advance of construction activity. These measures include shared expectations around behaviour, community engagement, and working closely with partners.

One example of this approach has been our support for local Pubwatch by funding security training for door staff. The training helps strengthen partnership working between local venues, Police Scotland and other community partners, helping to keep the town centre safe and welcoming for everyone.



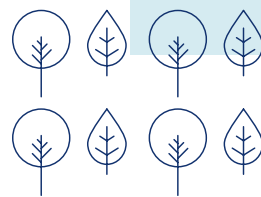
Protecting lifeline ferry services

Local communities told us that lifeline ferry services must be protected.

SSEN Transmission has secured a dedicated vessel for project freight, separating project deliveries from existing passenger and freight services - helping to protect capacity on the existing Stornoway to Ullapool route.

We continue to engage with the Major Developers Forum (MDF), which brings together developers and public sector partners to help coordinate major developments across the Western Isles, as well as working closely with local stakeholders including CalMac and Stornoway Port Authority. We are also collaborating with Loganair to help plan for future demand and support capacity requirements where needed. We will look to complete berthing trials once the new Deep Water Terminal Linkspan is installed.

Working through the Major Development Forum (MDF), SSEN Transmission continues to collaborate with local partners across Infrastructure, Wellbeing, Supply Chain, and Workforce & Skills subgroups to help maximise benefits for communities across the Western Isles.



Funding opportunities for communities across the north of Scotland

SSEN Transmission has launched two major funding opportunities to help communities benefit from the transition to clean energy. The Regional Community Benefit Fund provides grants of £40,000 to £500,000 for ambitious projects that support skills and employability, heritage and culture, or alleviating fuel poverty across the north of Scotland. Projects based in the Western Isles have already benefited from £1.3million through the Regional Community Benefit Fund. Round 3 is now open, with £2 million available, and applications must be submitted by 1pm on 24 November 2026.

Alongside this, a new Strategic Investment Fund will invest up to £10 million over the next two years in large scale, transformational projects focused on skills and employability and alleviating fuel poverty. Grants of £1 million to £5 million are available, with the first funding round now open and expressions of interest due by 15 October 2026. Strategic Investment Fund

The Lewis Hub Local Fund will be developed in partnership with the communities closest to our Lewis Hub Project site at Arnish Moor, including those in the Community Council areas of North Lochs, Stornoway and Laxdale. Through this fund, we want to support projects that strengthen communities now and leave a positive legacy for the future. You can find all the latest Lewis Hub Local Fund details on our webpage.



Working together with the authorities

The project team recently took part in an on-site emergency exercise with local emergency services. The exercise provided an opportunity to test plans, share learning and identify further improvements. Further exercises will continue as part of the project's approach to emergency preparedness and risk management.



Supporting Macaulay College

Our Chairman, Gregor Alexander, and Director of Offshore Delivery, Sandy Mactaggart recently visited Macaulay College to see first-hand how the completed improvements are helping the college expand opportunities for people with additional support needs.

Supported by SSEN Transmission, the project has enabled refurbishment and extension works, creating additional space and enhancing the range of activities available to students.

Meeting staff and seeing the facilities in use reinforced just how much these improvements mean to the people who rely on the college every day. The team left feeling proud to have played a small part in supporting an organisation that makes such a positive difference to lives across the Western Isles.



Investing in community events and local talent

Our commitment to the Western Isles goes beyond the projects we deliver. In 2026, we were proud to support some of the events, organisations and individuals that make island life so special, from HebCelt for the third year running and the SSAS Western Isles Open Water Championships, to Western Isles athletes competing at the World Island Games.

We're now looking at how we can build on this support in 2027, continuing to back events and activities that bring people together and make a positive contribution to island communities.

Community feedback continues to shape environmental plan

One of the most significant changes made during the development of Lewis Hub was the decision to move the proposed site from Marybank, to its current location. The change followed feedback from local communities and stakeholders and helped reduce the project's impact on nearby residents and the surrounding environment.

Since then, environmental surveys and ongoing engagement have helped shape plans to manage peat during our construction. There is now no requirement to undertake peat activities at Creed North, eliminating the need to transport any peat from the Arnish Moor site along public roads. We continue to work closely with NatureScot, SEPA and other partners to ensure environmental considerations remain at the heart of the project.

Third Sector Hebrides expands community support

Our presence on the islands is already helping deliver benefits beyond the Lewis Hub itself. By renting office space from Third Sector Hebrides, the project is generating income that has helped fund 400 meals for vulnerable people, five volunteer befrienders, six work experience placements for young people and additional support for vital community services.

It's a great example of how investment through the Lewis Hub can support local organisations and deliver wider benefits for communities across the Western Isles.





Scottish & Southern
Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

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