

North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme – Development Phase Update.

Hello,

As we head towards the end of November I thought it was time to provide an update on the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme (NILPS).

We are now receiving consultant feedback regarding provisional walking and cycling trails for each island. Thanks to all of you who provided feedback to our consultant during the process. Further discussion around the proposed trails will be taking place soon as we look to incorporate a key trail for each of the populated North Isles into the scheme.

Other studies required as part of the NILPS round 2 (development) stage are now well underway.

The Landscape and Seascape Study will help identify projects to be included in the delivery phase of NILPS. The consultants coordinating the study (Craignish Design) are in the process of arranging visits to the North Isles from the 30th November until the 8th December. The visits will involve a survey of the landscape and seascape of each island, outlining recommendations in response to the threats and opportunities posed in Isles distinct characteristics. There will also be a questionnaire made available online via survey monkey asking for isles residents to explain their relationship to the local landscape. I shall send an update with the survey link in due course. If anyone wishes to speak with the consultant (David Graham) when he is visiting the islands please contact your local development trust regarding dates.

The Visitor and Marketing Study is also underway. As well as identifying priority projects for delivery in the North Isles during NILPS, the study will identify priority themes and produce a marketing strategy. The study will involve engagement with local tourism stakeholders and groups on the North Isles as well as collecting information on people's trips to the North Isles. People living on the North Isles are welcome to participate in the survey. Please follow this link (and pass it on to anyone interested) to complete it -

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/visitorkneynorthisles>

The Biodiversity Study is also now underway. The study is being led by Nature Watch Orkney and will identify the wildlife and natural places that give each island its unique identity, and show how these form the character of the North Isles and its marine area. This will involve collating all the existing data about the species and habitats that occur in the North Isles. Also, a questionnaire asking for opinions about the most important wildlife features on your island has been produced. Please follow this link (and pass it on to anyone interested) - <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GNYBKQ2> If anyone would like to put forward suggestions, please contact Tim Dean and Anne Bignall via naturewatchorkney@hotmail.com

I do realise that your communities have recently been inundated with people from out with your islands carrying out various studies, and that this will continue until the end of the year. I'm afraid that these studies are an essential requirement of our ongoing Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid. Your ongoing involvement of these studies is very much appreciated and will help us enormously in gathering data to identify potential projects for NILPS. The studies will also allow us to produce a strong application to the HLF, which will be submitted in August 2017. The studies will, once complete, be made available to the local communities. It is hoped that the various studies will provide information of interest and benefit to local groups.

I would ask that you please disseminate this information as widely as you can within your own community and let me know if there is anyone you would like included in future communications. Further information is available at the following link -

<http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Service-Directory/D/north-isles-landscape-partnership-scheme.htm>

I am now slowly starting to get around some of the islands (as time allows). A big thank you to those I have visited so far for your time. I do intend to try and arrange more visits in the future but as time moves rapidly on during this phase it is proving more difficult. However, if anyone has any queries regarding the ongoing development phase or about NILPS in general, please do not hesitate to get in touch. I will be only too happy to assist.

Best regards,

Alister.

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The NILPS Development Phase is being supported by the following organisations

