

Dùthchas

Working for the sustainable development of rural areas

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This newsletter has been produced in-house to minimise production costs. It is printed on environmentally friendly paper.

Meeting with Ross Finnie

*How do we 'do' sustainable rural development?
What are the difficulties that we face in doing 'it'?*

Those were the questions being tackled at a mid March meeting with Rural Affairs Minister, Ross Finnie. A range of opportunities which our local communities have identified were set before the Minister. Consideration was given to ways in which we can build on our local natural and cultural heritage for social and economic gain. The challenge of achieving sustainable use of land and marine resources was highlighted as was our need to diversify, use and process quality local produce. Our traditional problems of access to services, transport and infrastructure were again aired. Newer challenges presented by waste reduction and renewable energy were also presented. Barriers to local sustainable development were highlighted and the Minister's views on possible solutions sought. Ross Finnie was impressed by the hard work and imagination of all those involved in the Dùthchas Project and praised our progress to date.

Project News

Farewell to Lorna Walker who has moved on to a new job with SEPA. With SEPA she will be designing yet another 'Strategy' – this time it's the 'Highland Waste Strategy'. Look out for her in this demanding new role. Thanks to Lorna for all her hard work on our behalf. Welcome to our new **Project Officer, Issie MacPhail from Assynt**. Issie will be relieved to hear that we are currently compiling a Dùthchas Dictionary.

Entries include:

- 'alignment' - possibly getting things straight?
- 'capacity building' - more room to dance?
- 'scope' - verb possibly meaning to figure out what is important?
- 'zuchinni' – type of North American vegetable



Vanessa Halhead, Wilma Chestnut, Issie MacPhail
Project Manager, Project Administrator, Project Officer

Sustainable Communities Scheme

Dùthchas has been pioneering the development of a new scheme to network and support communities trying to tackle sustainable development. Highland Council hopes to pilot this scheme later in the year. It will offer a **financial award** for community projects which are carried out in a sustainable way or contribute to local sustainability. Assistance in the form of **expert help and advice** will also be on offer. The SCS takes the place of the EQM (Environmental Quality Mark), which some of you may remember was the intention at the start of Dùthchas. At this stage the Scheme will only be piloted within Highland Region.

“How well do you know Dùthchas?”

The word “dùthchas” is a very old Gaelic term that speaks of strong, united, self sufficient communities who actively look after their people and their world. Here are a few characteristics which makes up a 'dùthchas' community:

- it has a clear and strong identity, and a deep sense of belonging;
- it believes in itself because it has confidence;
- it values everybody within, and offers everybody the chance to earn a living through using their individual talents;
- it is the enthusiastic guardian of its surrounding natural inheritance today and tomorrow;
- it delivers local needs locally;
- it is positively engaged in creating its own destiny;
- it responsibly considers the effects of its actions on future generations.

These are the kind of goals that this project is working towards. We are the first to admit that they are big challenges. However every community needs to have goals, and these should be based on strong, sound principles.

Trotternish Peninsula - Iochdar Thròndairnis

Dè tha dol?

Photo: Janice Gillespie



Latha mòr airson muinntir
an taobh sear

Photo: Caillean MacLean

Staffin Slipway

There were people who said it would never happen but Staffin has now got a new slipway. During the Planning for Real exercise seven years ago, this issue got the top vote in Staffin. And when they cast their votes at the Dùthchas exhibition in 1999, it was clear that Staffin people had not changed their minds. Urras an Taobh Sear - the local community Trust - was established five years ago with the slipway mission firmly in mind. It took time to raise the necessary £260,000. Stones for the construction came from the shore itself. Therefore it fits really well with its surroundings. Dùthchas has backed this project from the beginning, and already the benefits for the district are evident. The photograph above shows HRH The Princess Royal meeting local people at the opening of the slipway.

Uig

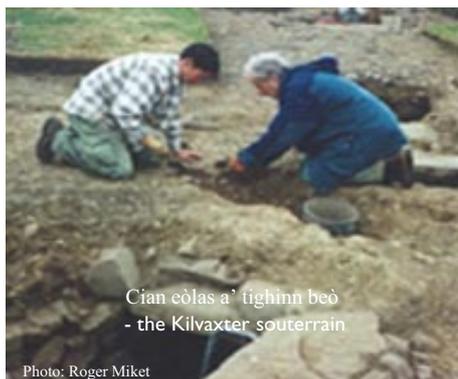
The Uig Community Development Association was set up in February 1999 and it has 110 paid up members. At the time of its formation, the burning issue for the Association was to secure retention of the ferry service from Uig to the Western Isles. To demonstrate the pivotal role of the ferry, the Association undertook an economic survey in the locality. A lengthy crusade of meeting with transport officials and the Minister of Transport has proved fruitful. The ferry service is secure - at least for the foreseeable future, and there has been some investment by Highland Council at the pier. A long term mission of the Association is towards a substantial upgrading of the pier - a development that has been calculated at £4 million. The year 2000 has been a challenging year for the Association who had to take swift action when a number of local businesses closed. Their current priorities are to defend these basic services. Dùthchas has supported all of the initiatives of the Association from its inception.

The Féis comes to Trotternish

People in Trotternish have a cultural heritage that could rival anywhere in Scotland, but the district has been sorely neglected in terms of the arts. That is why we were delighted when Dùthchas Partner, Jim Tough of the Scottish Arts Council, committed the sum of £5,000 to our area for an arts project to be chosen by the community. Their decision was to invite Féisean nan Gaidheal to advise on how the community could best implement their programme in our peninsula for a trial year. The project kicked off with a taster week for the children at the beginning of the summer holidays. Linda Mackinnon was the local organiser. "We held four fun days, and every day we got 30 children. We visited Uig, Kilmuir, Staffin and Sgeabost. The children got Gaelic song, fiddle, whistle, keyboards, guitar, step dancing and percussion. To see the expressions on the children's faces made it all worthwhile." The follow on to the taster week will take place alongside the primary school curriculum in 2000/2001. Under the direction of the féis, primary school children in our Dùthchas area will be offered traditional arts tuition in four to six week blocks.

The Kilvaxter Souterrain

When the underground structure was discovered on Mr James' croft in Kilvaxter recently, it caused a lot of excitement. Souterrains are believed to belong to the Iron Age, and this one is possibly 2,000 years old. A swift excavation got underway without delay, and Roger Miket, the archaeologist, is doing the work on behalf of Kilmuir Community Council. When Anna-Karin Gidlund and her Swedish contingent visited the site as part of an exchange visit with Dùthchas this August, Roger had no fewer than fifteen local volunteers helping him with the dig.



Cian eòlas a' tighinn beò
- the Kilvaxter souterrain

Photo: Roger Miket

Caisteal DhunThuilm

Kilmuir has had an exciting few months. With the help of HC Area Manager, John MacDonald, we have put together a community trust for Duntulm Castle. We have a committed local team and are glad to have persuaded Gavin Scott Moncrieff to be our chairman. Duntulm has everyone's support - it got the second vote in the Kilmuir voting. A landmark since the time of the Picts, we are at last establishing a way to save it from disappearing over those cliffs. Partnerships are really important to rural development, and discussions continue for a footpath to the monastery at Loch Chaluum Chille. The wet habitat there is perfect for half of Skye's corncrake population, and the walk offers people the opportunity to have a memorable cultural experience.

Staffin Hall

Dùthchas is involved with Staffin Community Hall Association in a plan to redevelop the hall. According to the Dùthchas community voting results, a new hall and a new surgery are the current priorities in Staffin. This redevelopment is a golden opportunity to create a community resource that can become an excellent rural model.

Renewable Energy Seminar

- July 2000, Columba 1400

On the same day that HRH the Princess Royal opened the slipway, she officially opened Columba 1400. This new leadership centre proved to be an ideal venue to hold the Dùthchas seminar on Renewable Energy this July. A great buffet was presented by Columba's staff, who were as intrigued as we were ourselves by the seminar's topic. To remind you, the reason we have a local strategy group investigating this very new topic is because during our interviews last year, somebody in Trotternish said to us, "Why don't we do something with all this water and wind?"

"It Can be Done"

We were pleased that our fellow crofter, John Mackenzie of Assynt, made the journey to the seminar to talk to us, along with other specialists from the field of renewable energy. Ian Willoughby, our own man on the local group here in Trotternish, had recently been on a trip to Jutland along with Dùthchas. Ian has returned from there, truly inspired by what the Danes have achieved through investing in renewable energy. In rural Scotland, we have a very long way to go, but our local group believes that with concerted effort and a determination to beat the difficulties, "It Can be Done". We would like to thank all the speakers and attendees, some of whom travelled a VERY long way to get here. A special thank you to Alexandra Hayles who traveled from Denmark to share her expertise.

Strategy Group Update - Iain and Sine report

You will remember from our last newsletter that our communities selected five topics that matter most for our future development. To recap, the topics are given below, along with news of how these groups are progressing and what their chosen actions are.

Trotternish Trails and Interpretation – In Search of a Theme

Inspired by the Trotternish ridge, this group aims to create trails for various levels of physical ability. Their chosen action is to create a temporary local job that will identify and classify the local features and resources. The work will give consideration to the suitability of sites. It will also draw out a really strong theme for Trotternish.

Transport Infrastructure

This group's goal is to support and develop the transport system (including public transport) which is cost effective, and meets the needs of the indigenous and visiting population with minimum environmental impact. This group felt the most important action for now is to undertake research into the use of transport services.

Reduction of Waste

This group has taken the first step towards reversing the way that we look at "waste" by deciding to implement a plan for a composting scheme. This will be linked with the diversification group, and it will take advantage of the expertise of the Skye and Lochalsh Horticulture Association.

Diversification on the land

Crofting is less about keeping animals than it is about keeping people in rural places. This group are interested in experimental horticultural units with diversification a priority. This group are determined to build on what has already been achieved elsewhere in Skye.

Renewable Energy

As their demonstration project this group have selected to erect an affordable eco house - based on sound, efficient use of energy with possibly a wind turbine to serve the house. This might become a model for the future.

Final Word from our local Chairman, Donald MacDonald

Anything that is worth doing in this life takes time. Community development is a prime example of this. You need a lot of patience, determination and direction. Dùthchas has given us a good foundation to build on. And while we certainly hope the programme will be extended beyond December 2000, one way or another we must continue to support the work already done and take the projects on board as community groups. We have to look forward positively to bring benefits to our communities.



Photo: Kerry Conlon

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North Uist - Uibhist a'Tuath

North Uist sunset



Local Produce Group want to encourage an increase in cattle numbers

Strategy Group Update - Caitriona reports

Since the last newsletter the groups have been very busy! They have now had three meetings and have produced visions, objectives and actions for their chosen topic. They have also coped well with all the paperwork and we would like to thank them for all their hard work.

The “**Marketing of Local Produce**” Group want to encourage the production of healthy, good quality products and to successfully market them locally and externally as a quality finished product. They have highlighted a feasibility study for a fully licensed slaughtering and packaging facility and a marketing co-ordinator as the two most crucial actions that are needed to reach their vision for the future.

The “**Sustainable Use of Marine Resources**” Group have already decided how to use their Duthchas seedcorn funding and have begun to implement their Demonstration Project. With the help of Uist Fish Marketing and Uist2000 they are marketing local seafood at Kallin Pier, with outreach to local markets and hotels. They can be found there every Saturday. This will give easier access, to fresh local fish and shellfish, to visitors and locals alike. Using their own skills and resources the group is also investigating local needs and attitudes with regard to local boat repair and maintenance facilities.

Legends & Archaeology

We are pleased to tell you that **Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a'Tuath** have agreed to progress the legend trail idea. This project is funded by 'The Scottish Arts Council', who offered £5000 per Duthchas area for an arts project. CEUT are now looking for match funding from other agencies. The project involves producing a CD-ROM and booklet, which will include legends & tales, historical, & archaeological information, photos, music and sounds.

New Look Website

The Duthchas Website has now been revamped! Take a look and then tell us what you think.

www.duthchas.org.uk

Do you have any events that you would like to publicise through our noticeboard? Or links to local community or project webpages?

The “**Tourism Using Unique Features**” Group want to attract visitors to North Uist by creating a memorable cultural experience for visitors through allowing them to share our way of life. As their Demonstration Project they have chosen to *research and package existing activities for visitors*. This will mean that if a potential visitor were to look at North Uist on the internet or go into a travel agent they could book a package where different activities were organised for each day of their holiday. Therefore they would get to experience many aspects of life in North Uist.

The “**Renewable Energy**” Group want to use some the technology available to harness our wind and waves to the advantage of North Uist. A representative from this group went on a study trip to Jutland to learn from their expertise in this area. A group member also attended the Skye seminar where, amongst other issues, they discussed energy efficiency. This is also highlighted by the Group as a topic which is important for North Uist.



Local Fish & Shellfish Stall at Kallin Pier

Benefiting from our Natural & Cultural Heritage

— June 2000, Carinsh Inn

The purpose of this seminar was to bring together the strategy groups from the three Duthchas areas so that they could progress their ideas and learn from each other and other communities. To give the visitors to North Uist a chance to get out and about and experience some of our cultural and natural heritage, one afternoon was set aside for field visits - Balranald RSPB, Taigh Chearsabhagh & Carinish Township Archaeology.



Mary MacLeod - CNES Archaeologist
Opportunities to develop archaeological tourism

The slide show that we got from **John Love** of **SNH** gave glorious images of our gorgeous western seaboard. You can't help but wonder though whether it isn't John himself who is the national treasure. **John White** of **Whitewave Skye's Outdoor Centre** gave a passionate address for outdoor education. It doesn't matter whether you are having a walk down the croft or a challenging rock climb, the medium is so powerful that it is "*physical, spiritual & emotional*". John also challenged us to have more respect for the truly great Gaelic artists in our midst by acknowledging them and rewarding them adequately. In her work with the **Highland and Islands Interpretative Strategy Project**, **Rona Gibb** has seen an awful lot of bad interpretation. Less, according to Rona, is definitely more, and her plea is that we should have a very good reason before adding to the landscape. This is our story, and the cry came for live interpretation – which is seen as unquestionably the most powerful medium of communication.

What can we say except that **RSPB's Pat Thompson** is a very natural performer. And while he challenges us to find a more beautiful

creature than the black throated diver, he clearly puts people at the centre of our rural communities. Appreciation of our beautiful world was echoed by artist **Bill Lawrence** of **Trotternish Art Gallery**. Bill wisely advises us to go outside and to use our ears and our eyes and – it being the orchid season – our noses! **Deirdre Morrison** and **Will Lamb** told us about the award winning "*Ceòlas*" in South Uist, and there is no doubt that indeed they are delivering *memorable cultural experiences* with their musical residencies there.

Robert Livingstone of **HiArts** congratulated Dùthchas on the event. It was his first seminar where natural and cultural assets had been packaged together. Barra folks, **Vladimir Dadivkevich** and **Jessie MacNeill** gave a live demonstration to show that it is neither complicated nor expensive to create your own web site for tourism.

Mary Anne MacIver of **WITB** discussed the important findings from the recent Western Isles Visitor Survey. **Duncan MacInnes** of **Sleat** gave us a very earthy insight into his world with an unexpected modelling assignment. By means of the layers of t-shirts that he peeled off, he revealed his years as a countryside ranger, an arts' promoter, and generally a guy you can't tie down. Duncan's message was simple. *You don't put a show on for tourists*. You put on a show for your communities, and you invite your visitors to join in. As you would imagine, **Poker** brought more than a dollop of South Uist charm as the seminar's chairman. And his summary brought you back to the tone that had been set by **Donald Angie MacLennan** at the onset of proceedings. Although he had thought little of it at the time, he now knew very well where he had got his most memorable cultural experience.

And it had been here in North Uist. So we have a great deal to offer in our own special places. We're willing to share our special places with visitors. We want to protect them. And we'd like to reap a better financial reward in the process. Which is where it all started ...

"S e na daoine a tha deanamh an dùthaich anns a' chiad àite ..."

Horticultural Association of the Uists

Maire MacPhail, chairperson, gives an update;

The Horticultural Association of the Uists held a logo competition in the Primary Schools, the winner was Toni Simpson a pupil at Balivanich School and she received a £20 book token as her prize. We now have our own label and stickers with "Product of Uist" on them, this makes the presentation of all our goods much more professional and easily identifiable.

We have been very active at the Local Produce Markets throughout the Uists selling a wide selection of vegetables, shrubs, bedding plants, herbs, fruit and cut flowers. However we are still looking for more growers to contribute to the markets.

We had hoped to have a "box system" in place now but in order to establish this worthwhile service and to meet the demand we need more producers.

If you are interested contact Maire on 01876 580260

North Uist

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North Sutherland -Duthaich MhicAoidh



Norwegian Visit

In early September each of the Duthchas Areas had a small group of Norwegians visiting. Some of the Norwegians had been before. Some had been visited by the Duthchas group when they visited Norway last year. To others it was be a new experience! We can learn a lot from the more remote communities in Norway and they feel that they can learn from us. Thank you to all the community members who helped us throughout the week and gave a friendly welcome to the visiting communities

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New Co-ordinator

Since our last newsletter Anna MacConnell has left us to work for Caithness and Sutherland Enterprise as Communities Initiatives Manager.

Kerry Conlon, her replacement, started in February with a day in Inverness at a Partners meeting, so she really was dropped in at the deep end! She started as she has carried on, friendly, capable and never really flustered or phased. It is always difficult to start mid stream and she has coped very well.

She has taken on the Dùthchas remit for the Social Inclusion Partnership. This scheme is improving facilities, opportunities and community transport for the 14 - 25 age group. Achievements so far include the dial-a-bus service, the setting up of learning centres and the development of youth facilities.

Meg is working well in spite of her advancing years and memory loss!!!!!!



Sutherland Seminar:

The Sutherland Duthchas Information Seminar "**Good Enough to Eat**", focusing on local produce, resources, marketing, developing and adding value, was held on 8 & 9 September in Tongue Village Hall. Speakers included:

David Younie - Scottish Agricultural College

Carol Inglis - Food Futures Project Skye

Geoff Brown - Fells & Dales Leader Programme

Jon Priddy - North Highland Forest Trust

Michael Wigan - Borrobol Estate

Camilla & Jompa Wolgers - "Turbogrisen" a family run slaughterhouse, Sweden

Donald Macleod - Macleod Organics

Sandy Murray - Strath Halladale

Joan Campbell - Melvich

Field visits were arranged to **Dalcharn Woods**, a native woodland re-generation scheme near Tongue, **Borgie Forest** where North Sutherland Community Forest Trust are looking at ways of managing the forest for the benefit of the communities of North Sutherland and to **Skerray** to see diversification in action, and, visit the **community shop** and archive collection.

All the sessions were open, and everyone involved agreed that it had been a very interesting and worthwhile day.

Local people who attended the Information Seminars in Skye & North Uist found them immensely valuable and good fun too.

Jutland Study Visit:

Wilma Robertson, Melness Crofters Trust represented North Sutherland on the recent visit to Jutland, which was an opportunity to study renewable energy projects.

Denmark is well advanced in exploring renewable energy resources and has a political determination to develop new ideas in technology. It has set a target of 35% of its electricity coming from renewables by 2030.

We visited many projects during our stay such as district heating schemes, burning wood chips and using methane from biogas. Biogas plants are run mainly on cattle and pig manure (Denmark has approx. 23 million pigs) with the resulting treated slurry re-applied to the land.

Windmills are a dominant feature of the landscape. They produce around 10% of the national electricity, however future developments will mainly be placed offshore.

One of the most interesting schemes we visited was a village whose houses were powered by photovoltaic roof panelling (electricity generated by light). These villages also owned a wind turbine, which had repaid itself after 7 years.

With relevance to our area there are similar resources such as wood and wind etc. and hopefully with community spirit and government help we could follow in Denmark's footsteps.

Dùthchas - A Force for Good

The Highlands and Islands of Scotland embrace a vibrant culture, a culture that is rooted as much in the present and future as it is rooted in the past. **Highland people and their environment are indivisible.** A philosophical thread reaching back to the end of the last Ice Age, when Mesolithic men first ventured north of the Great Glen, shapes every aspect of Highland life.

It is important to preserve and nourish this culture and, in my view, **the Dùthchas Project has played a vital role in doing so.** Although I have not been involved personally in the planning and administrative activities of Dùthchas, I have been impressed by the practical results of the programme. Many of my friends, neighbours and colleagues in the far north share this opinion and would agree with me that **Dùthchas has been a force for good.**

In every community individuals emerge who are willing and able to take on a lead role. The Dùthchas Project has helped to identify them and has supported their efforts both financially and practically. This has been of **enormous benefit to the communities**, in which they live and work. The Dùthchas initiative has encouraged people to come together to examine present realities and to plan realistically for the future, for the benefit of all. - **Bruce Sandison.**

North Sutherland Update - Meg and Kerry report...

Strategy Group visions, objectives and actions:

The five groups, **Marketing Local Produce, Essential Services, Cultural and Natural Heritage, Young Returners & Sustainable Land Use / Renewable Energy** have each decided on a "vision" for their topic, and developed objectives and actions required to achieve these. From these the groups have chosen a Demonstration Action which will start the implementation of their prioritised objectives. A small amount of seed corn funding is available for each group to start the ball rolling. Once again this proves that if there is money available, even a very small amount, it can make all the difference.

If you would like more information about the above please contact us at 01641 521858 or call in at the office in the Naver Telecentre, Bettyhill.

Task Group Update:

Iomairt Aig an Oir, has provided seedcorn funding for some of the Task Group Projects to get under way. We can not underestimate the value of this, as even a small amount of "pump-priming" can encourage those involved in a project to begin the process. Some examples are:- **The Armadale Housing Scheme, The Information Toilet Cabin at Strathy and the Bettyhill Interpretation Centre.**

Feis Air an Oir

North Sutherland chose to look at traditional music, storytelling and dance, for their arts project funded by **The Scottish Arts Council.** These are areas where it was felt there had been a decline over the past few years. Feis Air an Oir was set up, providing professional tutoring for the first four gatherings, in accordion, fiddle, drums, chanter, bagpipes, whistle, clarsach, Gaelic and traditional games. The events have taken place in Bettyhill, Strathy, Tongue and Durness and have been attended mainly by children, but adults have been welcome too.

The next series of events will start in September, hopefully being as successful as the first four.



DUTHCHAS PARTNERS

Caithness and Sutherland Enterprise

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Crofters' Commission

Forestry Commission

Forest Enterprise

Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Historic Scotland

North of Scotland Water Authority

Scottish Arts Council

Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Scottish Homes

Scottish Museums Council

Scottish Natural Heritage

Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department

Scottish Tourist Board

Scottish Environment LINK

Skye and Lochalsh Enterprise

The Highland Council

The Scottish Council Development and Industry

University of the Highlands and Islands

Western Isles Enterprise

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EC LIFE
Environment
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Steve Warner - Sutherland GIS Agent

GIWHAT?!*

GIS – Geographical Information Systems to you and me. Basically – it's a laptop with a whole lot of maps and local information. You can look at landownership, archaeology or SSSI's – to mention but a few options. One thing at a time – or all at the same time. You can look at one township or at a whole area.

But there's more – each local area now has a Dùthchas GIS 'Agent'.

These intrepid innovators are bringing GIS to a venue near you from now until late October. In Trotternish we have 00 BORVE, **Alastair Nicolson**, taking the 'Trails & Interpretation' Group to places they have never been. On Uist we have 00 LOCHEPORT aka **Neil Nicolson**. With him the 'Tourism using our Unique Features' Group will be featuring strongly. On the north coast of Sutherland lurks 00 STRATHNAVER, known to some as **Steve Warner**. He will help the 'Sustainable Landuse & Renewable Energy' Group – and possibly try finding them a shorter name?

To get involved – contact your Agent – or your Area Office.

Looking Back – the time has come to take a long hard look at the Duthchas process and ask ourselves;

"What have we gained - from our involvement in the Dùthchas Project? and if we were to do this again, in what ways would we do it differently?"

To help us answer those questions we have engaged consultants. Our consultants – Firm Crichton Roberts Ltd. – will be gathering together the **comments and thoughts** of all those who have been involved in Dùthchas over the past few years. Some people will receive questionnaires in the post while others may be telephoned by a member of the consultancy team.

This is part of our **'Monitoring & Evaluation'** process.

If you receive a questionnaire, please do fill it in and add any comments that you want to make. The more responses we get, the better able we shall be to answer these questions honestly. Your views matter and our consultants would like to hear them! All responses are dealt with in the strictest confidence.

For further details contact your Area Office.

Moving forwards

Dare I say it – the days are getting shorter! By the turn of the year we will see the end of the Dùthchas Project in its current form. In your own local area the work will continue, as everyone helps out in **implementing your Area Strategies** and the **Projects** which have been started.

Over the coming months we shall all be working hard to shape up those Projects and Strategies, find funding and plan a secure future for the implementation of your Demonstration Projects and Area Strategies. To this end we are getting help with a **'Continuation Strategy'** – ways of securing future progress in all 3 areas.

As the Dùthchas Project draws to a close we will be busy writing reports on what we have all learned and achieved to date. Some of that information will be sent to Brussels from whence much of our funding came. Other information will be turned into leaflets, booklets and CD ROM which we can all use to keep track of how far we have come. And perhaps even, how far we still have to go?

A Last Dance?...

When the days have grown 'driech' and the nights are too long, what are we to do for a bit of 'craic'?

Come to the **Dùthchas Ceilidh & Conference** of course. A grand event is planned for late November with entertainment from each area. Everyone who has been involved in the Dùthchas Project is invited – nay, beseeched – to attend.

At this Ceilidh & Conference the Partner Agencies and the Deputy Minister for the Highlands & Island & Gaelic, Alasdair Morrison, will preside over the adoption of your Area Strategies. The Partner Agencies will agree to their role in assisting



implementation, hence supporting all that hard work over the past few years.

But never fear – this is not our last dance. Just our first few steps into the future, where a new kind of Dùthchas will emerge. The time has come for all those **local Projects** and **Area Strategies to become reality**. That's a job best done at the local level – so all power to your many elbows!

Over to you!

Many thanks to the EU Life Environment Project and the 8 funding agencies from Scotland for enabling us to start on this journey of discovery together.

'S e obair latha tòiseachadh ach 's e obair beatha crìochnachadh