

## **First whisky distillery on Barra will be funded by community shares**

A community shares offer has been launched to raise £1.5m to build the first whisky distillery on the Scottish island of Barra.

Peter Brown is the entrepreneur behind the project. He says “using the community benefits society model ensures this whisky business will be owned and run by the local community. “ But shares can be purchased by investors outside the area as well. Community shares are a democratic form of governance, offering one vote per member investing, no matter how much you invest. They can also offer 4% interest to attract investors and often see money rolled back in to other projects which will benefit the community.

Barra is an island of 1200 population and some 8 miles by 5 miles, dependent on tourism, fishing and fish processing.

The community benefit society model creates an organisation owned by the community, for the community and ‘of’ the community where any profit made in the future is reinvested.

For Barra, the long term potential is some £2m of new money will be for other community projects locally which would come back to the community through profits made at the distillery in years 9 and 10.

Peter Brown and fellow directors Neil MacKinnon and architect Malcolm Fraser aims are that the distillery will be environmentally friendly, using the local water from the reservoir close by, barley grown on the islands, and driven by renewable power from the reservoir, solar power and wind turbines.

For Community Shares Scotland (CSS) which advised Barra Distillery this was the second distillery project they helped through the process of raising money in this way. An earlier project on the mainland raised over £2.5m in 2016, from 2,441 supporters in 30 countries around the world. This was more in community shares than any other UK organisation.

Peter Brown continues: “Scottish distilleries like to think that their whisky is imbued with the elements of the place in which they are created. This claim can be indisputably made by the Barra Distillery.”

“This is where Scottish author Compton MacKenzie wrote his novel which became the famous movie “Whisky Galore” filmed here on Barra in 1949, and it’s believed the mythical island location was in fact Barra.” Barra within its 35 sq miles contains craggy summits over 1,200 ft, over 1,000 species of wild flowers in rich meadows, diverse birdlife, and glorious beaches

Peter says: “We’ve seen so many good traditional and modern businesses in Scotland sell out and take the capital, with the business ending up in overseas ownership. Jobs are often lost, and they’re not wholly Scottish any more. We want the distillery to be owned for posterity by the community it serves. It will provide long term employment, some 7 new jobs when fully up and operational, an attraction for the tourist industry with a visitor centre, and products for a growing market.”

“Barra whisky will be a top quality niche product, sought after by whisky connoisseurs the world over. Whisky sales are increasing worldwide, against the general tide of alcohol sales, and in countries where there is no overall market growth there is a move from blended to single malt. And there is a trend towards people increasingly seeking a unique artisanal product, which is true to its roots.”

ENDS

This information from Carol Anderson The Business tel 0131 344 4647 mobile 07836 546 256

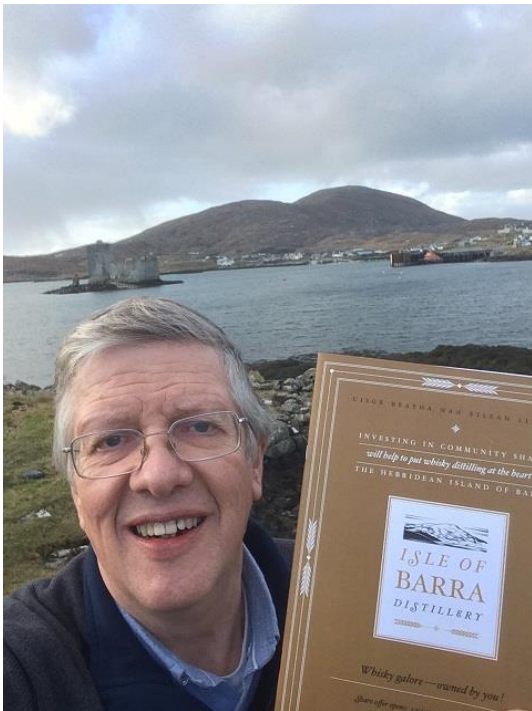
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**INFO/ EDITORS NOTES:**

Whisky has never been distilled on the island of Barra.

In 2016/17, UK spirits revenue increased by £229m (7.2%) to £3.38bn, overtaking revenue generated by beer for the first time, and highlighting its continued prominence and popularity. From a Scotch whisky perspective, export values have increased by 56% between 2006 and 2015 from £2.5bn to £3.9bn reflective of the increasing demand for artisan single malts and premium blends. Scotch whisky accounts for almost a quarter of all UK food and drink exports, which is currently exported to over 175 countries globally.

**Peter Brown** splits his time between Barra, and Edinburgh where he has owned several successful businesses. Engineer Iain Brown has an in depth knowledge of distilling as well as generation and storage of renewable energy.



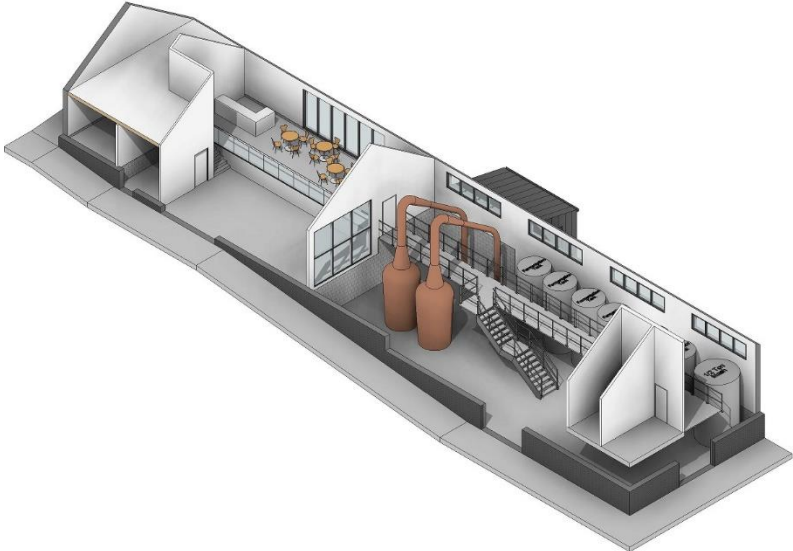
Peter Brown, One of the Directors



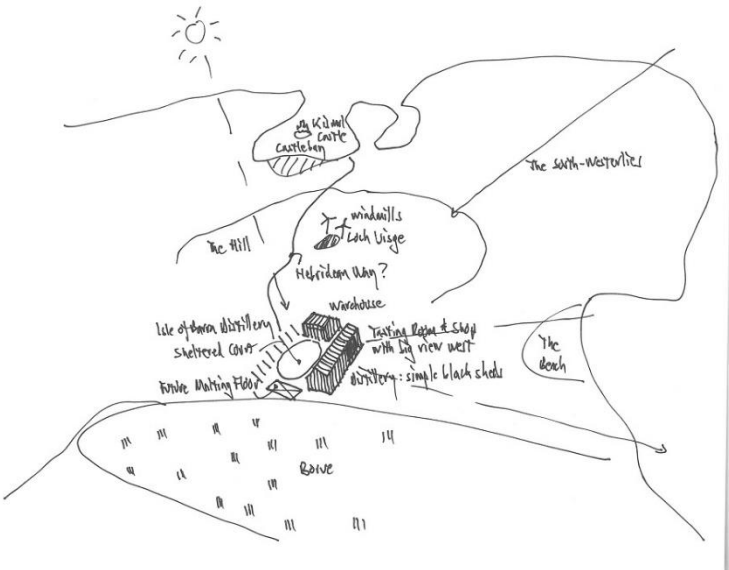
Peter at the Turbine Electrical Shack



Directors: Peter Brown and Neil Mackinnon walk the site



The Distillery and Visitor Centre - Artist's Impression



Seagull's View, Isle of Barra Distillery