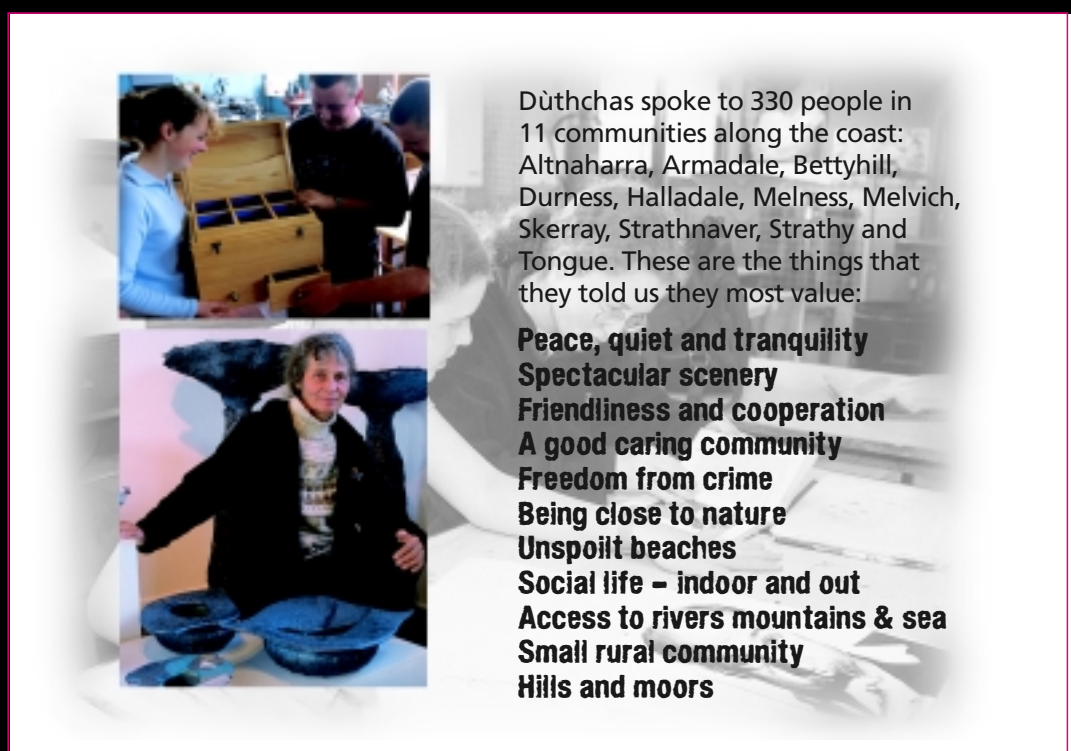


North  
Sutherland  
our place in the future

"We who are fortunate to make a living in North Sutherland must see to it that the next generation are never forced into a leaving that is not of their making. We must grasp this opportunity for those who belong, and want to continue to belong to North Sutherland, be they a generation native to the land or the children of those who have come to live among us, who want, along with us, only the best for the future of what is now their land too."

Joan Campbell, Melvich, speaking at the Dùthchas conference 'Looking After the Future' held in Strathy in April 1999.



Dùthchas spoke to 330 people in 11 communities along the coast: Altnaharra, Armadale, Bettyhill, Durness, Halladale, Melness, Melvich, Skerry, Strathnaver, Strathy and Tongue. These are the things that they told us they most value:

**Peace, quiet and tranquility**  
**Spectacular scenery**  
**Friendliness and cooperation**  
**A good caring community**  
**Freedom from crime**  
**Being close to nature**  
**Unspoilt beaches**  
**Social life – indoor and out**  
**Access to rivers mountains & sea**  
**Small rural community**  
**Hills and moors**

**"You can trust people here. It's a good and safe environment"**

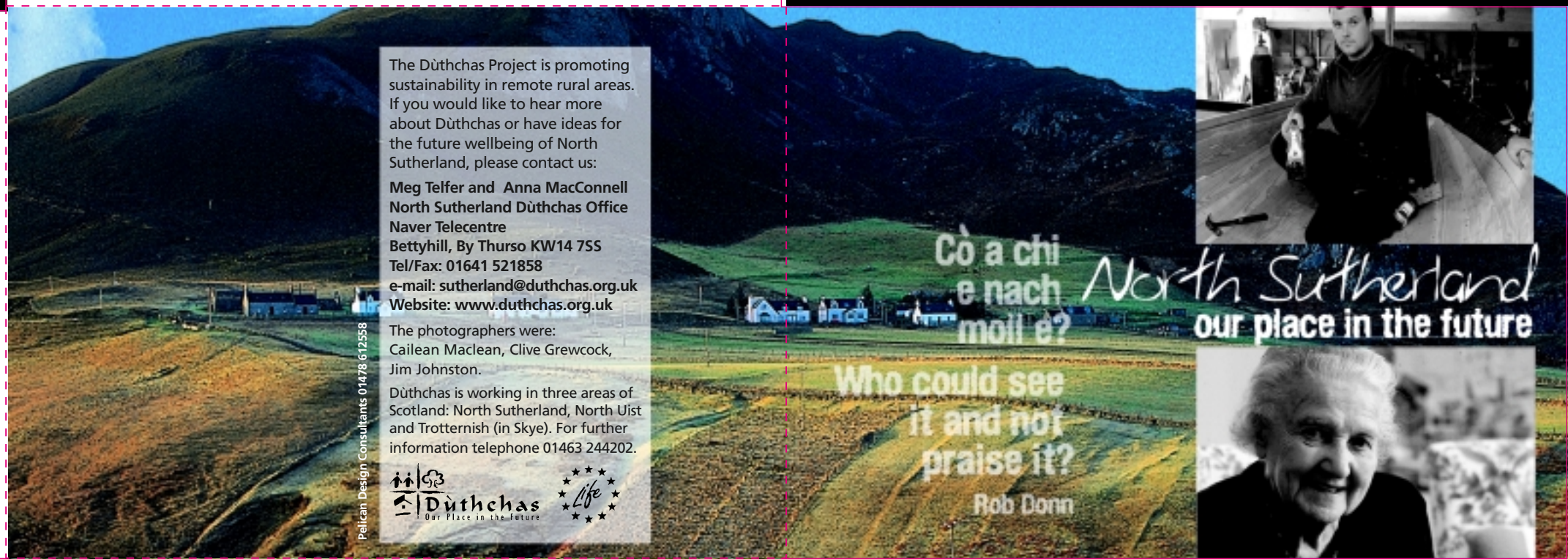
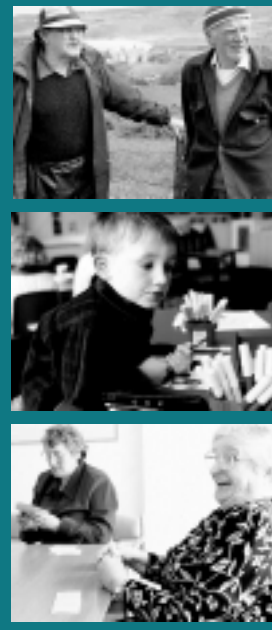
"The people here are friendly, there's helpfulness, kindness, honesty and community spirit ... if anyone has any problems people help and they rally round."

Sandra Mackay, Bettyhill

"I like the way of life and the easy going lifestyle. I like the independence and being my own boss. You can trust people here. It's a good and safe environment."

Marty Mackay, Durness

**"...helpfulness, kindness, honesty and community spirit"**



The Dùthchas Project is promoting sustainability in remote rural areas. If you would like to hear more about Dùthchas or have ideas for the future wellbeing of North Sutherland, please contact us:

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North Sutherland Dùthchas Office  
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Bettyhill, By Thurso KW14 7SS  
Tel/Fax: 01641 521858  
e-mail: sutherland@duthchas.org.uk  
Website: www.duthchas.org.uk

The photographers were:  
Cailean Maclean, Clive Grewcock, Jim Johnston.

Dùthchas is working in three areas of Scotland: North Sutherland, North Uist and Trotternish (in Skye). For further information telephone 01463 244202.

Pelican Design Consultants 01478 612558

**Dùthchas**  
Our Place in the Future

**Life**

Cò a chì e nach moll e?  
North Sutherland  
our place in the future

Who could see it and not praise it?  
Rob Donn



"the locals are friendly and everyone knows everyone and are always willing to help one another"

"I enjoy living here because of the freedom and open spaces. The locals are friendly and everyone knows everyone and are always willing to help one another."

Jamie Mackay, Strathy East

"This is a safe secure environment for my children – they can play and run free without the restrictions that would be placed on them anywhere else"

Francis MacLeod, Skerry





"We have privacy here and the land is productive."  
*Magnus Campbell, Laidnagullen*

"If there is another source of income then crofting is good because you have something belonging to yourself."  
*Willie Robert Mackenzie, Skerry*

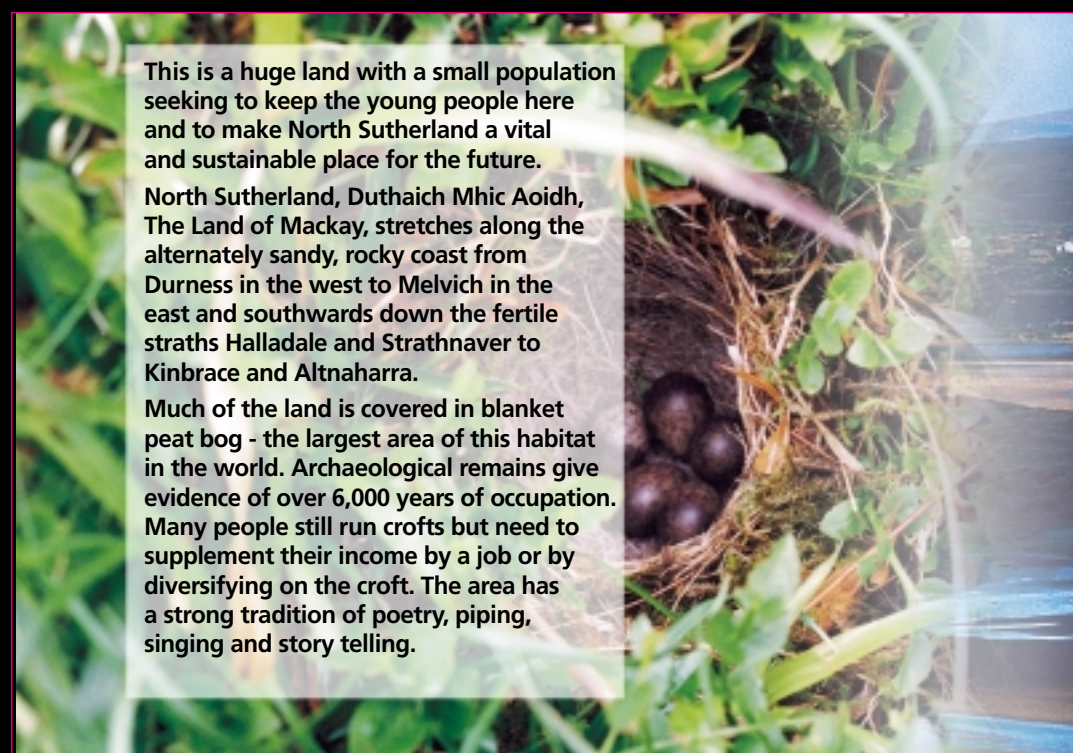
"Crofting has to be kept in the hands of practical crofters - not the theorists. If it doesn't involve sheep and cattle then it won't be crofting as we know it."  
*Len Mackay, Invernaver*



ideas  
for the  
future

There is no shortage of ideas of how we can develop this place... without changing what we most value. For instance:

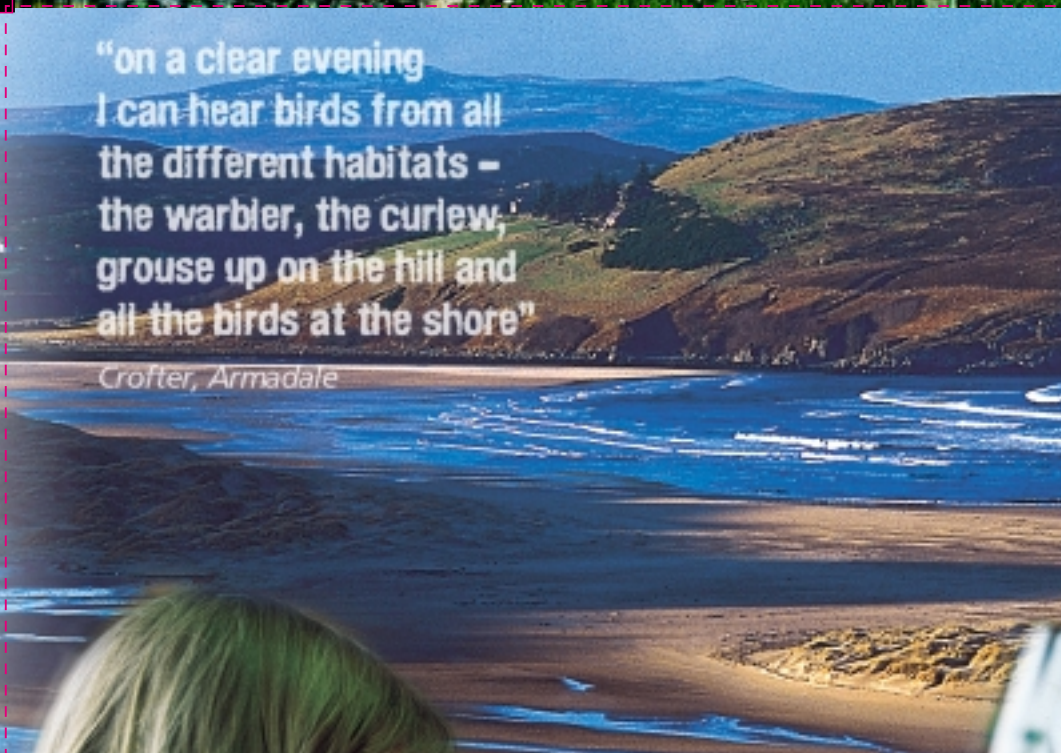
- Better public transport... inter community transport etc.
- Marketing of local products
- Interpretation and access to environment and cultural sites
- Making more use of village halls
- Better tourist facilities



This is a huge land with a small population seeking to keep the young people here and to make North Sutherland a vital and sustainable place for the future.

North Sutherland, Duthaich Mhic Aoidh, The Land of Mackay, stretches along the alternately sandy, rocky coast from Durness in the west to Melvich in the east and southwards down the fertile straths Halladale and Strathnaver to Kinbrace and Altnaharra.

Much of the land is covered in blanket peat bog - the largest area of this habitat in the world. Archaeological remains give evidence of over 6,000 years of occupation. Many people still run crofts but need to supplement their income by a job or by diversifying on the croft. The area has a strong tradition of poetry, piping, singing and story telling.



"on a clear evening  
I can hear birds from all  
the different habitats -  
the warbler, the curlew,  
grouse up on the hill and  
all the birds at the shore"

*Crofter, Armadale*



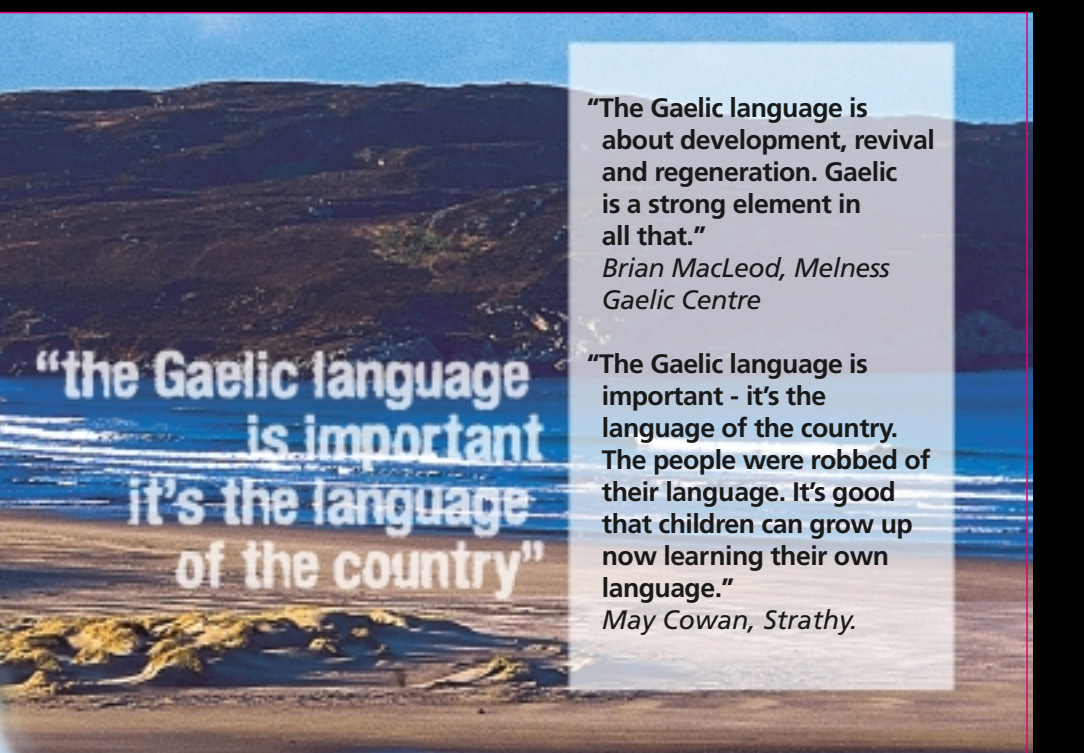
what do our  
children like?

"It's quiet and peaceful and no-one disturbs you. There isn't the air pollution like in the cities so we breathe healthy air. We have lots of clean beaches on the North Coast"

*Christopher Macintosh, Halladale, age 13*

"I like music and art best at my school. In music we learn Scottish songs and dancing. I love it too when we get visits from travelling shows, especially when we can join in"

*Hannah Wares, Melvich, age 9*



"the Gaelic language  
is important  
it's the language  
of the country"

"The Gaelic language is about development, revival and regeneration. Gaelic is a strong element in all that."

*Brian MacLeod, Melness Gaelic Centre*

"The Gaelic language is important - it's the language of the country. The people were robbed of their language. It's good that children can grow up now learning their own language."

*May Cowan, Strathy.*