

**Inside this edition:**

Highland LEADER 2007-2013 Programme in Sutherland	p2
North West Highlands Geopark	p2
Sutherland Partnership Partners	p2
Sutherland Development and Action Plan	p3
Theme 5: Natural Resources	p4



Ben Kilbreck at Dawn - part of the Sutherland Partnership Biodiversity Collection which is available for use by community groups for non profit making purposes. Image: Iain Sargeant

For more information on any of the items in this newsletter please contact us:

Fiona Mackenzie
Development Officer
Police Station
Main Street
Lairg
IV27 4DB

01549 402 646

Devofficer@sutherlandpartnership.org.uk

www.sutherlandpartnership.org.uk

You can also find us on
Facebook: Sutherland
Partnership

Welcome

Much has changed since the last issue of the Sutherland Partnership newsletter. We have bid farewell to Sutherland Partnership Manager William Sutherland and welcomed Fiona Mackenzie as our new Development Officer. Fiona is tasked with coordinating and supporting the Sutherland Development and Action Plan. Read more about Fiona's role and progress towards meeting the actions within the Plan on p3. The Highland LEADER Programme is coming to an end and has distributed over £1 million in European funding throughout the county. However, much also remains the same we are still faced with the same challenges of our rurality and peripherality and much more still needs to be done.





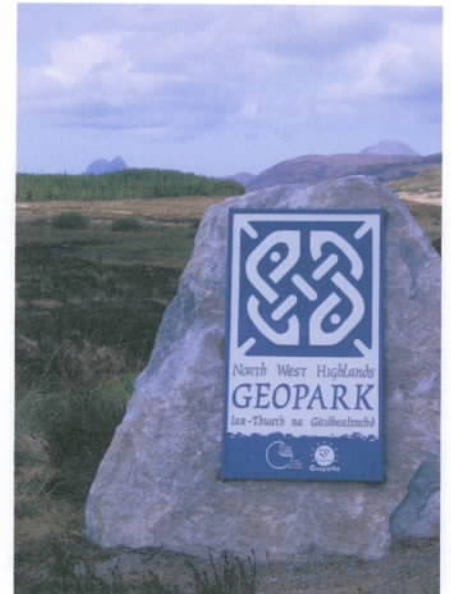
Highland LEADER 2007 - 2013 Programme in Sutherland

The LEADER Programme is coming to an end and during its lifespan Sutherland Partnership members have administered the Local Area Partnership, helping to distribute over £1 million of European funding throughout the county. Sutherland Partnership members have helped develop projects such as the North West Highlands Geopark, Lochinver Mission, Community Care Assynt, Scourie Pier, Golspie Community Power and numerous youth projects.

North West Highlands Geopark

The North West Highlands Geopark (NWHG) was awarded funding in 2009 from Highland LEADER, SNH and the Sutherland Partnership in order to employ a Georanger. The Georanger is tasked with delivering walks and talks to visitors and locals as well as producing a Geodiversity Audit and Local Geodiversity Action Plan. These documents will show the importance of our geological asset and identify actions in order to preserve and promote the geology.

The NWHG is in an exciting period of transition, previously managed by the Sutherland Partnership and supported by its members and other agencies. The five communities within the NWHG are now working towards establishing the Geopark as a social enterprise for the social, economic and environmental development of the local communities.



Sutherland Partnership Partners

The Sutherland Partnership is made up of a number of partner organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors. The Partnership provides an arena where members can work together to ensure that efficient services are delivered to the people of Sutherland.

Our partner organisations:

CVS North
Forestry Commission Scotland
Highlands and Islands Enterprise
National Farmers Union (Scotland)
NHS Highland
Northern Constabulary
North Highland College
Scottish Crofting Foundation
Scottish National Heritage
The Highland Council
Voluntary Groups East Sutherland



Sutherland Partnership Chairman Cllr Jim McGillivray

The Board meets quarterly and minutes of previous meetings are available to view on the Sutherland Partnership website.

Sutherland Development and Action Plan



SUTHERLAND DEVELOPMENT AND ACTION PLAN

SUTHERLAND – STRONGER - TOGETHER



Revised October 2011

The Sutherland Development and Action Plan is the result of a series of events led by the voluntary sector and supported by Sutherland Partnership partners. These events, beginning with the Sutherland Summit in September 2009, engaged the Sutherland community through a series of consultation events. The Action Plan is divided into eleven themes and identifies a series of actions to achieve economic, social and environmental benefits for Sutherland. The Sutherland Partnership Development Officer, is tasked with coordinating and supporting the delivery of the Plan as well as monitoring and reporting on its implementation.

This page will be used to highlight current projects happening in Sutherland which are contributing to bringing about actions within the Plan.

Sutherland Youth Conference 2012

A study commissioned by CVS North into the creation of a youth exchange programme highlighted the lack of opportunities available to young people in the area. It emerged from the consultation exercise that a desire existed amongst the young people to play a lead role in the creation of opportunities and activities for themselves.

As such the Sutherland Partnership in collaboration with CVS North and VGES is proposing a Sutherland wide Youth Conference to give young people the chance to discuss what opportunities they would like to see developed in Sutherland.

With the help of the Sutherland Youth Forum and Youth Development Officers we have consulted with young people in Sutherland to find out if they would like the opportunity to get together and discuss what would make Sutherland a better place to live. The Consultation Report is available on our website. The event is youth led and a steering group with representatives from each school catchment area has been formed with the support of Sutherland Partnership, VGES, CVS North and High Life Highland.

The Conference will be participative and allow the young people to work collaboratively to identify what challenges exist and solutions to overcome these. A list of actions identified by the young people will be produced and fed into the Sutherland Development and Action Plan where relevant organisations will then be identified in order to carry forward these actions.

Homecoming 2014

Scotland is planning another year of Homecoming in 2014 which provides an opportunity for our communities to develop new and capitalise on existing local events to attract visitors and encourage them to return.

CVS North and VGES were awarded funding from the Community Project Development Scheme administered by the Sutherland Partnership to investigate opportunities for Homecoming 2014. Macleod Associates were appointed to invite ideas from community groups that may be included within a programme of events for 2014 and a report for each area has been produced.

The reports found that the range of activities, events and potential ideas is more than enough to meet and exceed visitor's needs and expectations. The range of options for visitors is immense ranging from galas, highland gatherings, flower shows, exhibitions, heritage trails, walks, talks, music and ceildhs to mention a few. These events will provide an authentic visitor experience and could also potentially strengthen local identity and community pride.

A partnership approach was welcomed from respondents to the consultation and by working together for mutual benefit will bring greater benefits to the county. Work is ongoing to create a programme of events for Sutherland which will be promoted via a dedicated website.

Updates on progress towards the actions in the Plan are published on the Sutherland Partnership Website and on our Facebook page. If you want advice and support for your project get in touch with us or let us know what is happening in your area and we will ensure the Plan is updated.

Theme 5 Natural Resources

In each issue we will take a look at the projects which are going on across the county in order to meet the actions contained within the Development and Action Plan. As one of Sutherland's greatest assets is its natural resources we will start here, it also gives me an excuse to share some of the wonderful photographs in the Sutherland Partnership Biodiversity Collection.

Sutherland has a wealth of opportunities which can be developed to utilise, showcase and promote our natural resources. The geological richness of the Geopark offers significant tourism potential while woodland and timber resources can contribute to low-carbon housing and renewable heat as well as enhancing landscapes and biodiversity. Tides, waves and wind and water offer a range of opportunities for renewable energy generation. Sutherland's contribution to the world as a carbon sink should also be remembered as it is estimated that 400 million tonnes of carbon is locked up beneath the Flow Country. This is estimated to be more than two times more carbon than all the UK's plants and forests put together and would otherwise be released to the atmosphere and contribute to global warming. Collaborative development of markets for high quality agricultural produce has the scope to support and retain land use activity in Sutherland.

Faraid Head Puffin Link

Durness Community Council applied to the Sutherland Partnership Environmental Fund in order to enhance the visitor experience at Faraid Head by installing camera equipment. This allows visitors to view the puffins at close quarters with no disturbance caused to the birds. In this way we are making the most of our natural resources in a sustainable way as the birds are not disturbed and visitors understanding and knowledge of the creatures are increased.



Sutherland on Film

The Development and Action Plan recognises the potential of the Sutherland landscape to the film industry. The Highland Film Commission works to promote the Highlands to the film industry and a major new film is set to begin filming in Spring 2013 in Durness. The film, starring Kevin McKidd and Ashley Jensen is planned to be made in Durness in Spring 2013. Indian Summer is set in 1967 and describes the impact on a Highland family of a Native American US Marine's arrival in their community.

Sutherland Partnership Biodiversity Collection

The Partnership holds a library of biodiversity photographs which are available to community groups for non profit making purposes. Examples of the types of images available can be viewed on our Facebook page. The images to the right are taken from the collection. For more information and a list of the images available please contact us on 01549 402 646 or devofficer@sutherlandpartnership.org.uk



Images: Ken Crossan