

AP03 Coigach & Assynt Heritage Signage



Project Overview:

Coigach & Assynt Living Landscape Partnership (CALLP) has included several heritage projects that have increased the understanding of local heritage. Moreover, the Partnership has created greater links between the heritage and tourist organisations of Coigach and Assynt.

The objective of the project is to highlight the key built and cultural heritage features for both Coigach & Assynt on a formatted map, which would be printed as a leaflet. Near to the noted features would be a heritage waymarker post with 200mm by 180mm aluminium identifying sign.

Respondents to the CALLP Tourism Survey identified that almost 62% of visitors to Coigach and Assynt visit with the intention of general sightseeing, although over 75% have completed no research on local attractions. Moreover, over 92% of respondents noted that road signs were the most popular means by which visitors found out about local tours, attractions and activities.

The objectives of the project would be:

1. Identify key heritage features of both Coigach & Assynt that Coigach Community Development Company (in consultation with Coigach Heritage Group and Achiltibuie Tourist Association) and Historic Assynt identify.
2. Locate suitable locations for heritage waymarker posts to highlight features.
3. Locate key heritage figures on a suitably designed A2 or bigger Heritage Trail map of both Coigach and Assynt.

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

Project Location: across CALL

Project dates: November 2020 - February 2022

Project Outputs

Measure	Target	Delivered	Notes
A formatted map locating key built and cultural heritage features in Coigach & Assynt.	1	0.5	Leaflet draft completed ready for printing in Jan 2022
4 new and one upgraded plinth throughout Coigach & Assynt displaying the cultural heritage features in Coigach and Assynt	5	0.5	3 new Plinths, 1 upgraded plinth, and 6 monoliths to be manufactured and installed in Feb 2022.
30 heritage waymarker posts in Coigach and Assynt locating built and cultural heritage features.	30	0.5	Only 18 way markers required to be installed Feb 2022.

Scheme Outputs

How has the project contributed to the CALLP Scheme Outcomes:

Y	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. <i>Plinths, waymarkers and leaflets with a map will guide visitors around the key features of the area.</i>
	2. Where appropriate the connectivity and diversity of selected habitats will be mapped. Both Plinths and leaflets will include a map of the area showing sites of interest
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>The features described above will all feature interpretive text.</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>Heritage trail is a key element in celebrating cultural and natural heritage.</i>
Y	5. People will have gained new skills in researching, restoring and understanding their heritage. <i>This has been achieved – particularly for our researcher – but also for everyone involved in the project.</i>
Y	6. Collected data, information and interpretation will be more accessible in the public domain including posting on appropriate websites. <i>There will be a website for the project and information will also be available for those not connected to the internet.</i>
Y	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. <i>By increasing the information publicly available, the project enhances everyone’s appreciation of local features.</i>
Y	8. Increased access infrastructure at key strategic locations enabling people to enjoy the natural and cultural heritage of the area. <i>Plinths and waymarkers will be placed at key locations.</i>
Y	9. Increased opportunities for informal recreation that promotes health and well-being benefits. <i>To read the plinths, visitors will need to get out of the car and reading will promote the reasons to explore further.</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?

Community Engagement

There was initially some resistance to interpretation panels in some locations. By engaging with landowners and community groups, the project has identified why objections were being put forward, worked with people to come up with solutions which all could buy into and therefore garnered active support from some who had previously raised objections. Without the CALLP name behind it, it is dubious whether those conversations would have happened.

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

The heritage has always been there; this project is simply taking the heritage, sharing it and putting it in the forefront of people's minds.

What difference has this project made to People?

It has made heritage more accessible, by sharing it publicly at the roadside. The CALLP Tourism Survey identified that annually an estimated 27,234 visitors come to the CALLP area to participate in local history/local heritage and the trail will make the local history more accessible to these visitors.

Useful Links

<https://coigachcommunity.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/historicassynt>

<https://www.coigach-assynt.org/project/coigach-assynt-heritage-signage-project/>

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

Future Plans and Legacy

The project covered the development of the trail, the development of the panels and the design of the Heritage Trail Leaflet, and the installation of plinths and monoliths. The organisations organising the project have gained funding to developing a complimentary website, and by using QR codes on the panels link the panel, monoliths and heritage trail map to further online resources.

Lessons Learned

What are the three positive lessons gained from the scheme:

1. Community engagement
2. Accessibility
3. Communities working together

What are the three negative lessons gained from the scheme:

1. Time is not always on your side
2. Scope creep – project was much bigger than initial estimates, but it was a learning exercise
3. We have too much heritage for a single project to capture.

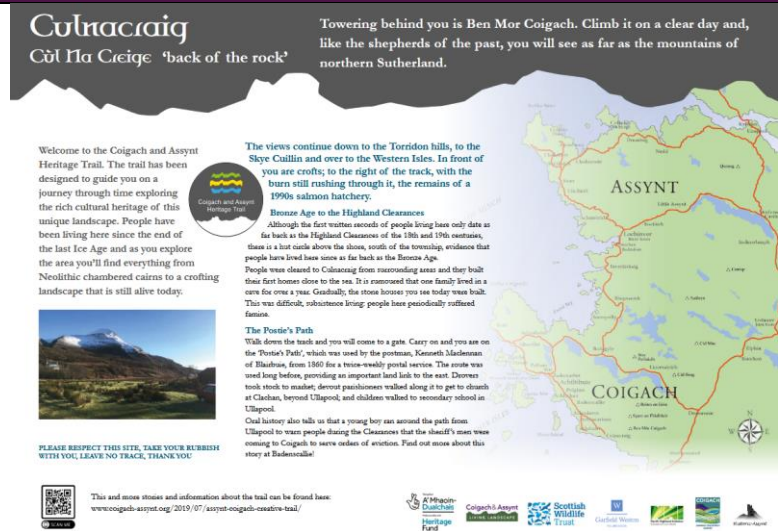
Funding Partners



Photographic Evidence



Heritage Trail Map



Culnacraig Heritage Trail Panel



Example of Heritage Trail 'Monolith'