

P15 Fox Point Path



Project Overview:

The project will upgrade parts of the path to allow visitors and residents of mixed abilities to explore the cultural and natural heritage of the Coigach coast from Polbain to Old Dornie Pier. This work will address pinch points and degraded parts of the path with a “light touch” so maintaining the rough nature of the path.

The landowner and the project lead suggested that that the path construct an extension to lead the walkers away from the now busy, industrial parking and pier loading area at the start of the path. This extension will be approximately 117m of new built path.

The project is a replacement for the Polbain Path Project.

Project lead organisation and other organisations involved: Coigach Community Development Company

Project Location: Dornie, Coigach

Project dates: August 2020-March 2022

Project Outputs

Measure	Target	Delivered	Notes
Upgrade 20m Full Build Aggregate Path, Revetment, and Top Side Ditch, 10m Pitching, 80m Stepping Stones over peat	110m	245m	220m of stepping stones, 25m Pitching, 2 water bars. Work adapted as appropriate.
Self closing gate and fencing at Polbain end of path	1	1	Pedestrian gate installed.
signage and interpretation panels at Old Dornie Harbour and Polbain Gate, and 4 way markers	6	3 waymarkers	Only 3 new way markers were required. Panel at Fox Point installed March 2022, Path extension completed March 2022. Plinth and int panel due for completeion May/June 2022.

Scheme Outputs

How has the project contributed to the CALLP Scheme Outcomes:

	1. The key features of the Coigach and Assynt Landscape will better understood and restored with a fit for purpose system in place to ensure the benefits are sustained.
	2. Where appropriate the connectivity and diversity of selected habitats will be mapped.

	3. Increased awareness and understanding amongst all individuals and groups of what makes Coigach and Assynt special and the threats to the unique heritage.
	4. Important elements of the built, cultural and natural heritage will be recorded, improved, made publically accessible and celebrated by the local community.
	5. People will have gained new skills in researching, restoring and understanding their heritage.
	6. Collected data, information and interpretation will be more accessible in the public domain including posting on appropriate websites.
	7. Local groups and individuals understand, enjoy, value and take action in the Coigach and Assynt area in ways they did not at the outset.
Y	8. Increased access infrastructure at key strategic locations enabling people to enjoy the natural and cultural heritage of the area. <i>Better path allowing easier access that forms part of the developing Coigach Coastal Path Network.</i>
Y	9. Increased opportunities for informal recreation that promotes health and well-being benefits. <i>Easier access to Fox Point, the remains of the salmon bothy and the coastline.</i>

Reflecting on the last 5 years, what's the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of CALLP?

New Great Path to Fox Point

We were able to complete the work to a high standard whereas previously we might only have managed a patch up job with volunteers if we were lucky. CALLP gave us access to funding and knowledge we used professionals with expertise in this area.

It was surprising how quickly and efficiently expert contractors on the job made a big difference – with the right equipment and skills, they installed stepping stones, steps, water bars etc – all to a high standard.

The planned signage at Polbain Gate has been moved to Fox Point and incorporated in to the AP03 Coigach & Assynt Heritage Signage Project Heritage Trail.

What difference has this project made to the built, cultural and natural heritage of Coigach and Assynt?

The path has really added to the infrastructure and is now a distinct feature – a clearly defined path to walk. It is a really appealing asset that attracts both local and visiting walkers of varying degrees of experience and allows them to leave the road, get close to the coast and enjoy a sense of freedom. The path enables people to enjoy the landscape, heritage and wildlife of the area while helping to preserve these things by sticking to a path.

What difference has this project made to People?

The path introduces a whole new “audience” to the areas coastline, heritage and wildlife.

“it's brilliant – especially the stone steps as that was a really tricky part, much easier now!” Regular Walker

"I've done it few times now and I love it!" Regular walker

"it's been a while since I tried the path as it was always very boggy in parts but the stepping stones are perfect and I love walking it regularly now." Occasional, now regular walker

"I really love how they've used the natural stone – it looks like its been there for years and really fits with the landscape" Regular walker.

"For us oldies, it's a real bonus – I can do it now, even that awkward rocky part. That always put me off but it was just fabulous!" Regular walker

"We're just loving this path – it's changed a bit since we were last here and it's much better now. We have dry feet!" Visitors

"Well done on the path upgrade. I was trying to identify the original path stone from the new upgrade and the work makes the path look quite natural, and more accessible!" Visitor

Useful Links

<https://visitcoigach.com/see-and-do/walking-climbing/dornie-to-old-dornie-harbour/>

<https://coigachcommunity.com/2011/02/21/film-companies-beat-track-to-coigach/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqmNF1dBhfM&t=154s> contains footage of the work on Fox Point Path

<https://ullapooltrading.com/product/walkers-guide-to-coigach-and-assynt/>

Future Plans and Legacy

Since the conclusion of the path construction work the landowner and the project lead have suggested that an extension to the path should direct walker away from the now busy and industrial pier parking. The extension will be completed in March 2022. The path is included in the Walker's Guide to Coigach & Assynt that will promote the path. Now we have this path and locals and visitors alike are enjoying it, we foresee demand for more. We'd gradually like to:

- Build up a network of paths and link some together
- Map all the paths in the area
- Publish maps, guides, leaflets and upload walks online
- Hold a celebratory event – community walk and picnic when restrictions etc allow

Lessons Learned

What are the three positive lessons gained from the scheme:

1. Use professional contractors with relevant experience: it's a worthwhile investment
2. Talk to people who have done it before, gather information and advice from local, nearby and/or specialists.
3. Keep good lines of communication open with all concerned especially land owners and users and local community – early consultation and involvement is key.

What are the three negative lessons gained from the scheme:

1. Allow at least twice the amount of time you expect for all parts of the procedure: it's all more complicated than first appears.
2. We learned that a global pandemic can scupper everyone's plans and that caused delays, complications and further expense.
3. Summer although a good time for path-building, is a bad time for finding affordable accommodation for contractors. Travelling time is unproductive and expensive so it's best if contractors can be accommodated in the local area but that is increasingly difficult.

Funding Partners



With generous support from the
KMF Maxwell
Stuart Charitable



Photographic Evidence



Fox Point Path Upgrade before & after © B Alexander/Scottish Wildlife Trust



Fox Point Path Upgrade before & after © B Alexander/Scottish Wildlife Trust



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Annex 1: Location of Fox Point Path

