

Project Information

'The Coast that Shaped the World' project is led by the University of the Highlands and Islands and based in West Highland College, Fort William. The purpose of the project is to gather maritime stories from 20 destinations across the west coast – stories that shaped our coastal communities into what they are today, and which convey how our maritime cultural and natural heritage helped to shape the world.

This is a community-led project, which gathers stories from the people within the communities themselves as well as people who have connections with the area, with the intention of attracting people to come to the less-visited areas of the west coast of Scotland. The aim is to help sustain local communities and businesses, and to protect and share our rich natural and cultural heritage through these high-quality experiences – for both visitors and locals alike.

Coast Project Outputs

- An area by area and themed story bank which will be securely stored and archived within the University of the Highlands and Islands.
- A website and an innovative app, to bring the stories to life and encourage travel and exploration off the beaten track.
- A minimum of four interactive installations, working with local heritage centres and museums.

Project Funding

The project is funded primarily by a grant from the NatureScot's Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund (NCHF). This fund supports new opportunities to promote the outstanding scenery, wildlife and culture of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland in ways which support inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The focus of the fund is to help to retain jobs and sustain populations and services in rural communities. The project is also match-funded by West Highland College UHI and CalMac Ferries and is supported by 'West Coast Waters' which is a collaboration of all the Destination Groups across the west coast which was set up in 2018 in readiness for 2020 Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters.

Covid 19

The project was originally scoped out prior to the Covid19 pandemic and has been modified in light of this with 32 local story gatherers appointed to work within

local communities and reach out and meet (when possible) key individuals to help gather their stories to ensure they are integrated in our west coast storybank. The project will now be a key mechanism for recording stories from this devastating era in our heritage which has galvanised many communities and demonstrated resilience which is a key feature of our west coast spirit.

Visitor Impact Mitigation and Equalities

As part of the conditions for the NCHF funding for the project, a Visitor Impact Mitigation and Environmental Sustainability Action plan document was produced, as well as an Equality Impact Assessment. The considerations and mitigations set out in the plan will run through the project and be a vital part of the criteria for selection of chosen stories. This project will help deliver a more responsible approach to tourism in our coastal destinations and engender strong empathy for the culture and heritage of each community.

Legacy

The funding requires the outputs to be maintained until 2030, and hopefully beyond this, to ensure the project's legacy. The bank of archived stories - our story bank - in addition to being integral to this 3 year project linked to the Year of Scotland's Stories in 2022, may also be kept alive and be used (with permission) for other UHI academic study or projects further ensuring an ongoing legacy for the continued preservation of our vibrant west coast cultural heritage.

As the stories are being gathered digitally as a database, the archiving by UHI will be an important feature of this project. The project partners will also explore sharing the local storybank for each area with suitable organisations.

Crediting Stories

Contributors will be credited where requested/supplied on our story gathering form, and contact made before use in any of our applications and project activities. If further source material is referenced, we will refer to these and direct people through the website, app and exhibitions to those sources for further information.

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For further information please contact hello@coast.scot