

# Brough of Birsay – Interpretation Plan

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High quality interpretation delivers on the key outcome of the Historic Environment Strategy, *Our Place in Time*, 'to ensure that the cultural, social, environmental and economic value of Scotland's heritage makes a strong contribution to the wellbeing of the nation and its people'. Following the principles and standards outlined in Historic Scotland's Interpretation Strategy, *The Magic of the Real*, this new interpretation will allow visitors intellectual access to the Brough of Birsay, communicating the many stories we have to tell about this fascinating site, enhancing the visitor experience and promoting a powerful sense of place.

## BR01 – W2H – A1

### Physical context

On mainland. Remove Historic Scotland's existing A2 lectern next to the A1 Northern Lighthouse Board panel.

Install new A1 panel mounted on a new stone cairn next to welcome sign to the left of the causeway.



### Aim

To encourage visitors to walk to the island and outline what they can expect to see. Provide a sense of the site for those who can't cross the causeway and to encourage people to come back later when the island can be accessed.

Cultural Resources Advisor comment: This panel is outside the scheduled and PIC area and so will not require SMC consent. Approval should be sought from the landowner to carry out the works. Contact should be made with the local authority archaeologist (who is Julie Gibson and can be contacted at [Julie.Gibson@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:Julie.Gibson@uhi.ac.uk)).

## BR02 – W2H – A1

### Physical context

On brough, after climbing up from the beach and entering the site through Norse entrance way. In same position as current panel on existing cairn.



### Aim

To welcome people to the site, to orientate them, and provide a historical context for exploring the site.

Cultural Resources Advisor comment: This panel is a straightforward like for like replacement on an existing cairn. It will not require SMC consent. It has no new archaeological or setting implications for the monument.

## BR03 – W2H – A1

### Physical context

At east of site, looking west towards the entrance way, over the morass of later Norse houses. In same position as current panel on existing cairn.



### Aim

To give a sense of the importance of this site in Viking times, and to emphasise that this was a high status dwelling.

Cultural Resources Advisor comment: This panel is a straightforward like for like replacement on an existing cairn. It will not require SMC consent. It has no new archaeological or setting implications for the monument.

## BR04– W2H – A1

### Physical context

To south-west of church enclosure, overlooking the church. In same position as current panel on existing cairn.



### Aim

To discuss the importance of the church on the brough, and it's mysterious beginnings.

Cultural Resources Advisor comment: This panel is a straightforward like for like replacement on an existing cairn. It will not require SMC consent. It has no new archaeological or setting implications for the monument.

## BR06 – W2F – A3

### Physical Context

New A3 panel to replace cast-metal plate by possible sauna building. Sign mounted on angled metal stakes to fix into ground, as at Skara Brae. If archaeology means there is insufficient depth to do this, ground to be built up accordingly. This will help dissuade visitors from walking into the space, in which there are fragile flags. Two metal plate panels in entrance way to be removed.



### Aim

To interpret the sauna building, explain how it functioned and emphasise the high status of the Norse dwelling here.

Cultural Resources Advisor comment: the proposed new panel will offer a better interpretation of this feature to visitors while helping to conserve it by discouraging visitor access. The method of installation has been used successfully at other monuments. Probing of the ground will take place before the sign is put in place using the same method as for the installation of Permanent Ground Survey Markers to ensure that there is sufficient depth of turf to take the panel spikes stakes safely.

If there is not, the ground will be made up to a sufficient depth to avoid damage to underlying archaeology.

## **BR07 – W2E – A4**

### **Physical Context**

New A4 panel to fix to door of visitor centre



### **Aim**

To alert visitors stranded on the island of the emergency number they can call

Cultural Resources Advisor comment: this panel will be fixed to a modern door and has no archaeological or setting implications for the monument.

30<sup>th</sup> July 2015