

North Isles Landscape Partnership - Biodiversity

Summary

This project will contribute to 2 key biodiversity projects: Natural Heritage Guides and Interpretation in the North Isles and Virtual Dives in the North Isles.

The Natural Heritage Guides and Interpretation element or “wild places” guides will help to promote understanding and interaction with the natural environment within the North Isles. The guides would be aimed at both visitors and the local community and would be produced with input and support from key local stakeholders and community groups. It is anticipated that a guide be produced for each of the populated North Isles, outlining the main species and nature witnessed during the year and detailing the habitat and landscape features that support that wildlife. The guides’ production would be developed for as many different formats as possible, ensuring all modes of information dissemination (i.e. hard copy and online) are considered

It is envisaged that interpretative materials (including information boards, signs, etc.) will be designed, produced and subsequently displayed at key sites within the populated Isles. In some cases, this could involve the updating/enhancement of an existing interpretive feature. In other instances, it will involve the creation of a new interpretative feature at a site previously not featuring any physical interpretation. Careful consideration will be given to ensure that any sites chosen to receive interpretive materials and accompanying information are sympathetic to the natural environment and landscape.

In some instances, the development of the interpretation could involve engagement with local school pupils. The pupils could help research some of the information or provide some of the illustrations. The exercises would also involve site visits to the selected areas around the North Isles, helping ensure the school pupils learn more about their natural environment through the process.

Complementing the Natural Heritage Guides the Virtual Dives in the North Isles will aim to develop and promote the understanding, interaction and awareness of the natural marine environment of the North Isles.

In part the Virtual Dive project will help to raise the awareness of this feature of the North Isles marine environment and how important it is in itself but the role it plays in delivering economic and social benefits and promoting the area as a visitor destination.

The Virtual Dive resource would involve an interactive package of motion graphics of the underwater environment using a mixture of real life gathered data, 3D visualisations, film, photography, etc. The interactive elements might include the ability for users to navigate to certain areas of the site and link to video or photographs from the site by clicking on certain features, giving the user a real-life view of the site’s habitats and species.

The final resource will subsequently be publicised to enable people to experience and learn more about the unique habitats and species within the scheme area. The finished product will also be a useful educational tool for North Isles schools, with the dissemination of the finished product made available to them as an educational resource and for use to promote the North Isles.

Aims

The NILPS programme has an agreed vision that will guide the delivery of these two projects:

“Through providing a platform to coordinate resources towards assisting local communities to increase their skills, knowledge and offering of heritage, we will support the North Isles to become more resilient and sustainable. Through engagement and partnership working, we will help towards maintaining the identity of the North Isles and ensure others can experience the intimate landscapes and welcoming people that enliven them”.

The North Isles Partnership that oversaw the development of the programme also agreed a set of aims:

I. To celebrate what the North Isles offer through promotion and recognition of what makes them special including their intimate landscapes enlivened by the dedicated and welcoming communities that reside on them. To achieve by making heritage more accessible to learn or experience, encouraging the involvement of young people, and promoting islander skills and traditions.

II. To conserve and raise awareness of the unique cultural identity and history of the North Isles including dialect, field names, genealogy and oral history. To achieve by conserving and developing local knowledge and skills.

III. To conserve and raise awareness of the distinctive built and natural landscapes of the North Isles. To achieve by raising awareness of the wider North Isles landscape, conserving and promoting natural characteristics of land, sea and sky, whilst conserving and showcasing built heritage.

IV. To provide resources to help communities pro-actively manage their natural and cultural heritage, to help improve the North Isles as a place to live, work and visit. To achieve by improving the heritage offer of the isles and effective management of a changing landscape.

in order to achieve these aims a set of objectives were agreed:

1. Improving the tourist offer of the North Isles to help sustain and responsibly develop its considerable potential for the island communities.

2. Celebrating island life and traditions in order to capture and catalogue the unique stories of the North Isles for current and future generations.

3. Undertaking of landscape surveys and investigations, to help catalogue the origins and changes throughout the North Isles in order to better understand the future.

4. Enhancing and developing the heritage trails and active travel routes throughout the North Isles, in order to better promote and utilise the considerable network for both locals and visitors.

5. Reinforcing isles connections through various community-led partnership activities involving sharing of knowledge, experiences, and collective ambitions for the future.

6. Protecting and enhancing the natural habitats and biodiversity that exist within the North Isles, providing opportunities for communities to explore and learn.

7. Enhancing and conserving of the built heritage in the North Isles, through training, restoration and development of facilities for local communities and visitors to enjoy.

8. Developing the network of heritage centres found throughout the North Isles, providing opportunities for additional use of, and participation in these important community and visitor facilities.

9. Working in partnership with local landowners, farmers, businesses and local communities to help achieve a sustainable future for the management of the heritage and landscape in the North Isles.

10. Assisting the communities and groups of the North Isles to achieve additional skills, knowledge, and confidence in caring for and making decisions about their own heritage and landscape.

The project includes the following elements:

Financial Information	£	%
Total project costs	£140,000.00	
Total eligible costs	£140,000.00	100%
LEADER funding	£50,400.00	36%
Heritage Lottery Fund	£89,600.00	64%