

# UCRS announces plans for new outdoor riding arena

**Emma Löfgren**  
**EXCLUSIVE**

WITH 18 horses and ponies and only one paid member of staff, the Uist Community Riding School (UCRS) in Balivanich relies heavily on volunteers, employment programmes and donations. But spirit, hard work and ambition have helped this community organisation

grow rapidly in recent years – and it is now setting its sights on new ventures.

UCRS Yard Manager Sue MacDonald reveals the new growth plans:

“We have been developing our feasibility and business plan over the past few months to gain support and funding stream to finance some of our new projects. The main thing we would like to do is to build an outdoor riding arena – full size and floodlit, so that we can use it in the evening in winter as

well. An all-weather arena that the children can ride in come snow, wind or rain.”

UCRS is a good example of recycling material and buildings: the indoor school used to be the Balivanich swimming pool, the tack room and offices are built within the old changing rooms, and the bedding in the horse boxes is made up of various recycled material donated by community members (if you have ever wondered where old office copies of *Am Pàipear* go – you have got your answer).

“We have an extensive fundraising task ahead to be able to grow, but we also need to grow and diversify to improve our income,” says Sue MacDonald.

Apart from the outdoor riding arena, which will complement the already existing indoor arena, they have several other projects lined up, she says.

“We have three students here

*continues on page 24*

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UCRS expansion plans



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