

THE NUMBER of times Dugie Bannatyne has retired has become something of a standing joke among friends and colleagues.

Six or seven times is the number being bandied about, the most recently being as development director for the Nàdair Trust - only for him to rejoin as a director on the board!

He joined the trust in 2001 as project manager of the Nàdair Trust, which was set up in 2000 to apply for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for 31 heritage projects throughout the Argyll Atlantic islands.

A total of £2 million was granted and with match funding that went up to around £3 million.

Dugie joined the trust from a background in finance and administration, having spent his formative years after leaving school working for a variety of banks and buildings societies.

Having been educated firstly in Glasgow, then Rockfield primary and Oban high schools, his first job in Oban was at the Royal Bank of Scotland.

'I came out of banking and building societies in 1992,' said Dugie, who lives in Taynuilt with his wife, Olive, 'and was in various posts until I took early retirement for the first time.'

From there he worked in various roles and offices around the town until he came across the Nàdair Trust. 'It seemed the job for me; I belong to Oban, love the islands, it was to do with administration and grant finance. It seemed to fit me particularly well. In fact, it's the best job I ever had.'

Dugie's predecessor worked for a year to apply for the funding but left before the Heritage Lottery Fund agreed to fund the projects and it was Dugie who then took everything forward when the money came through.

He oversaw 26 projects from studying coastal erosion to tackling rampaging rhododendrons on Colonsay to wildlife and heritage trails on Mull to developing a custom-made data base for the An Iodhlann archive on Tiree.

The projects have managed to sustain 45 jobs on the islands over the last five years.

Latterly he was involved in setting up Nàdair

Support Services to help communities and groups develop their ideas by sharing expertise and contacts that have been built up over the last few years.

'The small communities and islands and some on the mainland have come on so well thanks to the help from Nàdair and the Heritage Lottery Fund, with match funding from other bodies,' said Dugie. 'The joy of the whole thing is seeing the communities developing themselves and projects coming to fruition. It is the kind of job where people actually say thank-you.'

'I am proud of them all,' he said of the projects he has been involved in. 'There is no one that stands out and they are all really valuable projects.'

Trust manager Eleanor Shaw paid tribute to Dugie's work: 'As a local man, he has an excellent understanding of rural and island issues and was a popular visitor to the Nàdair projects, with his combination of wit, wisdom and measured encouragement.'

'His good humour, astonishing memory and ability to see 'the big picture' will be much-missed by his colleagues and by all in the Nàdair programme.' Dugie says he will now be spending more time on his boat and pursuing his other interests of photography and DIY.

Eleanor took over as project manager from Dugie after he took on the part-time post of development director last July to set up Nàdair Support Services.

Nicola Welsh joined the team in April as project officer, helping to co-ordinate the 36 projects in the Nàdair two programme.

She has a background in scientific research and moved to Nàdair from the Forestry Commission in Lochgilphead, where she was office manager.

Donna Ferguson, who has been with the trust for two years, has taken over the role of development officer with Nàdair Support Services.

Nàdair is now on to its second programme of projects which it has funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund of £2.2 million, with an over-all programme costing £4.5 million over three years. It includes projects from the islands of Coll, Colonsay, Gigha, Islay, Lismore, Luing, Mull, Oronsay and Tiree. Some are 'inter-island' while others are specific to certain islands.