

P21 Coigach & Assynt Landscape Routes



Project Overview: (Please refer to LCAP or website)

Through the development of a North West Highlands Geopark business plan, community consultation, tourism research and a workshop focused on developing an interpretation strategy for Coigach and Assynt, we found that although interpretation and information on walking routes and landscape is a key part of the visitor experience. The development of a Sense of Place Toolkit for use by local businesses and organisations will allow them to capture and communication what makes our area so special. Finally a guidebook or walks in Coigach & Assynt that will highlight our rich natural and cultural heritage will be published.

Project lead organisation and other organisations involved: North West Highland Geopark, Coigach Community Development Company, Assynt Development Trust/ Discover Assynt, Achiltibuie Tourist Association

Project Location: Across CALL

Project dates: April 2020 – Sept 2021

Project Outputs

Measure	Target	Delivered	Notes
People attending guided walks events in either Coigach or Assynt	10 walks	10 walks	10 guided walks completed by HLH 2/12/20 NLHF accepted alteration
Walks Guidebook covering Coigach and Assynt	1	1	<i>Walker's Guides to Coigach and Assynt</i> launch in September 2021
Local walks guidebook printed and circulated	2,000	2,000	<i>Walker's Guides to Coigach and Assynt</i> is available for purchase locally and online.
Sense of Place Toolkit developed messages and branding about Coigach and Assynt through app, walk guide and local NWHG Geopods	1	1	<i>Sense of Place Toolkit</i> published and accessed at: http://www.nwhgeopark.com/sense-of-place .
Panels promoting community messages prepared for each Geopod	4	2	Panels amalgamated into two instead of four. Installation complete.

Measure	Target	Delivered	Notes
Local Guide (Scotland) route app for Coigach & Assynt which is downloadable and can be used anywhere in the area (not reliant on mobile signal or WIFI).	1	1	Available for download here: https://www.nwhgeopark.com/local-guide-to-coigach-and-assynt/
Promotion of walks guidebook and Local Guide (Scotland) app through social media and local hubs.	1	1	Promotion Sept 2021 with purchase from: https://ullapooltrading.com/product/walkers-guide-to-coigach-and-assynt/ Advertised via social media: https://mailchi.mp/3e923e2553e1/north-west-highlands-geopark-newsletter-8509626?fbclid=IwAR0rnPpulo4lp41IDliyPjAVlgp_hOK9G7fMOH6HarAJ_Ds144HHKAgZOnHw
Portfolio of visual images or video available for use under Creative Commons licence 'Attribution Non-commercial' (CC BY-NC) to promote Coigach & Assynt stored on NWHG website.	1	1	Portfolio complete and available online Sense of place media library - North West Highlands Geopark (nwhgeopark.com) . Contemporary Gaelic poem book to published February 2022. https://www.nwhgeopark.com/product/walkers-guide-to-coigach-assynt/

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.
Y	3. Increased awareness and understanding amongst all individuals and groups of what makes Coigach and Assynt special and the threats to the unique heritage. <i>Promotion of Sense of Place Toolkit, app and walks guide.</i>
Y	4. Important elements of the built, cultural and natural heritage will be recorded, improved, made publicly accessible and celebrated by the local community. <i>Availability of Sense of Place Toolkit, app and Walker's Guides to Coigach and Assynt.</i>

	5. People will have gained new skills in researching, restoring and understanding their heritage.
Y	6. Collected data, information and interpretation will be more accessible in the public domain including posting on appropriate websites. <i>Availability of Sense of Place Toolkit, app and Walker's Guides to Coigach and Assynt.</i>
	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.
	8. Increased access infrastructure at key strategic locations enabling people to enjoy the natural and cultural heritage of the area.
Y	9. Increased opportunities for informal recreation that promotes health and well-being benefits. <i>Availability app and Walker's Guides to Coigach and Assynt.</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?

Sense of Place Changes Outputs

The project has developed from the concept of a very expensive app (£60,000), transformed by the research of a tourism survey, to metamorph with new outputs that has led to widespread local collaboration among Tourism Organisation of Coigach & Assynt and the focus on developing key materials to be available for tourist. The tourism survey was initially not part of the project but has transformed the original outputs that have become obsolete to a suite of outputs that will provide value to the local tourism organisations.

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

The project has provided three major outputs through digital and print medium as materials for interpreting the natural, built and cultural heritage. Both the app and the walk guide are expected to have immediate impacts on visitors interpretation of the landscape. However, the Sense of Place Toolkit has the potential to have the greatest impact in terms of interpretation of the natural, built and cultural heritage of Coigach and Assynt in the future as a unified messaging within the community and to visitors.

What difference has this project made to People?

The Tourism Survey 2018 identified that over 67% of visitors (estimated 78,336 in 2017) come to Coigach and Assynt for walks of over 3 miles and the *Walker's Guides to Coigach and Assynt* will be available to 55,245 walking visitors on an average year. An estimated 17,062 visitors per average year have expressed interest in using the app, and the areas tourism organisations will use the Sense of Place Toolkit to promote the messages to visitors.

The collaboration between the Tourism Organisation of Coigach and Assynt and the promotion of the Sense of Place Toolkit to tourism providers to encourage a unified messaging to promote Coigach and Assynt to visitors.

"Pre-ordered. Super excited to get my hands on this book." Facebook comment.

“There is a magic that happens here that makes visitors feel at peace almost instantly. The place itself is an invitation to slow down and engage with nature and our environment. There is more to Coigach and Assynt than just the landscape, however. As with any beautiful place, there is always a community that calls it home.” Sir Chris Bonington CVO CBE DL

“I got a copy of the walkers guide to Coigach and Assynt book that CALLP produced which is a really lovely book. I’m planning to complete some of the walks I haven’t yet managed and even if I don’t get out on any more of the walks I’ll always enjoy looking through the photos.” Ullapool Resident

Useful Links

<https://www.nwhgeopark.com/>

<http://www.nwhgeopark.com/sense-of-place>

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

<https://www.coigach-assynt.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CALL-Tourism-Research-Report-FINAL.pdf>

[Sense of place media library - North West Highlands Geopark \(nwhgeopark.com\)](#)

Future Plans and Legacy

The Northwest Highlands Geopark will take on the role of promoting and updating the digital assets from the project for the mandated 5 years and longer, and update the walks guide over the coming decade. However the project itself has been a process whose exciting outputs has demonstrated the value of local collaborations between the communities of Coigach and Assynt. The project has secured further funding from underspend to promote the *Sense of Place Toolkit* through a tutorial video and Gaelic Poetry book for the portfolio of promotion resources.

Lessons Learned

What are the three positive lessons gained from the scheme:

1. Wider collaboration has produce quite exciting outputs
2. Use research to inform change in outputs
3. Ensure agreements are in place among local stakeholder to ensure clear understanding

What are the three negative lessons gained from the scheme:

1. Firm handle on contractor deadlines required
2. Do not underestimate project management costs
3. Exciting outputs that grow take more resources to implement

Funding Partners



Photographic Evidence

 <p>Walker's Guide to Coigach & Assynt Local classic and lesser-known gems.</p> <p>26 Walks in Coigach & Assynt Local classic and lesser-known gems.</p> <p>This guide describes the best walking routes in Coigach and Assynt as selected by the local community. With routes ranging from short strolls to longer mountain adventures, there is something here for everyone.</p> <p>Descriptions of local history and geology bring the landscape to life... Over 100 photographs will inspire you, while detailed logistical information, route descriptions and maps help you make the most of your time in this spectacular landscape.</p> <p>Dougie Cunningham co-ordinator of the Coigach & Assynt Living Landscape</p> <p>£11.99</p>	 <p>A short walk into Nature (Coigach)</p> <p>Why not join a few of us for some nature therapy: some leisurely exercise, friendly company, great views, and fresh air.</p> <p>Thursday 24th June; 11-12noon Thursday 8th July 11-12noon Thursday 22nd July; 11-12noon Thursday 5th August; 11-12noon Thursday 19th August; 11-12noon</p> <p>Join the Ranger for some nature therapy in and around Achilbucle. This walk will be a short and slow-paced walk aimed at folk who don't wish to undertake longer more demanding walks but would still like to get out in the fresh air for a short period. Help re-connect with the natural world. Distance approx. 1 km/0.5miles. Measures will be put in place to make sure all up-to-date Covid-19 precautions are adhered to.</p> <p>Please phone Andy Summers on 01571 844654 (07825 116516) to tell me if you are coming. Details where to meet given out on booking.</p> <p>This project is supported through the Coigach and Assynt Living Landscape Partnership, promoting the release of the Walker's Guide to Coigach and Assynt and Coigach & Assynt Local Guide (Scotland) App.</p> <p>Coigach & Assynt LIVING LANDSCAPE</p> 
 <p>Tourist poses for scenic photograph during the Walker's Guides to Coigach & Assynt research © Dougie Cunningham</p>	 <p>Project team during the Walker's Guides to Coigach & Assynt research © Dougie Cunningham</p>