

FACT SHEET 03: The Links of Noltland

- Links of Noltland lies behind Grobust Bay on the north coast of Westray.
- The site was first recorded in the 19th century by antiquarian George Petrie. Archaeological excavations were carried out between 1978 and 1981 led by Dr David Clarke from the National Museums of Scotland. Artefacts from these excavations are now on display in the National Museums Scotland.
- The site was taken into care by Historic Scotland in 1984 and since then has been subject to consolidation works and monitoring.
- The Links of Noltland is among Orkney's richest and most threatened sites. Severe wind erosion is causing the collapse of the dune system which has protected the archaeology for thousands of years.
- In recent years emergency excavations have been carried out in parts of the site where the archaeology has been uncovered, then rapidly blown away by the wind.
- The surface levels now exposed are from around 3,000BC and Historic Scotland is keen to learn all it can about society at that time before the evidence is lost.
- It is important because extensive evidence has survived about the people who lived there over a long period of time from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age.
- The Links of Noltland settlement shows parallels to Skara Brae, where multi-cellular structures were built by revetting the walls against midden, piled up to provide stability and to keep out the elements.
- The settlement at Links of Noltland displays a greater depth of time than Skara Brae and excellent preservation, allowing modern archaeological techniques to be used to recover the maximum amount of information from the site.
- The results from all the recent investigations on the site will be published as an interim report in 2010, once initial post-excavation work is complete.