

our land, our people  
and our place  
in the future



## TROTTERNISH PENINSULA AREA STRATEGY 2001

*'S e obair latha tòiseachadh ...  
It takes just a day to start a worthwhile job ...*





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## **Our Land, Our People and Our Place in the Future:**

### **A New Song for the Trotternish Peninsula**

*An rud a bhios na do  
bhroin, cha bhi e na do  
thiomhnadh*

*That which you have  
wasted will not be there  
for future generations*

- To have a clear and strong sense of identity
- To have confidence and believe in ourselves
- To value everybody and offer everybody the chance to earn a living using their individual talents
- To be positively engaged in creating our own destiny
- To be the enthusiastic guardian of our surrounding natural and cultural inheritance, today and tomorrow
- To aim to deliver local needs locally
- To consider the effects of our actions on future generations
- To identify a realistic way forward for the community



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## To the people of Trotternish

We would like to thank everybody in the Trotternish peninsula for helping us along with the Dùthchas process since the work got going here in October 1998. You made us welcome in your homes. You gave us very many useful ideas, which have helped us to reach a clearer understanding of our strengths, challenges and opportunities. You lent photographs, baked cakes, sang and even wrote songs. You drew pictures, wrote speeches and played the pipes. You gave up lots of valuable time to attend meetings and workshops to create sound visions, objectives and actions for important topics. Some of you took days off your work to go on exchange visits far from Skye. Others went to Norway and Jutland on our behalf. All of this considerable effort was voluntary, and we are very grateful to you. In one way or another, you have all played an inspirational part in creating a plan for developing the Trotternish peninsula.

## To the Agencies and Partners of Dùthchas in Trotternish

During the last two years, we know we asked a lot of you, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the very many dates we put into your diaries. Partnerships are not easy to manage and we still have a lot to learn, but you helped us to make a start. We feel it is important that since Dùthchas began, more people from our communities have come to recognise your faces and to gain a better understanding of how your organisations operate. You have contributed to many consultations, information seminars, exchange visits and conferences, and you have travelled many miles to do so. We are also grateful for the opportunity to “align” ourselves one with another, so that hopefully in the years to come we might find it a less daunting challenge to sing a song from the same song sheet.

Many groups in our communities are already doing good work for Trotternish in their own right. The Dùthchas Project belongs to the people of Trotternish, and this document is intended to be a useful source of information for the establishment of future projects. While working in partnership with the agencies has helped tremendously to develop the strategy, the emphasis of the document is about what we and our communities want for the Trotternish peninsula.

*Le taing mhòr dhan a h-uile duine agaibh*

Donald MacDonald,

on behalf of the Trotternish Advisory Group to Dùthchas

## The Dùthchas Project What is Dùthchas?

The word 'Dùthchas' is a very old Gaelic term that speaks of strong, united, self-sufficient communities who actively look after their people and their world.

The Dùthchas Project has aimed to achieve grassroots sustainable development through the participation of communities in planning their own future, with support from the many agencies whose remit impacts upon these areas. The Dùthchas Project is co-funded by the EU LIFE Environment Programme and has 22 Partner Agencies, of whom 11 are co-funders. Since 1998, the Dùthchas Project has been working in 3 Pilot Areas in the Scottish Highlands and Islands. The Pilot Areas are Skye's Trotternish peninsula, North Uist and North Sutherland.

## The Dùthchas Partners

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Crofters Commission, Forestry Commission, Forest Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Historic Scotland, North of Scotland Water Authority, Rural Forum Scotland (1998 – 1999), Scottish Arts Council, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Homes, Scottish Museums Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department, Scottish Tourist Board, Scottish Environment LINK, Skye and Lochalsh Enterprise, The Highland Council, Scottish Council for Development and Industry, University of the Highlands and Islands Millennium Institute, Western Isles Enterprise.





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## The Trotternish Advisory Group

Borve and Anishader Crofting Trust, Columba 1400, Community Councils (Uig, Kilmuir and Staffin), Crofters Commission, Forest Authority, Forest Enterprise, Highland Council, Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board, Historic Scotland, Kilmuir Drama Club, Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association, North of Scotland Water Authority, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Scottish Arts Council, Scottish Crofters Union, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Scottish Homes, Scottish Museums Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Small Business Federation (Skye and Lochalsh), Skye and Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations, Skye and Lochalsh Enterprise, Skye and Lochalsh Horticultural Development Association, Staffin Community Trust, Staffin Youth Club, Trotternish Choir, Trotternish Tourism Association, Uig Community Development Association, University of the Highlands and Islands Millennium Institute, Donald Angus Campbell (fishing issues), Donald MacDonald (Chairman), Kathryn Mackay (youth issues), Roger Miket (archaeologist) and Gavin Scott Moncrieff (Councillor).



# 1. A Sustainability Strategy



## What is a Sustainability Strategy?

Sustainability is a modern 'jargon' word for a concept that was historically well understood by local people in Trotternish, whose livelihood has always been dependent upon the careful husbandry of natural resources. However, in recent times global changes in lifestyle have made these traditional systems less sound. The challenge for us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to apply the old principles of sustainability to the complex modern world. This Strategy, and the work that lies behind it, is intended to help by setting a framework for planning which is based on the core principles of sustainability.

A Sustainability Strategy provides the framework and essential building blocks for the area to take forward sustainable development, both now and in the long term future. It takes into account the social, economic and environmental needs and resources of the area, in relation to every activity. It also takes into account the effects of the things we do in our area on other places and people, and on future generations. An essential part of this Strategy and Action Plan is that it brings together the activities of many interest groups and organisations, and links them around a common goal.

The Strategy and Action Plan identifies:

- our **vision** for the future development of our area,
- the **objectives** which will help us to meet that vision,
- the **actions** we need to take to make it happen,
- the **roles** of all the different individuals and organisations involved,
- the **measures** which will tell us that we are making progress,
- the **framework** through which it will all be organised
- resource implications

The Strategy takes a long term view. The Action Plan concentrates on the implementation of the first set of prioritised objectives. For this reason, the Action Plan is likely to be changed and updated more often than the Strategy itself. The Action Plan is to be found in the 'back pocket' of this Strategy document.

## Purpose of this Strategy

This Strategy and Action Plan has been compiled to plan and create a development path for the Trotternish peninsula, which is based on - and sympathetic to - our natural and cultural heritage. A central focus of this development path has been to gain the enthusiastic participation of local people along the way, as well as the support of key government bodies and local authorities. The following pages contain the Strategy and Action Plan that has been drawn up and agreed by the local Dùthchas Groups in planning a vibrant, sustainable Trotternish. Everyone in our peninsula has had an opportunity to contribute to this plan for the way forward.

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## Who is this Strategy for?

This Strategy and Action Plan are for all those who live and work in the Trotternish peninsula, the agencies who serve this area and everybody who cares about its future. The documents will be used by local people and local townships, community groups, public agencies and voluntary sector organisations. This will be a tool to help us work together for the good of Trotternish, and to tell people what we are working towards.

## How was the Strategy developed?

This Strategy is based on all the information gathered from the local community survey and the 22 Partner agencies. This information was then shaped into the Strategy by members of the local Dùthchas Strategy and Advisory Groups, in consultation with other 'expert' contacts. The Strategy itself was written by the Dùthchas Staff team, working closely with Trotternish Advisory Group members. Figure 1 illustrates this process.

*(Opposite: Figure 1)*







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## A Guide to Using the Strategy

Figure 2

SECTION	PURPOSE	PAGE	DUTHCHAS REPORTS
<b>VISION</b>	Our Vision for a sustainable Trotternish	1	4
<b>A NEW SONG FOR TROTTERNISH</b>	Summary of the Strengths, Challenges and Ideas for change from the Initial Review findings	10	4,5,6
<b>SUSTAINABILITY PROFILE</b>	Our Goals, Objectives and Priorities for the sustainability of Trotternish	15	5
<b>SUSTAINABILITY PLANS</b>	Priority Actions for achieving our vision	17	4,5,9, 11, 12,13,14, 15,16, 17
<b>IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY</b>	The Organisational Framework for carrying out our actions	27	
<b>MEASURING OUR PROGRESS</b>	Measuring the Impact of our actions in achieving our vision and objectives	27	5
<b>REVIEWING THE STRATEGY</b>	Making Changes to the Strategy in the light of our progress and changing circumstances	28	5
<b>MAKING LINKS</b>	Strategic Links and information	28	5
<b>ACTION PLAN</b>	Detailed plans for implementing the First Phase of the Strategy	Back Pocket	4



# Dùthchas Reports

All Partner agencies have copies of these reports. They are also available in the libraries in Columba 1400 and Portree.

our place in the future

**Figure 3**

Ref No.	Title	Description
1	The Dùthchas Project CD Rom	Contains all of the information and reports produced by the Dùthchas Project – March 2001
2	'The Dùthchas Handbook'	How to develop a sustainability strategy – March 2001
3	Dùthchas Project Final Report	Covering all of the work done in the Project – June 2001
4	Initial Review Report and appendices	One for each pilot area – Winter 1998 - 1999
5	Area Sustainability Profile and appendices	One for each pilot area – November 1999
6	'Our Place in the Future'	A statement of what the local people most value about their area – Spring 1999
7	The Dùthchas Project Tape/Slide on video	Documents the ideas raised by the community in the Initial Review – Spring 1999
8	3 Project Newsletters	Spring 1999/ Winter 1999/ Autumn 2000
9	'Looking after the Future'	Report of the first transnational conference held in Sutherland - April 1999
10	'Dùthchas Project Final Conference'	Report of the second transnational conference held in Skye – March 2001
11	'IT – You Know it Makes Sense'	Report of the conference on using IT with local communities – August 1999
12	Natural and Cultural Heritage	Seminar report June 2000
13	Renewable Energy	Seminar report July 2000
14	Local Produce	Seminar report September 2000
15	Norway – Scotland exchange programme	Reports of the exchange visits looking at rural development in remote areas – September 1999 & October 2000
16	Jutland Study Tour Report	Study tour on renewable energy in Denmark – May 2000
17	Cumbria Study Tour Report	Study tour on processing and marketing of local meat produce – November 2000
18	Geographical Information Systems Project Report	Report of the findings of the GIS Project – March 2001

## 2. A New Song for the Trotternish Peninsula



The first stage of the work was to ask the community and agencies, through an extensive survey and data search, about the strengths and challenges facing Trotternish, and their ideas for change. This section documents the main points raised. Our strengths are our seedcorns. In a healthy society, new ideas will evolve in the fullness of time. After all, diatomite was not mined here until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and renewable energy was not contemplated here until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*O Eilein mhóir, m' Eilein, mo chiall,  
's iomadh oidhche shìn mi riamh  
rì do thaobh-sa anns an t-suain ud  
is ceò na camhanaich 'gad shuaineadh!  
Is gràdhach liom gach bileag fraoich ort  
bho Rubha Hùnaïs gu Loch Shlapain,  
agus gach bileag roid dhomh càirdeach  
o Shròn Bhiornaill gus a' Ghàrsbheinn,  
gach lochan, sruth is abhainn aoibhneach  
o Ròmasdal gu Bràigh Aoineart,  
agus ged a nochdainn Pàrras,  
dé b' fhiach a ghealach-san gun Bhlàbheinn?*

O great Island, my Island, my love,  
many a night I lay stretched  
by your side in that slumber  
when the mist of twilight swathed you.  
My love every leaflet of heather on you  
from Rubha Hunish to Loch Slapin,  
and every leaflet of bog-myrtle  
from Stron Bhiornaill to the Garsven,  
every tarn, stream and burn a joy  
from Romisdale to Brae Eynort,  
and even if I came in sight of Paradise  
what price its moon without Blaven?

Verse from 'An t-Eilean' (The Island), a poem by Sorley MacLean, who was born and raised in the nearby island of Raasay, who lived out his retirement in Skye and whose mother was a Nicolson from the Braes of Trotternish.

## Trotternish Peninsula

In Gaelic our home is Iochdar Thròndarnais. In English, we become the Trotternish peninsula. The root of this place name is Norse, telling us that our native soil was once Thronda's headland. Skye, the "great beautiful bird of Scotland", means winged island in Gaelic, and we are Skye's eastern wing. As the largest island of the Inner Hebrides, Skye has a population of 8,500. The people of Trotternish number 1,400 and while we are scattered throughout, there are four population localities – Staffin, Kilmuir, Uig and the district of Kensalyere and Borve.



## Our Natural Environment

*'Chan fheum an neach a shealbhaicheas an toradh an blath a mhilleadh'*

*'He who inherits the fruit must not destroy its blossom'*

### Geology: Older than the hills

You could be forgiven for imagining that Trotternish is older than many a place you've visited before. Everywhere you look, there is massive evidence of our aged world and our people's history in it. You can clearly see the evolution of our rocks, from the Jurassic era of the dinosaurs, through immense volcanic activity and glaciation to the familiar Trotternish of today. Geological wonders are to be found at the Storr, Beararaig, the Kilt Rock, the Quaraing, Rubha Hunish and Baile nan cnoc. The greatest landslip in the British Isles is happening here and older residents from Flodigarry remember planting potatoes where the sea now encroaches. With such a magnificent geology, there is a real challenge for us all to learn much more about this asset and to look after it sensitively.

### Palaeontology: The UK's most important dinosaur discoveries

Our rocks are a magnet for palaeontologists. Scotland's only dinosaur fossils have been found on the east coast of the peninsula, and amongst the species positively identified are the cetiosaurus, the hardrosaur, the stegosaurus and the coelophysus. Dougie Ross of Staffin Museum says, *"In the closing years of the last millennium, the Staffin Jurassic beds yielded dinosaur fossils of international importance. There is no doubt that Staffin is now recognised as the dinosaur centre of the UK."*

Local people and visitors need to be encouraged to enjoy this asset without damaging it. A more reliable reward must be reaped for offering education and enjoyment of this resource. Staffin Community Trust has presented plans for a 'museum in the environment', to enable our heritage to be better understood and more accessible for ourselves, our visitors and students. Such plans must be encouraged. In conjunction with the local museums, this idea presents considerable potential.

### Flora and Fauna: The best mountain plants in Skye

In the Initial Review, many children were quick to point out how lucky we are to be able to breathe good clean air in Trotternish. It is refreshing to know that our children care about their world, and it is heartening that they are growing up in a place where the quality of our environment is high. Almost half of our landscape is made up of peatland. The Trotternish ridge is the richest place in Skye for arctic and alpine plants, including the Alpine Pearlwort, the Mountain Avens, and the rare Koenigia Islandica. Our mountain birds include the golden eagle, the raven and the buzzard.

Trotternish is home to a wide range of seabirds, many of whom nest on our cliffs. The Sea Eagle has returned and his old Gaelic name, iolaire sùil na grèine, has revived since his reintroduction. Our lochs offer the opportunity to see Whooper Swans and many ducks. Wildlife to be enjoyed and protected at sea includes otters, porpoises, dolphins, seals and whales. The quality of our sea, lochs and rivers in Trotternish is assessed to be excellent, and we aim to keep it that way.

### Local Biodiversity: Protecting our Assets

On lower ground, the Corncrake finds cover in the traditional hay meadows of Kilmuir and Earlais, and though not great, their numbers are significant. This endangered species was once such a part of crofting life that he has nine Gaelic names. The challenge is to continue to provide the corncrake with this habitat. In Kilmuir and Earlais in 2000, 41 crofters benefited from the Grasslands for Corncrakes Scheme. Successful well targeted schemes such as this, with environmental benefits, are seen as the way forward in crofting.

A mere 1% of our landscape is under woodland now. In some places a reduction in grazing pressure would facilitate natural regeneration. Crofter Forestry offers the possibility of re-establishing a range of native trees where conditions are suitable. This can enhance crofting incomes and benefit biodiversity. A great challenge here is to reduce our 10,000 sheep and put cattle back on the ground.

The significance of our natural habitats and landscape quality is such that 14% of the Trotternish peninsula is protected by Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and European Special Areas of Conservation designations. Along with its National Scenic Area, the land under top tier heritage designation amounts to one third of Trotternish. These internationally important natural features present a great opportunity for the people of Trotternish, to build on our tourism potential through good interpretation and facilities, and to enable entry into agri-environment schemes. The challenge is to maintain and enhance these significant habitats.



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## Our People and their Culture

*'Fhad's a bha Neacallach ann a Rubha Hunish'*

*'As long as there has been a Nicolson in Rubha Hunish'*

### Young People: Why are they leaving?

The 1,400 people who live here today are a mixed population. A significant number have moved from the cities of the south in search of a better quality of life. Their neighbours are the many clans and families who have been in Trotternish for at least a millennium.

Dùthchas sees the outmigration of our young people as one of the most serious threats to the future stability of Trotternish. The gap is mostly felt in the 18-35 age range. Our young people are leaving because of the struggle to find year round, meaningful employment, in an area where seasonal tourism is the prime economic provider. The other main reason for leaving is the struggle to put an affordable roof over their heads, in an area where 14% of houses are holiday homes.

Trotternish is a great place to begin your life and to end your days, but there's a yawning gap in the middle. If young people are to contemplate staying here, we must involve them in the planning process to deliver their needs. Young people presented their views during the Initial Review, and these should not be forgotten. A youth café was the most popular idea in the Uig community, for example. Having been selected as one of three Skye and Lochalsh communities for the

Community Learning Partnership, we have highlighted youth needs as the top priority in the lifelong learning drive for Trotternish. We see a great challenge here to reverse the philosophy from "there is nothing for me here" to "everything I want is here".

### A Gaelic Stronghold: Tha Gàidhlig mhath air a bruidhinn an-seo

We are the stronghold of Gaelic in Skye. Over 50% are Gaelic speakers. Two of our four primary schools offer full time education through the medium of Gaelic. Support for the language is also nurtured through Gaelic playgroups, nurseries and the Gaelic choir. We hope to build on the success of Fèis Thròndarnais, which was piloted by Dùthchas. There are also personal challenges here. If we have Gaelic, let's keep it alive by speaking it. If we don't have Gaelic, we might enjoy learning the language.

### Crofting: A socially precious institution


They say that successful rural development is about equal investment in a place, its people and their economy. That isn't a new concept - it existed here within living memory. This was the essence of crofting, which remains a socially precious institution - less about keeping livestock than about keeping people in rural places.

### Working the land in harmony with nature

Many of us live on a croft. This offers significant numbers the opportunity to build a home and work the land. Until recently







the croft provided an important supplement to the family income. Changing agricultural practises in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have led to an imbalance in stocking and damage to our natural resources. Crofters need adequate incentives to help improve environmental and economic gains.

## Produce: Let's grow, buy and sell local produce

When the crofters of Borge and Anishader bought their crofting estate in 1994, they broke new ground in Skye. Their township Trust has been a good role model for community control and decision making. The Trust plan to move towards low impact crofting, by aiming for niche markets with a local label for added value meat and vegetables. This is difficult in an island where there is no slaughterhouse or processing facilities of any kind. We need to acknowledge the value of what we have to offer, and aim to produce our own meat and vegetables rather than import them from thousands of miles away. This has wider benefits by reducing 'food miles'. Skye lamb is now available for sale through the Skye Machinery Ring. Crofters from Borge, Glenhinnisdale and Glenconnon are participating in this project. The Skye and Lochalsh Horticultural Development Association are taking great strides towards encouraging crofters to grow and market their own produce. We must have faith in our own abilities and support our own growers.

## Heritage, Built and Living: Memories and Monuments

Trotternish has benefited immensely from the Kilmuir Museum of Island Life, and Staffin Museum. While the museums themselves are interesting, the people who run them contribute hugely to the experience. Memories and monuments have a meaningful role in our cultural heritage. We need to nurture local people to share their local knowledge. No monument on the west coast outshines Duntulm Castle, but it has no parking, no toilets and you visit the building at your own risk. With investment, we have the will to do something special there – with integrity and by involving local tradition bearers.

## Archaeology: I gaze at ruins with immortal eyes

There are 24 'scheduled' ancient monuments identified by Historic Scotland in the Trotternish peninsula. These include forts, cairns, brochs, standing stones and a monastic settlement. There are a multitude of unscheduled monuments here too, and very many which are not yet recorded. The discovery in 1993 of a rock shelter at "An Corran", overlooking the shore at Staffin, transferred our known human history on Skye from the Neolithic to the Mesolithic age, and we instantly gained 4,000 years in antiquity. An Corran made news throughout the UK. The future potential for interpreting and accessing our archaeology is exciting.

## Employment – A' tighinn beò

Tourism, distribution, the agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture sector and construction are our principal sources of employment and income.

## Cultural and Green Tourism

Most of our jobs are currently in tourism. It is not enough though to merely hope that people will visit us: we must go out and tell them why Trotternish is special. We have much to offer the modern tourist, who is very interested in learning about our environment, culture and ways of life. We also have much to learn about marketing and the opportunities to reach millions through the Internet. Since it opened in 2000 the leadership centre of Columba 1400 has become an important employer. We must see that our communities make full use of this resource and that our natural and cultural strengths are developed there.

## Activity Holidays are Physical, Emotional and Spiritual

John White of Whitewave – Skye's Outdoor Centre in Kilmuir – pioneered the concept of activity holidays in Trotternish. In support of outdoor education, he says, *"It doesn't matter whether you go for a simple walk down the croft or a challenging sea kayak. The experience is physical, emotional and spiritual. We want our daughter to grow up in a real world, not a virtual one."* As more people spend their lives in front of the VDU by day and television by night, they are desperate to experience the real things in life. They want to catch a fish light a fire, climb a hill, learn a little Gaelic or a local song. These experiences are memorable and life changing, and we can offer them in abundance. The challenge is to organise ourselves to take full advantage of these unique opportunities.

## Jobs and skills to strengthen our identity

The Gaelic College of Sabhal Mór Ostaig has brought many benefits to the Sleat peninsula in south Skye. We too must localise educational opportunities and access a full range of digital telecommunication services. There is scope for Trotternish to strengthen its links with the evolving University of the Highlands and Islands Millennium Institute (UHI), through the proposed 'museum in the environment' and Columba 1400, a recognised learning centre for the UHI ADAPT LINC project. This project provides access to on-line learning. There are currently 8 people in Trotternish studying degree course modules in this way. Access of this sort is a new opportunity for us. We must build on our cultural and musical traditions too. The area needs industrial units, inward investment, and jobs and skills that strengthen our identity. We also need better recreational facilities. If our young people don't find these things here, they will go and find them elsewhere.

## Marine and Fresh Water Resources

Loch Snizort is the main fishing port and aquaculture centre in Trotternish. We need to upgrade vital infrastructure and support schemes which make available local fish and seafood for our tables at home and in our restaurants. Marine and fresh water resources are important in tourism too. The challenge is to maintain these resources sustainably.

## Services

### Access Concerns: “Disabled people are trapped in their homes”

Our communities have a large proportion of elderly people. Old folks’ homes are located at Staffin and Uig. Many elderly and disabled people receive home care. Weekly surgeries are held at Staffin and Uig also. Our communities expressed concern at the great distance from specialised medical care. Disabled people feel trapped in their homes here, since access to surgeries, shops, post offices, hotels and other public places is so difficult. It is crucial to involve wheelchair users at the planning stage of developments. While there are local playgroups and nurseries, the nearest full time childcare establishment is in Portree.

### Transport: High costs and poor roads

We have a very high cost of living in terms of food, animal feedstuffs and building materials. Most of us have cars, but many of us cannot afford to run them due to the costs of petrol, the Skye Bridge, and ferry charges. Combined costs have far reaching implications for transporting goods and sustaining economic activity. Not discounting the number of jobs in distribution, there is a challenge to get heavy vehicles off the road and to transport heavy goods by boat. Many of our roads are in a very poor state and unfit for the increased summer transport. In 1999, a group representing Dùthchas visited Sogn og Fjordane in rural Norway. They were deeply impressed by the excellent, low-cost, integrated transport systems and their impact on rural development. Can we do the same?

### A New Pier for Uig

It took Staffin Community Trust five years to raise £260,000 for a new slipway. The slipway was built of rocks from the shore and looks good. Boats can berth at any tide now and this has had a positive impact on the local economy. At Snizort, Camas Mòr, Balmaqueen and Uig the slipways need substantial investment. In Uig a vast upgrading has been priced at £4 million to develop our fishing, recreational opportunities and ferry service. The Uig Community Development Association has worked to secure retention of the ferry service to the Western Isles. This provides ten, full-time, year round jobs - more than any other employer in Trotternish in the year 2000. These jobs must be protected. The Association’s crusade has lead to welcome investment by The Highland Council. However we must continue to fight for the £4 million upgrade required in the long term at Uig.

## It's Time to Invest in Our Assets

A healthy community is one that invests in its assets. We have the beginnings of community ownership in crofting; one of the strongest forces of Gaelic speakers in Scotland; some of the best hill walking in Europe; significant numbers of globally endangered corncrakes; Britain’s most important dinosaur discoveries and a natural and cultural heritage to rival anywhere in the world. We have a ferry to the Western Isles. Columba 1400 is taking a stand on the need for youth leadership. We have art studios, horse riding stables, an activity centre, museums, boat cruises, shops, cafes, a brewery, a pottery, community halls, old folks’ homes, hostels and hotels. We have precedents for improved infrastructure. We have a good standard of primary education, and local musicians and writers to inspire us.

### Sustainability is about confident communities

Everyone in Trotternish is a unique asset with unique talents to offer. If we are to build a future from our assets, we need to develop our skills. We are discovering that to watch your own ideas come to fruition is as satisfying as watching your children grow up. We need to create an increased pride in our place, our culture and our traditions. That is not a job for somebody else: it is a job for all of us. We need to find our own voice. That is what Sorley Maclean did, and we can find a great source of inspiration by looking at our world through his eyes. “Let’s put a new song in our mouths.”

*Aig obair còmhla ri chèile*

*Dùthchas is sowing seeds of sustainability in the Trotternish peninsula*

### 3. Sustainability Profile



### Sustainability Goals

Having identified the key issues for the Trotternish Peninsula, as set out in the previous section, four Sustainability Goals were developed. For each Goal we also developed four Sustainability Objectives. We will use these Sustainability Goals and Objectives to steer the way and to measure progress towards the sustainability of our area in the coming years. These Sustainability Goals and Objectives have already been used to identify this area's Sustainability Priorities. The Sustainability Goals and accompanying Sustainability Objectives are:

#### Goal 1: Making the most of natural and cultural resources without damaging them

- Protecting and enhancing natural resources and protecting their value
- Protecting and enhancing cultural resources and protecting their value
- Promoting sustainable and innovative use of natural resources
- Promoting sustainable and wise use of cultural resources

#### Goal 2: Retaining a viable and empowered community

- Retaining a balanced and healthy population
- Supporting community empowerment
- Ensuring equal access to employment
- Ensuring equal access to essential services

#### Goal 3: Reducing problems of remoteness by delivering local needs locally and reducing dependence on external inputs

- Improving the local market for goods and services
- Promoting equal and effective access to goods, services and markets
- Providing an adequate Information Technology resource
- Reducing reliance on imports and subsidies

#### Goal 4: Avoiding harmful effects on other people, places and future generations

- Supporting the wise use of energy
- Promoting waste minimisation and management
- Supporting 'green' business and community initiatives
- Promoting co-operation with other communities



## Sustainability Priorities

Using the information on key issues created through our community survey and agency data search, we identified a range of topics which we need to take action on if we wish to make progress towards sustainable development. This list was identified by comparing current circumstances in the Trotternish Peninsula with the Sustainability Goals and Objectives. In this way it was possible to identify crucial 'gaps' in current development provision and action. These priorities will change over time, as circumstances change.

From this list, the Trotternish Advisory Group selected five topics for immediate action, while the other issues were identified as areas for future action. Strategy Groups were set up for these five topics. The other issues identified as areas for future action, are important to the sustainable future of the Trotternish Peninsula, and a lot of discussion will be needed in the future to progress these other topics.

Topics selected for immediate Action	Topics for future Action
Trotternish Trails & Interpretation	<i>Young Returners</i>
Diversification, local produce & markets	<i>Increase local involvement in planning</i>
Transport infrastructure	<i>Essential Services</i>
Renewable Energy	<i>Reducing reliance on imports</i>
Waste Reduction	<i>Active habitat management</i>

The Strategy Groups comprise both community and Partner agency representatives, with interest and expertise in the topic. The Groups have created plans for each of the five selected topics. A central task in working towards sustainability is maintaining an awareness of the potential positive and negative impacts. The Groups developed plans to maximise positive impacts, achieve added value and reduce negative impacts.

*For further detail on the role of these Sustainability Goals and Objectives in our Strategy, please refer to the 'Sustainability Profile for Trotternish' referred to in Figure 3. For more detail on Sustainability and Sustainability Priorities for Trotternish, please refer to the 'Sustainability Profile for Trotternish, Appendix 2: Gap Analysis' as referred to in Figure 3.*

## 4. Sustainability Plans

The Strategy Groups worked in co-ordinated meetings to develop action plans for their topics. Along the way they consulted with specially selected 'Reference Groups' made up of 'experts' on the topic from home and abroad, including Partner agencies. The Groups identified:

- Their **Vision** for the topic
- Their **Objectives** for meeting the vision
- Their **Priorities** for action
- The **Actions** required to deliver the objectives

This section presents the plans developed by the five Strategy Groups and their achievements to date.



## Trotternish Trails and Interpretation

**GROUP VISION: “To create Trails throughout the Trotternish peninsula for everyone to enjoy, highlighting what is special here along the way with interpretation, and creating benefits for local people, their economy and their surrounding natural world. ”**

*“Live interpretation is by far the best”*

Who named every peak, pass and pinnacle on the remarkable ridge that stretches almost the entire length of our peninsula? Before there were roads, it was the Trotternish ridge which connected the four main townships together. Beinn eadara is “the hill in between” Staffin and Uig. Bealach nan Coisichean is “walkers’ pass”. Long ago, these “trails” were interpreted for us, and their stories deserve to be shared.

There is a lot we can do to enhance the enjoyment of our trails in Trotternish. Many of the trails being planned will be for walkers, but some might be enjoyed on horseback, on a bicycle or in a wheelchair. The ridge will not be the sole focus of the trails - we must include something for everyone. In the summer of 2000 an Iron Age souterrain was discovered near the main road at Kilvaxter. An exciting community dig followed, and once it is developed, the Kilvaxter site will be accessible to people with a range of mobility challenges.

Tourism is our prime economic provider, and many visitors come for activity holidays. Our trails are a big part of that, and there is a challenge to make Trotternish stand out in the competitive global market place. To date we have not done this well. On the strength of our trails, via the internet, we can market Trotternish as a brilliant destination for a wide range of activity holidays from walking and horse riding to bird watching, learning about our fascinating rocks and dinosaurs, angling, painting and photography. But we are also the stronghold of Gaelic in Skye. Why don't we make more of that asset by encouraging people to come here to learn Gaelic, and to hear great local music while boosting our local concerts and ceilidhs?

Appropriate, sensitive and imaginative interpretation of our natural and cultural assets is one of our key objectives. Through this we can manage visitor pressure better, and protect sensitive sites. We need to tell people all about the world they will see round about them, and the life and times of people who have gone before. We also need to tell people where they can get water, buy a cup of coffee, a meal, a painting. And while maps, guidebooks and marketed tourism can do this to some extent, who better to offer the rounded picture of our world than ourselves?

We need to create an increased pride in our wild world, our culture and our traditions. And what of the adventurer in ourselves? Is it enough to only see the Quaraing on the calendar or at a distance from the kitchen window? Or would it be more fun to feel the mountain air in our own lungs, to

smell the first flowering orchids, to catch sight of a ring ouzel with our own eyes? From Gaelic to archaeology, from geology to ornithology, from botany to place names, from palaeontology to crofting, there is so much to discover and to learn here. You can have a multitude of memorable cultural experiences in your own backyard. And you are then in a prime position to communicate these to visitors with live interpretation which is warm, friendly, informative and certainly worthy of an income.

## Priority Objectives and Actions

**To identify our key features and current provision, and then to draw out a theme or themes for the Trotternish peninsula**

- To create an inventory of existing resources and special features
- To thereafter classify which resources and features are appropriate for the agenda of ‘Trotternish Trails and Interpretation’ (making categories and headings)
- To pin point for ourselves a really strong theme or themes from the inventory so that we can confidently say “Trotternish is special because ...”
- To liaise with relevant landowners at an early stage – that is Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department and at grazings level
- To encourage people to visit sites which are robust, rather than directing them to fragile ones which could have a negative impact on our natural assets (e.g. Bereraig is such a site, where fossils are being depleted)

**To identify and target the customers and the market:**

- To conduct a basic survey with B&Bs, hotels etc. to determine what variety of visitors there are and what they are looking for
- To identify the targeted markets for these trails to assess the numbers, range and type of people who are coming here
- To find out what Scottish Tourist Board and Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board are doing with niche marketing in this topic
- To market Trotternish via the internet with a web page
- To provide family tickets on bus to make affordability a carrot for the trail
- To create a colourful map of the Trotternish area to show more trails than at present, & to distribute it
- To provide guidelines of where to go, without over-commercialising walks

**To plan a series of Trails, to source funding and initiatives through which to promote our key features, protecting and enhancing our environment as we go**

- Find out more about funding and initiatives
- Interpretation is the key so find out which routes will bring this out best
- Propose a pilot route for this project



- Look at route guides and extract walks from there
- Look at maps (Pathfinder)
- Investigate grants for access regarding above

## Other Objectives

- To develop a network of Trails and promote them
- To provide education and interpretation about what makes Trotternish unique.

## Projects

### *Dùthchas Demonstration Project*

As their Demonstration Project this Group used their Dùthchas Seedcorn Grant to carry out research involving the community, into natural and cultural features suitable for the basis for Trails themes and new interpretation.

### *Kilvaxter Souterrain*

Excavation of the souterrain began in the summer of 2000. In 2001, the site will be prepared for display to the public. A car park will be constructed to permit access to the public. This Dùthchas initiative was enabled through the generosity of the crofting tenant, and the support of Kilmuir Community Council, Highland Council, Skye and Lochalsh Enterprise and Historic Scotland.

### *Duntulm*

Duntulm Castle has been a landmark to the Picts, the Saints, the Vikings, the Lords of the Isles and the Jacobites. It was chosen in the Initial Review as the priority project for Kilmuir. Dùthchas created a partnership with the local community, The Highland Council and Historic Scotland. A detailed project plan was prepared by archaeologist, Roger Miket, and is now under the care of a local Trust. We want to ensure that Duntulm is a proud and prominent landmark when people are celebrating the year 3,000.

### *Saint Columba's Loch*

In the past, this site had a monastery, and early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the loch was drained by "An Dotair Bàn", (Alasdair MacLeod,) to create land for local people. Today the wet habitat provides an important nesting place for the Corncrake. The site has a remarkable cultural and natural heritage and is a good study of land use down the centuries. For all of those reasons, Dùthchas has been pursuing a partnership to create a footpath with interpretation. The partners include the crofting tenants, Kilmuir Community Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Highland Council and the Skye and Lochalsh Footpaths Initiative, the Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department, Historic Scotland and Columba 1400.

## *"GIS": Geographical Information Systems*

This Group has been experimenting with a 'Geographical Information System' to plan a future trails network. The system allows us to present maps of Trotternish with local knowledge set alongside more factual data. If issues of copyright and system costs can be overcome in the future, GIS will be a useful tool to market Trotternish. We could use it on a web page and people from all over the world would be able to magnify images of our landscape, depicting trails, local faces, wildlife and stories.

## Group members

Alaistar Nicolson (Borve), Bill Lawrence (Solitote), Kenneth Willoughby (Ellishader), Gerlinde Krug (Glenhinnisdale), John Phillips (HC Ranger), Stephen Varwell (Scottish Natural Heritage), Donald Kennedy (Skye & Lochalsh Footpaths' Initiative)

## Diversification, local produce and markets

### GROUP VISION:

**“To create a viable, social, economic environment to keep people on the land”**

*“It costs more to buy a leg of New Zealand lamb in the Co-op store than it does to buy one of our own sheep”*

The majority of crofters rear sheep locally, but stock is almost always finished and sold very many miles from home. And the irony is that we will then go and pay exorbitant prices for New Zealand lamb in the Co-op store! This makes no sense. Under the current regime, it has been impossible for crofters to positively plan their agricultural units as viable businesses. If crofting crumbles, then the populations of our rural areas are under threat.

Some ten years ago, there was a slaughtering facility on Skye. It is understood that this was not economically viable. A strong force believes that we cannot afford to pin our hopes on getting a local – or even a mobile – abattoir here since it can be a struggle for large slaughterhouses to be viable. However, another force believes that we should not give up the fight for a Skye abattoir.

The local market for homegrown produce has increased significantly in recent years. Through the co-ordination of the Skye Machinery Ring, a pilot project involving local crofters is underway to finish and sell Skye lamb. The project offers advice and support direct to crofters, to enable them to finish their own lambs. Skye Machinery Ring also co-ordinates haulage to Dingwall for slaughter and the sale of the lamb direct to participating wholesalers. Initial feedback from the wholesalers and the consumers of the first batches of lamb processed has been very good.

The Skye and Lochalsh Horticultural Development Association is a local driving force in the horticultural industry, with 45 units currently producing vegetables for sale on the home market. Through their Horticultural Diversification Project, crofters can get a management premium for diversifying from livestock into horticulture.

Local people are frustrated that they cannot buy fish from local fishermen, since the bulk of our landings go to Spain. The Dùthchas survey demonstrated a significant desire to develop niche marketing of local produce and local farm shops. Our island has long considered a local label for its goods. The Skye name has worldwide appeal. A Skye label might be applied to lamb, beef, fish, fruit, vegetables and craft items. Skye and Lochalsh hosts a Food and Drink Festival and a Directory, focusing on added value and linking producers and consumers. Skye & Lochalsh Enterprise Company is a member of Food Futures, a three-year national partnership project run by the Soil Association and funded by the National Lottery Charities Board.

Clearly, there is a growing market for quality local produce and an interest in reducing ‘food miles’ locally. It takes

considerable time and funds to vitally instil local confidence, provide skills and training, and boost opportunities for the growth and creation of local produce and its subsequent sale. The benefits of linking local produce with consumption are many. Not least, it can strengthen local confidence – by reinforcing the concept that with a little determination and hard work, you can reverse a hopeless situation by making things happen yourself.

### Priority Objectives and Actions

**To set up experimental horticultural units with diversification a priority, by building on what has already been achieved elsewhere on Skye.**

- Any initiatives must be practical and within the means and abilities of crofting households
- Link in with the Waste Group to create a composting scheme which focuses on horticultural producers and gardeners
- Link in with the Skye & Lochalsh Horticultural Development Association co-ordinator to promote horticultural production:
  - practical units
  - low capital costs for unit set up
  - on site practical training – NOT days away (soil analysis, disease problems etc) to meet demand
  - publicise local produce (what is available and where) to customers through local press
  - make producers/potential producers aware of opportunities through local press
  - advise potential growers of growing techniques
- Produce a three-year development plan
- Private contribution required by crofter with match funding
- Build confidence with more education
- Change legislation so that you don’t necessarily have to keep livestock to be working the land by pressing relevant public agencies and create conversion payments for diversification

**To educate people about new opportunities and promote local produce to everyone**

- Advise potential growers of growing techniques
- Provide practical training (soil analysis, disease problems etc) to meet demand

**To provide advice and guidance on processing**

- Encourage and increase the production of fruit and veg
- Change existing production methods
- Advice targeted to micro businesses



## Other Objectives

- To undertake study tours and research as to what is suitable locally
- To increase the scope of the existing machinery ring to include lightweight horticultural machinery and to encourage more people to become involved
- To look at taking a more flexible approach to the support system at a local level.
- To undertake market research to determine the size of the market for local produce with a potential Skye label

## Projects

As their Demonstration Project this Group used their Dùthchas Seedcorn Grant to:

- Establish five experimental units
- Provide training and assistance through Skye and Lochalsh Horticultural Development Association
- Training for new growers in soil testing, ground preparation, use of lime and fertilisers, composts, sowing, intermediate care, harvesting and marketing
- Investigate establishing a horticultural machinery ring, starting with a rotivator

## Group Members

John Angus Mackenzie (Borve), Dougie Ross (Staffin), Terry Pritchard (Earlais), Hector Macleod (Scottish Crofters Union), Catriona Maclean (HC Planning and Development Service), Carole Inglis (Food & Drink Officer, Skye and Lochalsh Enterprise)



## Transport Infrastructure

**GROUP VISION: “to support and develop the transport system (including public transport) which is cost effective and meets the needs of the indigenous and visiting population with minimum environmental impact”.**

*“We need a double track road from the Storr Lochs to Portree”*

Trotternish faces a number of severe transport issues. The majority of our roads are single track and many of these are in a poor state of repair. The prevalence of single track roads inhibits business development at the north end of Skye because of the difficulty of getting deliveries in and goods out. A better road is needed in Kilmuir, and from the Storr Lochs to Portree. In view of our growing awareness of sustainability issues, we are also aware of the potential negative impacts of this idea. We must consider the fact that a faster car route round the north end might result in a reduction in visitors staying overnight, since a quick day trip would be made more feasible. Other potential impacts include potential loss of ‘local character’, loss of habitats and increased pollution. We suffer from a lack of car parking at viewpoints, popular beauty spots and also at graveyards.

Fuel costs are high and rising. In Trotternish 30% of households do not have access to a car. This is slightly lower than the Scottish average of 45%. It should be noted that rural households sacrifice much in order to own a car because work and access to basic services is so difficult without your own transport. Public transport is not available in the evenings and is restricted to between 3 and 5 buses on week days, on the main routes only. Skye’s bridge tolls add considerably to transport costs on and off the island.

Those with mobility difficulties are often trapped in their homes and unable to participate in day to day local life or to access essential services. There is more traffic on the roads than there once was. In many places footpaths and pavements are needed for the safety of pedestrians and to provide pleasant easy walking for locals and visitors.

The Uig ferry terminal provides a gateway to the Western isles. We will fight to retain that facility because it is crucial to local business and transport. The terminal facilities need to be upgraded. Access to the ferry for foot passengers means a long walk the length of the pier. In wild weather this is hard work. Passengers and their bags become soaked and then people have to endure the ferry crossing shivering and wet. For those with mobility difficulties, this situation is of course ten times worse.

Community transport schemes are important to fill the gaps in rural areas such as ours and of course there is a need to co-ordinate these schemes with existing services. An Integrated Transport Plan which meets the different needs in the community and among our visitors is needed.

Information about our transport choices is not easy to come by. We need more bus timetables and we need to know who would use public transport, when, why and where. This was felt to be an important starting point by the Group in developing the strategy work.

### Priority Objectives & Actions

**To effectively use existing and new sea routes for freight and passenger transport, bearing in mind the impact on fragile roads**

- Obtain statistics re usage of existing sea routes (freight and passenger)
- Obtain more info re Norwegian model
- Pursue the Staffin to Gairloch ferry link (market research)

**To effectively use and improve the circular road system around the Trotternish peninsula incorporating side roads, and with greater use of public transport**

- Establish under what conditions people would use a bus service
- Encourage wider promotion of bus service (up to date timetables on bus shelters/available from local shops etc)
- Write to HC buses re introduction of incentive tickets
- Lobby Roads Dept re double track Staffin to Portree and general condition of roads
- Campaign for future safety of Uig bend

**To work towards a level European playing field, objectively to reduce fuel cost, road tax and the transport of all goods and animals**

- Establish if facts and figures are being looked at now
- Establish facts and figures re other countries (how costs are kept down etc)
- Lobby the Scottish Parliament re fuel and transport costs

**To ensure integration of modes of transport including community transport schemes**

- Lobby bus companies and other forms of transport regarding good transport information, regular posting of timetables on bus shelters and improved integration
- Obtain facts and figures from transport operators re usage of services
- Provide for and co-operate with cyclists and pedestrians
- Promote public transport
- Investigate government suggestions for a transport authority



### To develop Uig pier and bay area as a pivotal foundation of the transport system in Trotternish

- Identify good ideas from other areas – particularly Western Isles and surveys and studies already done
- From these ideas – come up with development plans/ funding bids
- Respond to those people who have come up with ideas and establish how they would move their plans forward

### Other Objectives

- To minimise fuel use and pollution

### Projects

As their Demonstration Project this Group used their Dùthchas Seedcorn Grant to undertake research to establish:

- Current barriers to use of local buses
- What can be done to make access to bus services easier
- Special needs of potential and current users, including local people and visitors
- The published Report is available from the local Dùthchas Office

### Group members

Donald John Beaton (Borgh na Sgiotaig), Andy Anderson (Earlais), Angus Lockhart (Earlais), Norma Macleod (Stafainn), Chirsty Mackinnon (HOST) and Graham Campbell (Skye & Lochalsh Enterprise).



## Renewable Energy in Rural Communities – “It can be done”

**GROUP VISION: “to be less dependent on external energy by effective use of local resources, to the maximum benefit of the community”.**

*“Why don’t we do something with all this water and wind?”*

During the wild, wet winter of 1999, an exasperated local resident asked the staff of Dùthchas “Why don’t we do something with all this water and wind?” The man’s question struck a chord. Trotternish has the potential to generate clean, cheap, renewable power for our communities and to generate income from sales to the Grid.

Energy costs here are horrendous – electricity, petrol, oil and coal. Freight on imported goods is high. This all combines to make the cost of living very high. The crofting way of life is a good foundation for keeping people in rural places. And it is a good resource for potentially cutting our living costs. If in the long term we can create energy from our significant number of crofts, that is very good news.

Our Group believes that the way to start is to lead by example with a small group of enthusiasts. Indeed, they are that group! They want to demonstrate to crofters and the local community generally that you can do it. To feed their inspiration, and get to grips with a complex subject, we held a seminar at Columba 1400 in 2000. There we learned from experts about the opportunities and the challenges of creating our own renewable energy. An exchange visit to Jutland in 2000 was also an inspiration, since most of the local energy projects there are community initiated, promoted, supported and used for local economic benefit.

Warmth from wood is available at Broadford, Isle of Skye, from Torren Heating which is the first fully commercial wood fuel energy company in Scotland. In the neighbouring Island of Muck, Ingenco provides wind energy for the equivalent of two thirds of the national average via a non grid community scheme. Portnahaven on the island of Islay leads the world in wave power technology since its electricity generating power station joined the Grid in 2000. We are aware that although it can be done, how it is done, in terms of landscape and environmental impacts is of crucial significance.

So what about the Trotternish peninsula? The National Grid, as currently structured, cannot accept power generated in our area. We need to lobby for improvements to the Grid to enable us to reap financial benefits from our energy potential. We currently produce electricity from a small hydro scheme at the Storr lochs. Our Group feels that we could do a great deal more. Renewable energy from wind, sea and water offers long term opportunities and the chance to significantly reduce fossil fuel consumption. Integrated community transport would reduce our use of fossil fuel energy.

## Priority Objectives and Actions

The Overriding objective is:

**“To own and share energy resources for the benefit of all the communities”.**

The other objectives are set in light of that overriding objective.

**To investigate and develop the production of energy in Trotternish through power generated by a range of means - wind, wave, tidal, hydro, biomass, solar, waste to energy and fuel cells in a safe, sustainable and environmentally friendly way using existing sources.**

- Instigate a programme of info about Renewable Energy opportunities for crofters
- Wind anemometer installation for which planning permission will be required
- Expertise needed, and this will grow with the Group’s advancement
- Motivate local people by showing them something – lead by example!
- Funding to investigate other existing projects by case studies and visits
- Funding for pilot project in Trotternish – adopting a “think big” approach
- Small scale water turbine projects for individual crofts
- Biomass – long term, linked to creating schemes
- Funding to employ help from existing renewable energy projects
- Show use of wind as a cheap source of power
- Look at connecting up to the Grid and using the money made to reduce local people’s electricity bills – reducing bills is in all our interests
- Encourage use of rivers and/or small burns – The Group highlight that a turbine could go on Kilmartin River (Staffin) and perhaps serve the new hall for Staffin. Another example is Conon River
- Try and locate plans for water wheels or wind mills

**Increase the awareness of energy efficiency including building methods and existing building stock; get Highland Council to help us**

## Other Objectives

- To consider the potential for interpretation of power plants – e.g. tourism
- To encourage bus companies and car owners to use bio diesel and LPG





## Projects

To design and build an affordable, energy efficient demonstration housing project of 4 – 6 units which will withstand the local climate, and can be easily replicated and a good rural model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Too often, the cheapest possible housing solution is used, without regard to local climatic conditions or the cost – in terms of both environment and money – of heating that building in the future. The eco-house idea focuses on genuinely affordable solutions to this problem. As their Demonstration Project this Group are using their Dùthchas Seedcorn Grant to embark upon an ‘Eco-house’ project. The aims are:

- Target most needy customers, especially young people
- Use eco build techniques and local materials
- Build in an existing community where adjacent land is available
- Create housing which is affordable to build AND run
- Manage the housing units as ‘show houses’
- Involve all the relevant agencies in this project

Scottish Homes and other key agencies are supporting this project.

## Group members

Ian Willoughby (Baile nan Cnoc), DL Mackenzie (Geàros), Donald MacDonald (Stafainn), Gavin Scott Moncrieff (Flodigarry), Angus Ross (Ellishader), Alister Hunter (Lionacro), Andrew Prendergast (Skye and Lochalsh Enterprise)

## Waste Reduction

### GROUP VISION: "Trotternish as a shining example of a waste free environment"

*"Why don't we have beach clean-ups, with a barbecue afterwards?"*

Waste reduction is now a global issue and pressure for changes in management of waste is being felt through national environmental legislation. Our own government has stressed a commitment to take measures to significantly reduce waste by 2010.

When tackling big issues like this, we need to begin at home and look at how we manage our own waste. That is why Dùthchas selected Waste Reduction as one of its most important topics to address. We have been considering how we can minimise the waste that we produce and reduce the potentially negative environmental impacts of the waste which we need to dispose of or store. There is now an increased recognition that the disposal of waste can harm other people and other places and thereby create a liability for future generations.

Being an island location with a small population, we face a particular challenge. Landfill is a crucial issue. It is often possible to reduce the amount of landfill through local recycling schemes. However our small population base makes this a huge challenge, because it is difficult to make recycling pay and to create new products and markets through recycling.

The composition of standard household waste offers real opportunities for recovery and processing of a significant proportion of current landfill. Composting is one of the best options and can reduce up to 25% of household waste. The Group acknowledges this, as well as the importance of educating ourselves on the issue.

### Priority Objectives and Actions

**To raise awareness so waste reduction is an integral part of all our lives (industry included) and is seen as having value**

- Publicity on cost to us all of waste disposal
- Information on waste amounts from Trotternish
- Demonstrate savings for business/domestic
- Business audits – all businesses – no matter what size
- Demonstrations e.g. recycling
- School projects and competitions – emphasise environmental issues that involve you – not just whales
- Landfill visit to raise awareness of where waste goes to
- Prize for community councils for waste minimisation initiatives
- Local conference on waste reduction

**To set up composting and other local recycling schemes and develop local markets for recycled materials:**

- composting project – link with Horticultural Association
- local glass crusher (possibly in combination with Western Isles) and find local uses, e.g. roads

- local paper re-use project – e.g. bricks, bales for animal bedding
- study other island schemes
- sponsorship from private firms for scrap recycling – e.g. cars, white goods plus action markets for these and other recycled materials
- waste wood scheme, similar to the existing pallets into bird boxes project
- aluminium recycling – quick to set up and there is value in aluminium. This can involve children since kids like collecting cans
- battery recycling project

**To raise the profile of litter reduction including fly tipping a priority**

- To secure action from businesses and communities – e.g. clean ups
- Litter/fly tipping education programme
- Lobby maritime organisations, fish farms etc. to reduce marine litter
- Promote good housekeeping by landowners
- Publicity on negative effects of litter
- Local initiative to uplift scrap vehicles
- To set up township tidy ups to secure reduction in agricultural litter
- To produce a study on environmental/economic impact of litter

### Other objectives

- To use more benign materials, and to secure reduction in unnecessary materials and the way in which they are used
- To make collection and segregation easy
- To provide information and build good links with waste management organisations, local, national and international
- To see disposal as a last resort and to make disposal safe and potentially recoverable

### Projects

The first step to reducing waste was to set up composting schemes in conjunction with the Skye and Lochalsh Horticultural Development Association. The Group was very pleased that local schools have been keen to participate. We believe that in this way, many local households can start to take more responsibility for the waste that we all produce. As their Demonstration Project this Group therefore used their Dùthchas Seedcorn Grant to:

- Establish composting schemes in 4 local primary schools
- Provide composting sites, bins and wormeries
- Use the compost in the school gardens
- Expand from this start to involve the wider community, house to house collections and centralised composting sites

### Group members

Sally Phelps (Kilmuir), John White (Kilmuir), Mark Goodwin (Glenhinnisdale), Mark Westwell (Balmaqueen), Alan Yeats (Highland Council), Bryan Bellwood and Lorna Walker (SEPA)

## 5. Implementing the Strategy



The detailed actions to be taken in implementing the first phase of the Strategy are set out in the 'Action Plan' enclosed at the end of the Strategy document.

The main elements will be:

### Organisational Framework

In order to implement the Strategy, the right organisational framework needs to be put in place. This will aim to:

- retain the partnership links required
- provide a community-based, legally constituted organisation to raise and hold funds and employ staff
- employ project staff to support the work in the community

Through a detailed consultation process, the Trotternish Advisory Group has agreed the main elements of this implementation framework. In brief, this will consist of:

- A new community organisation will be established for Trotternish to undertake the implementation and review of the Strategy. This will be a company limited by guarantee with charitable status
- A new post will be created to support the implementation work
- A Partnership Agreement will be drawn up between the community and agency partners needed to support the implementation of the Strategy

Resource implications:

- Additional resourcing will be required to establish the new organisation and post.

### Practical implementation

The actual work of implementing the Strategy will be undertaken on a phased basis, with regular reviews to allow for progress to be monitored and alterations/updates to the Strategy to be made. This is based on a 2-3 year cycle of implementing projects, monitoring progress and identifying the priorities for the next phase. Approximately every 5 years a full review of the strategy and its impacts on the area will take place.

### Measuring Progress

The first step for each Strategy Group will be to:

- recognise current circumstances
- identify a measure or indicator which adequately describes current circumstances. An example for the Diversification, Local Produce and Markets Group might be the number of new horticultural units created or the weight of fruit and vegetables produced by new producers each year

When the Groups review progress and plan further actions, they will look again at these 'measures' and see if they have changed. In this way the Groups will be able to assess how their actions have made an impact. Help will be sought, in measuring progress at an area level, through impact on our



Sustainability Goals and Objectives. Each Group may also wish to set clear practical targets for implementing their workplan – e.g. dates for completing activities.

## Reviewing Our Strategy

For the Strategy to remain relevant and useful to the community of Trotternish it must be an accurate and up to date statement of what is needed for a sustainable future. Therefore it is important that the Strategy is reviewed regularly and updated as necessary. It will be the responsibility of the proposed new Trotternish development association, in implementing the Strategy, to ensure that the process is reviewed. One suggestion is that every 3 years a Strategy Review Workshop is held in Trotternish, to which all relevant Partners, organisations, community groups and community members are invited.

Such a workshop would deal with:

- Reviewing our progress in Trotternish
- Revising our Strategy in view of reported progress and change
- Revising our Action Plans in view of progress and change
- Committing to our new Strategy and Action Plan

A full community survey would also be necessary in the future – possibly every 5 years – as the communities' needs adjust to new circumstances. An annual meeting between the 3 Dùthchas areas, in order to share experiences and assess progress may also be of benefit.

## Making Links

### Access to Information

A key part of the work of building this Strategy was assessing the information about the area held by the many organisations, both public and otherwise, who collect data in our area. In doing this we discovered that this information is very extensive, but is difficult to find out about and difficult to access. We also discovered that the particular information which we need to develop and assess meaningful sustainability indicators, is often not available at all. Accessing the information and resources required to establish a local Geographical Information Systems is equally problematic.

**We will work with our Partners to help identify the kinds of information we need to have access to and the gaps which presently exist in that information and look into ways in which Geographical Information Systems could be made more available to us.**

## Strategic Links

It is not enough for us to have produced a Strategy which meets our own local needs. For this Strategy to be successful and lead to meaningful change it must be linked to the plans and strategies of other bodies, both within and outwith the area, whose work influences our area. Each of the Dùthchas Partners has their own strategic plans and policies. These need to take account of our Strategy, so that these agencies can do their best to help us meet our Vision for the Trotternish Peninsula.

In a strategic context we must ensure that our Strategy plays a robust role in the strategic plans of our Partners and local organisations. We must be aware of what our Partners and local players are doing, and take every opportunity to work with them. The way in which the community dig at Kilvaxter and the Duntulm Castle Trust have forged ahead gives a strong indication of what can be achieved in this way. Among these other strategies some are key, and the links with our Strategy will be essential. In particular these links include:

- The Highland Community Plan
- Highland Council Structure and Local Plans
- Local Agenda 21
- Social Inclusion Partnership
- The Wellbeing Alliance

Relevant emerging initiatives include:

Local Economic Forum, Leader +

**We will work with all of our Partners and local organisations to ensure that the links are made between our Strategy and theirs.**

## Moving Forwards

This Strategy marks 'the end of the beginning'. Every long journey begins with one small step. The attached Action Plan will help us with those next early steps. Many issues and ideas have been raised. Still others will emerge as implementation progresses.

There are many difficult issues to be tackled and a lot of hard work ahead. To make meaningful progress we must never lose sight of the value of partnership and the need to 'speak with one voice'. A strategic approach will help us achieve that and maintain unity. We should keep in mind the challenges presented by our Sustainability Goals and apply these Goals to every decision we take.

As implementation progresses, we shall have to find ways to meet the resource needs which will arise. Organising ourselves in a way which makes it possible and practical to 'lever in' funding from a range of suitable sources will be crucial. Strategic decision making and the framework provided by the Strategy and Action Plan will be pivotal to this challenge. Using suitable methods for measuring and hence illustrating impact, progress and change in everything we do, will strengthen our ability to find ways to meet future resource needs.

**Now it is time to concentrate on singing 'our new song' with one voice.**

A man in a dark shirt and light-colored pants is bent over in a field, holding a long-handled shovel. The background shows a vast, open landscape under a bright sky. The text "our place in the future" is overlaid in a bold, sans-serif font.

**our place in the future**



... ach 's e obair beatha crìochnachadh  
... but it takes a lifetime to bring a worthwhile job to fruition



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