



Point & Sandwick Trail

About the Project

The Point and Sandwick Trail is a community organisation (SCIO) which aims to develop a stunning 40 km circular route close to Stornoway. Different parts of the trail are suitable for experienced walkers, runners, cyclists, prams and wheelchairs. At present shorter routes are available, whilst work continues to complete the whole 40 km. Development of the trail has included path creation, seawall protection, bridges, waymarking, stiles, fencing and gates.

Developing the trail is a long-term undertaking. An engineer and a community development facilitator have been retained to provide inputs as and when needed.

Making it easier to access natural and man-made places of interest

The trail allows more people to access a wide variety of existing sites, including a 13th Century church and Macleod Chief burial site, a 19th century lighthouse, natural blow holes and the lolaire Memorial, which commemorates the loss of over 200 people in 1919 when the lolaire ship sank.

The initiative for the trail came from within the local community, and there has been extensive consultation as the project progresses. Concerns about dogs and gates being left open have been discussed and addressed.

The trail is popular with local folk, as a place to exercise and to visit places that were

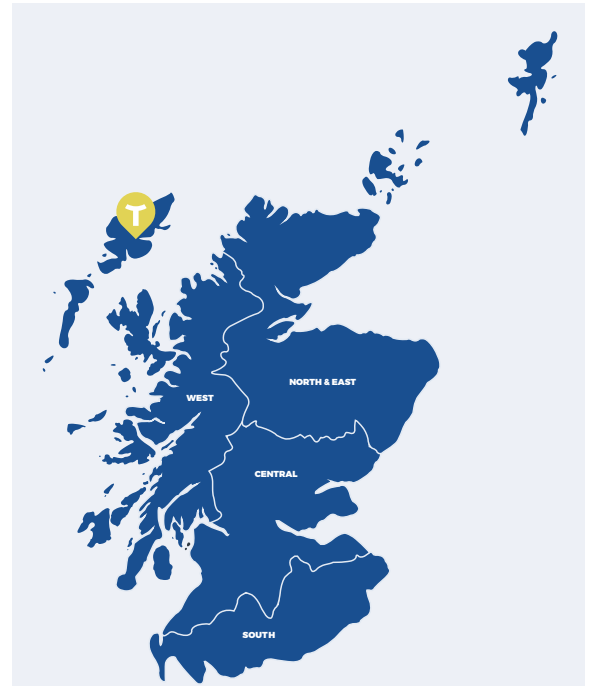
in danger of being largely forgotten because they were difficult to access. Development of the path means that local place names are being used more – names in Gaelic, English and with Norse origins.

The trail brings economic benefits, notably more sales for the shop and café. This is important, as local businesses need good footfall if they are to survive – their survival is very important to local people who rely on these services. A service lending out electric bikes is also being developed.

The project is carefully monitored and informed by community consultations and surveys. At 35%, “no paths or hard shoulders” outweighs poor weather (18%) as a discouragement to walk or cycle. 50% of respondents say they are “very likely” to use the lolaire section of path over the next 12 months.

“A path is much more than just a path. It is the infrastructure for accessing all sorts of opportunities. The path is a route to interesting and beautiful places, a way of reminding ourselves about our local heritage, and an incentive to do some healthy exercise.”

Alasdair Nicholson, Adviser



Location: Isle of Lewis

Type: Do

When Set Up: 2016

How Funded: Grants, including Scottish Government Island Funding, Point and Sandwick Trust, Crown Estate and European Union.

Beneficiaries: Locals and visitors who enjoy the trail; secondary economic benefits to shops etc.

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Trustees and advisers at a link path. Credit: Sandiephotos