

**ANNEX C – LIST OF ATTENDEES AND RECORD OF COMMENTS  
FROM WORKSHOP GROUPS**

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## **WESTERN ISLES BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLANS WORKSHOP – 15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2003 CASTLEBAY PRIMARY SCHOOL, BARRA**

### **LIST OF ATTENDEES**

Jonathan Grant  
Rhodri Evans – National Trust  
Gordon Craig

### **FORMAT OF THE BARRA WORKSHOP**

The Barra workshop was run slightly differently from the workshops in Benbecula and Stornoway as only three people attended. In the other two workshops the attendees were asked to circulate and write down initial thoughts on post-it notes and then later break into three groups to discuss each of the plans using the thoughts written on the post-it notes to stimulate discussion. This was not appropriate for the Barra meeting given the limited number of people present. Instead we had a round table discussion about each of the biodiversity plans in turn and notes were taken to record the discussion. Inevitably the conversation included comments and discussion regarding the engagement of the wider community in Barra.

### **NOTES TAKEN DURING ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION**

#### **General Comments**

- What is missing is a more informal group – similar to the ‘Natural History Society’ but less formal and more open.
- It needs to be realised and understood that a one-off biodiversity/environmental event or workshop cannot be held. It is very important to have follow up and come back to create interest and to get people involved.
- Would like to see an initiative in the Western Isles that is similar to the Urban Wildlife Groups Initiative.
- To get people involved you need to provide the ‘right’ kind of events and include the biodiversity themes within them. For example community archaeology tours, natural history tours *etc* such as those led by the ranger.
- It was pointed out that sheep on the island are decreasing due to their decreasing market price. It is understood that the number of livestock on the island will decrease further with the introduction of the CAP reforms, which will sever the direct link between number of livestock and degree of subsidy. This is and will continue to change the landscape directly due to decreased livestock grazing and indirectly due to a decrease in land management practices that traditionally supported livestock production, such as muir burn. It was questioned what we want the landscape to look like, do we want it to be a museum piece or do we want it to reflect the changes in agriculture and the changed understanding of the financial value of the land (in tourism for example). If we opt for a museum piece the practices that will drive land management practices will be in a sense false as economics will not be driving it.
- It was perceived that the economics of the island were no longer focussed in the land (at least in a traditional agricultural production sense). The economy is now essentially service based with fishing and increasing amounts of tourism. Attendees believed that there was scope to grow tourism in a sustainable way and that there may be the

possibility of using tourism as an incentive to improve the environment if it were understood that the one was directly reliant on the other.

- It was asked of the group if they had any thoughts of how to best to engage with the community of Barra regarding biodiversity and other environmental issues. It was suggested that the best way was to tell the community something about Barra, i.e. something about where they live and why it is special and amazing as all folk on Barra are very proud of their place and where they live. Generally it was thought that great pictures of the island were really important. Also the importance of following things up was highlighted so as to maintain interest. They intimated that it would be discouraging and pointless if the imagination and interest of the community was sparked in relation to these issues and then left and not followed up.
- Funding was discussed in relation to all three plans and it was made clear that if any of the initiatives were to be serious then sufficient amounts of funding had to be given to see them through.
- It was thought that there was no avenue for people who want to ‘say something’ and teach people about natural history on the island. It wasn’t clear to at least one attendee what it was that the Council was doing to address this. The Council’s intention to start up a Ranger service was brought up in response to this. A number of points were discussed with respect to the Ranger role throughout the Western Isles and so this is discussed under a separate heading below.
- Attendees thought there was potential to further encourage local interest groups on the island and that RSPB and SNH could do this. Generally it was thought that RSPB and SNH never come to Barra and never visit the schools and it was thought that they should make more effort on these fronts.

### *Ranger Service*

- It was understood that it was likely that the Council would obtain enough funding for one Ranger on Lewis, one on the Uists and Benbecula and half (part-time) a Ranger for Barra. It was generally thought that, depending on the role given, it was unlikely that these resources would be sufficient.
- It was recognised that a Ranger’s role could be incredibly diverse and range from policy and strategy, to marketing, to nature tourism co-ordinator, to natural and cultural tours to school visits. The role of marketing was discussed and it was agreed that it was not a job for a ranger.
- During the summer months it was thought necessary to have at least two full-time Rangers.
- It was felt that a Ranger service was essential and that while there were limited funding available that lip service shouldn’t be paid to these essential services.
- It was felt that it was essential to have a contact on the ground that could facilitate communication between crofters and agencies that are undertaking environmental/land management initiatives.
- It was queried whether funding for the Historic Scotland field officer post could better be spent as part of a general fund from several agencies which would all benefit from having ‘a ranger’ on the ground. It was suggested that the word ‘ranger’ might not even be the most suitable word. If the role was to include an ‘on the ground’ contact and ‘go-between’ between agencies and crofters (as well as incorporating more traditional ranger roles) a more suitable name could be identified.
- Generally understood that plans and strategies were required which could guide ‘rangers’ and on the ground land management issues. It was thought that outsiders at a high level should not develop the plans but that they should be produced at a ground level by those who would actually implement the plans.

- Agreement that one model of a land management service or ranger service could not be applied to all situations and that the role needs to be contextualised by the local situation.

## **WOODLANDS**

- When planting woodland areas it is important to consider the type of habitat that the woodland will replace. On Rum the idea of tree planting initially sounded positive but in some cases the woodland was replacing habitat that was in many ways more important than the woodland habitat.
- An interesting question that should be addressed is whether you can actually restore woodland. It needs to be understood that in these areas it is less likely that there is potential to restore woodland but rather to create woodland.
- Initiatives need to relate to land use and nature management must be linked to land management. Environmental management agencies do not perhaps always realise this and often they will come in and try and control a situation as compared to working with land managers.
- Crofting communities can already get grants for planting shelterbelts.
- There needs to be communication with crofters on how to manage these areas of woodland in the long term. They also need advice on what species to plant.
- It was reiterated many times by those present that woodland cannot be planted and just left – it has to be planted and managed into the future.
- Measures need to be put in place so that crofters can make the right choice regarding the type of trees that they are planting.
- Attendees did not believe that there was a huge potential for natural regeneration on the island as only sycamore is setting seed and regenerating.
- Highlighted that the landscape was a cultural landscape not a natural landscape and that the reason that it looks as it does today is due to the long history of crofting on the island. This will always have to be considered when any environmental initiative is put in place.

## **BUMBLEBEE**

- It was noted that despite the machair land on Lewis and Harris the Great Yellow Bumblebee has only recently been recorded once, in Northton. They put this down to different grazing regimes.
- Mentioned that the diversity of the machair sward had decreased and it was now more likely to yield trample resistant flowers.
- Agreed that people would probably set aside land for flowers but also questioned whether this was entirely necessary as already a wide variety of plants did exist on the island that were suitable for the bumblebee.
- Agreement that the machair does need to be managed but that incentives need to be provided if you would like crofters to manage the machair for bees – as they have done for the corncrake.
- A particular croft was discussed where the machair habitat had been mismanaged and was now eroding and damaged. It was not clear under what guise someone could approach this crofter to address the situation as it was recognised that the damage was not in anyway intentional but was due to mismanagement. It was agreed by all that this crofter required financial incentives to better manage the machair. It was not understood however why no incentives had yet been offered to the crofter or indeed, who would actually offer the incentive. It was thought that perhaps an individual land management agreement could be had with SNH. Although generally it was felt that

there was no mechanism for this process to happen i.e. for an agency to literally approach the crofter on the ground.

- It was thought that there was a scheme for crofters to manage machair but they weren't sure what it was called or how the system worked.
- Questioned whether the bumblebee naturally fluctuates with the population of mice on the island. It was thought that some research could be done to understand the relationship between these two species. It was thought that it might warrant a survey programme funded by SNH.
- The possibility of networking was discussed –i.e. more networking between agencies in relation to land management and incentive schemes. It was thought that it was all a bit disjointed and that there wasn't an overall clear vision of land management for the landscape and land management issues for the island.

### **SALINE LAGOONS**

- It was mentioned that 'tied-up thinking' was really important with respect to developments and saline lagoons. As an example it was suggested that it was necessary to work *with* road builders and designers at an early stage to minimise impact to the lagoons.
- All believed that the threats to saline lagoons were increasing due to the rise in the use of pesticides and fertilisers since the 1980s.
- If we want to influence pesticide and fertiliser use and other factors that negatively affect saline lagoons it is important that schemes are integrated into people's quality of life. And in this sense financial incentives have to be provided to make it economically viable for people to maintain quality of life and achieve the biodiversity objectives.
- In relation to the above point it was said that there was a lot more to all of this than just economic viability but it was about all of the sustainability principles including social and environmental aspects.

**BIODIVERSITY COMMUNITY WORKSHOP – 16 DECEMBER 2003  
NUNTON STEADINGS, BENBECULA****LIST OF ATTENDEES:**

Norman Johnson - Comann Na Mara  
Alasdair MacLellan - Comann Na Mara/Tigharry Township  
Lachie Morrison – Grimsay, North Uist  
David Buckland – Vet/SNH/Crofter  
David Shepherd - SUBAS  
John MacMillan- Crofter  
Isabel MacDonald – WIE  
Mary Harman – Stilligarry, South Uist  
Jeni Henton – Crofter Benbecula  
Andrew Stevenson - SNH/Bird Recorder, South Uist  
Paul Bayor  
Nicolette MacLean  
Bill Neill  
David Muir SCF  
Brian Lowe – Curracag  
Rona Womersley – Nunton Steadings (SIAT)  
Katherine Mathis - SIAT

**GREAT YELLOW BUMBLEBEE****Post-it Notes**

- Encourage use of seaweed as fertiliser by enhanced financial assistance to crofters.
- Interpretation – schools
- I was visited this year by bumble bees approximately 1 mile off shore in October it seemed strange so late in the year
- Raise awareness of bee among crofters (a bee may be just a bee to them and not something of a rarity).
- Find out more about field mouse distribution and numbers. More cat neutering and fewer ferrets.
- Seaweed – encouragement of fertiliser on machair by improving beach accesses.
- Discourage sheep grazing on machair.
- Introduce management prescription for crofting in return for financial assistance.
- Ensure long term funding for ESA.
- New threat is CAP reform – likely to lead to reduction of cattle and therefore traditional machair management. Must have incentives to counter this.
- All three groups of actions seem reasonable [the actions were arbitrarily presented in three groups on the poster for ease of reading].
- Raise local awareness.

### Flip Chart Action Points

- Increase awareness, to the principle landusers especially crofters.
- Supply charts for identification.
- Encourage gardeners to grow the flowers they like (the bees!).
- Ensure long-term funding for ESA.
  - Seaweed as fertiliser
  - Encourage cattle under CAP reform
- Discourage sheep grazing on machair in the summer.
- Find out more about female distribution.
- Employ ranger to go round school and take children out to the machair.
- Use red clover in reseed mixtures.
- Make display boards as part of Nunton Steadings' Wildlife exhibition to advertise.
- Create verges in road construction; sow with bee friendly seed mix.

### *Community Involvement*

- Increase awareness with school shows...
- Publicise through WITB
- Update biodiversity bit of council website and provide links from tourism and national websites.

### **ADDITIONAL NOTES [TAKEN WHEN FLIP CHART POINTS WERE PRESENTED TO THE GROUP]**

- Few knew there was a Great Yellow Bumblebee before coming along tonight. The evening has increased awareness of the bee. Generally we need to increase the awareness of the bee especially to the principal land users, which in this case is the crofters.
- Supply charts for identification.
- Encourage the gardeners to grow the plant species the bee likes which applies to crofter's also (i.e. through their seed mixes – discussed below).
- Management schemes – Encourage management schemes for the bees make evident the value of their land to the bee not only the value of their land in an economic sense.
- CAP reform – keeping cattle will no longer be a requirement to obtain financial grants and incentives under the CAP reform.
- Decrease sheep grazing on the machair.
- Find out more about the female population.
- Employ a ranger to get children out on the machair.
- Uist red clover in the re-seed mixture. Tendency to plant white clover. [The group wasn't sure why this was and asked a local crofter if he knew]. He said that the red clover does not regenerate that well, i.e. you can plant it one year and it won't return the next year. Suggested a possible reason may be that it is not a local red clover species and it is not hardy enough to regenerate. [Maybe a

possibility of doing some experiments on small patches between local and non local seed of the clover and determine if the local will regenerate].

- The Great Yellow Bumblebee will now be included in the Natural Heritage Wildlife display at the Nunton Steadings.
- Bee friendly seed mix – seed mixes are specified by the Council and therefore the Council has an opportunity to influence the make-up of this mix.
- Tourist Board can help raise awareness of the bee.
- Links can be provided on the Comhairle Biodiversity Website to international and local bee sites.

## **NATIVE WOODLANDS**

### **Post-it Notes**

- Consider long term maintenance of any plot. Who will do it? Who will pay for it?
- Have smaller plots of trees as people will find it easier to look after them. Also plant nearer houses as people will be more inclined to fix fencing etc.  
Accessibility.
- Provision at resources for maintenance is very important.
- Encourage local people to grow the species under threat – gardens.
- I thought that fire was nature's way of revitalising the soil.
- Reduce deer numbers.
- Free handouts of seedlings annually (perhaps from SAC).
- Encourage and expand existing outcrops at naturally occurring woodland through protection.
- Establish local nurseries to grow from seed.
- Encourage people to plant local interest species in their gardens.
- Good areas of juniper would need an incentive for favourable muirburn management.
- Smaller plantations easier to manage than larger.
- Need extra funding for very small patches of woodland on in-bye – natural shapes, good stock shelter.
- Work with crofting townships to protect existing woodland scrub on common grazings.

### **Flip Chart Action Points**

- Incentives for moorland management.
  - Selective burning/proper control
  - Reduce number of deer
  - Protect and encourage existing woodland scrub.
- Establish and utilise local nurseries to grow native species from seed.
- Encourage people to plant local species in their gardens.
- Smaller scale plantations.
- More consultation/advice about species, soil and location.

- Educate and emphasise importance of using local species (including school grounds).
- Community woodland days – education, guided walks/talks, maintenance (‘maintain a tree day’).

#### **ADDITIONAL NOTES TAKEN DURING PRESENTATION OF ABOVE POINTS**

- Important to understand and manage incentives to provide advice on management for example that can provide effective control of muirburn but while still reaping the benefits of the burn.
- Encourage existing woodland.
- Nurseries – get them to grow native species from seed. By this they mean actually using real *local* seeds, *ie* by harvesting seed from trees that currently exist on the islands.
- Plant in people’s yards and gardens and plant the right type of trees, i.e. native species not conifers.
- Deer management.
- Provide advice etc about management – where to plant etc and emphasise local species including in schools and use these trees to promote local ownership and on-going management.
- Important to follow up original tree planting schemes by having not just ‘plant a tree day’ but also ‘maintain a tree day’.
- Follow up is very important.

#### **SALINE LAGOONS**

##### **Post-it Notes**

- Oban Lionacleit is now starting to re-establish after the Lionacleit flood gate was renewed.
- Sea life centre situated somewhere – Lochmaddy? Explaining the systems with exhibits: - perhaps a lab to accommodate visiting researchers and students.
- More widely publicised information: exhibitions, ?mobile, open field days for adults and children; booklet.
- Raise awareness: Prepare materials for use in schools (video already?). Interpretation: support plans for Lochmaddy interpretation centre.
- I have never heard the word “lagoon” to describe part of the landscape of the Western Isles. Maybe education/awareness should be a priority.

##### **Flip Chart Action Points**

- Schools and young people.
- Field trips.
- Role for Comann na Mara.
- Research needs to be collated and available locally.
- Web site.
- Undertake all action points.

- Planning permission to consider impact on lagoon from domestic waste.

#### **ADDITIONAL NOTES TAKEN DURING PRESENTATION OF ABOVE POINTS**

- Looking at all the post-it notes it seemed to highlight that most thought the most important action was the raising of awareness. As a group they asked themselves a few questions relating to this awareness such as whose awareness do they want to raise. For example, in this instance they do not want to raise international awareness of this but more local awareness. They believe that the way to go about that is to work with schools and young people, literally get into the schools and talk about the lagoons. If the schools are not open to the idea then it is important to target other youth groups. It is important also when targeting schools to pick your time accordingly and not come in when they are under pressure *etc.*
- Setting up a young naturalist group was suggested– not limited to only including young people, open to all, but run and managed by young people.
- It was considered that there is a very strong role for the Comann na Mara.
- One post-it note suggested more research was required – again the group asked themselves who should do this research? After discussion they thought that actually a lot of research had already been undertaken on this topic.
- Attendees thought it was important to use the Western Isles Biodiversity Website for various purposes to raise awareness but also to disseminate research information *etc.*
- Those present thought it was important to address how they could ensure that the saline lagoons stay special. They believed it was a bit of a balancing act between allowing developing and preservation of the lagoons. But that the planning process should be used to a greater extent to protect these lagoons. For example, it is important if a housing development is going to go ahead that waste management issues in relation to the development are also considered.

**BIODIVERSITY COMMUNITY WORKSHOP – 17 DECEMBER 2003****THE COUNTY HOTEL, STORNOWAY****ATTENDEES**

Angus Nicholson – SNP Councillor  
Janet Marshall  
Donald Murdie – Lewis and Harris Horticultural Producers Group  
Hazel MacLeod – SEPA  
Sue Robson – Lewis and Harris Horticultural Producers Group  
Mark Bilsby – Western Isles Fisheries Trust  
Ms Maclean<sup>1</sup>  
Kevin Brown – Stornoway Trust  
Alison Martin – CNES  
Iain MacIver – Stornoway Trust  
Jamie Hepburn – SEPA  
Iain MacLeod – SCF, CNES  
Martin Jones  
Martin Smith  
Jon MacLeod  
Annie Campbell Shawbost Community Council  
Martin Scott – RSPB Conservation Officer  
Angela Barclay – Crofter

**GREAT YELLOW BUMBLEBEE****Post-it notes**

- The conditions in our area are ideal for this bee (Bragar machair and environs) but rely on traditional cultivation to remain so.
- Management of roadside verges.
- Vorulam Mite?
- Pay crofters to keep stock off land (machair) in summer and graze in winter.
- This is the ideal creature to capture the imagination of children.
- Raise awareness in schools.
- Regular press publicity.
- ‘Sex it up’ make it appeal, give it an image!
- Push identification – if you’re looking for records get pamphlets in the B&Bs etc. To most people it is just a bee.

**Flip Chart Action Points**

- Image: Identification and promotion – schools, local press, target areas.
- Location: Current records observer bias? Involve the public.
- Science: Keep it simple and accessible.

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<sup>1</sup> We had difficulty reading Ms Maclean’s first name (as written upon leaving the workshop) and for this reason have not included it to ensure we didn’t record her name incorrectly.

- Tourists: Highlight to attract records.
- Rural Stewardship Scheme: Bring the Great Yellow Bumblebee into the fold.
- Crofters: Involve them.

#### **ADDITIONAL NOTES [TAKEN WHEN FLIP CHART POINTS WERE PRESENTED TO THE GROUP]**

- Image – it was the understanding of the group that the Great Yellow Bumblebee had a bit of an image problem in that no one really knows what it looks like. They think that what they need is to get some simple identification posters and pamphlets and to promote the bee through schools and the local press.
- Location – The group thought that the lack of records in Harris and Lewis must be down to observer bias, they believe that if people know what they are looking for there would be records of the bee.
- Science – Attendees thought that the use of Latin names was unnecessary. The experience of the group had found that if you mention science terms or names people just switch off. It is important to keep it interesting and straightforward.
- The group thought it was important to raise tourist's awareness of the bee. They thought this could be done by giving pamphlets to B&Bs and hotels. They thought that it was particularly important to try and target those tourists with a particular science/nature interest or background who would like to get involved in surveying and recording. If this initiative is followed through it should be made sure that there is a mechanism by which these tourists to report back on their findings.
- RSS – the Great Yellow Bumblebee is already part of the RSS (as part of an incentive to manage machair in a way that is favourable to the bee) which means that crofters are possibly aware of the bee. Recognised that crofters have a huge potential to record the presence or absence of the bees, as they are the ones that are actually in the field. Often it is simply about asking the right questions – its not that crofters don't want to tell people but they have to know what people want to know.

#### **WOODLANDS**

##### **Post-it Notes**

- Planting of community woodlands with involvement of schools i.e. planting, cutting and monitoring wildlife.
- Planting up school grounds with native shrubs and trees.
- Small areas of woodland to be planted which will in time form a wildlife corridor – linked to existing areas of native woodland under threat.
- The main advisory body on tree planting in Scotland seem to be the Forestry Commission who recommended using conifers as a nurse crop for deciduous trees instead of fast growing willow coppice.
- Suggest planting of deciduous trees in areas where species such as primrose and bluebell exist i.e. indicators of native woodland in the past.
- What is the genetic variability of the different species off the mainland. Are there different strains local to here – if so they need to be prioritised?

- Encourage linking of sites – corridors particularly important for the regeneration of aspen.
- It is quite feasible to protect native woodland by fencing areas for regeneration but crofters/grazing communities would have to have a financial incentive to do so. And estates would have to control deer numbers.
- To be eligible for appropriate grants for planting crofter shelter belts, a large proportion of the trees must be conifers.
- Woodland strategy being developed through the Council.

### **Flip Chart Action Points**

#### *Community*

- Making it easy (ordinary language).
- Identify specific examples in local area.
- Who in community is doing this? Not an ‘official’ expert but an accessible local person/forum who crofters can talk to for sound practical advice.

#### *Environmental*

- Conservation of existing.
- Generation of new woodland.

#### *Technical*

- Identify genetic variation and integrity.
- To use a nursery crop or not.
- Use local stock (priority-to protect local stock).
- Collate existing data/research.

#### *Financial*

- Make it cost effective.
- Have incentive to make involvement attractive.

### **ADDITIONAL NOTES [TAKEN WHEN FLIP CHART POINTS WERE PRESENTED TO THE GROUP]**

- The group didn’t disagree with objectives and actions.
- As a general point the group felt that there were two clear and distinct objectives of the plan and that was to firstly protect real and existing native woodland and the second was to create new woodland. They thought it needed to be made clearer throughout that the two were distinct and that perhaps in the plan the two could be approached separately.
- Thought it was important to get people enthusiastic and excited about the prospect of woodlands. They thought a simple way to go about this was to just show people where the woodlands are and explain why they are important.
- Thought it was very important to identify individuals in the community who were successfully managing native woodlands – not a professional person but a person who crofts or farms and has successfully maintained or developed woodlands on his property. Arrangement could be made so that these people on

the ground were available to give advice to those in the same situation as them as to how to develop and/or maintain woodland areas on their land. There may be the possibility also of bringing together a forum of these people.

- The group thought it was important to identify genetic variation on the island. For example they thought it may be necessary to establish the genetic variation of stock between the east and the west of Lewis. If local stock is going to be promoted it has to be understood what is meant by local which will require some research.
- It is necessary to make it cost effective for people to grow woodland on their property. Incentives need to be provided to make it attractive to people. Essentially it has to be made to be cost effective to diversify.

## **SALINE LAGOONS**

### **Post-it Notes**

- Monitor new and existing aquaculture developments for impact on ecosystem of lagoons.
- Conflicting legislation: Need clear steer through this minefield.
- The Loch Roag Lagoons are highly polluted with marine litter. This may not affect them from a habitat point of view but if an area is considered important it should be maintained, otherwise the local community will not share the view of its importance. In Tob Valasay there is also a need to consider main drainage to avoid sewage run/off eutrophication.
- Removal of culverts – in some cases do the culverts not create the lagoons.
- Publicise where they are – we have this wonderful secret resource.
- Involve local sub-aqua club at least one member present tonight.
- As with the rest of wildlife and habitats here, market them much more rigorously as a haven for wildlife and their uniqueness. Show local people that such habitats can bring money into their communities.

### **Flip Chart Action Points**

#### **Culverts**

- they need to be considered individually – cannot have blanket removal.

#### **Litter**

- Visual image gives the lagoons a poor reputation.

#### **Tourism**

- Encourage specialist tourism.
- ‘Environmental Tourism’
- Glass bottomed boat.

#### **How to involve the community**

- Genuine local participation between SNH/NGOs and locals
- Educate – clean up – life the image.

- Help provide cash to enable more suitable sewage discharge – via secondary treatment.
- Promote social, economic and environmental aspects of your local lagoon.

**ADDITIONAL NOTES [TAKEN WHEN FLIP CHART POINTS WERE PRESENTED TO THE GROUP]**

- Removal of all culverts [not clear where the group established that this was an action] – the group disagreed with this as culverts were established and were likely to have created communities and ecosystems of their own now. If it is proposed that a culvert be removed the impact of removing the culvert should be considered.
- Litter in and around the saline lagoons is not helping the situation of enhancing the profile of the habitat. Local people won't think great of their local lagoon nor realise that it is anything special as it looks as though it is not valued when rubbish and litter is present.
- The group considered that environmental and green tourism should be encouraged in relation to the lagoons. In particular the Tourism Board should try and target those tourist with an interest in the marine environment.
- Attendees thought that glass bottom boats are a valid idea as the lagoons are beautiful underneath the water. They understood that there was a glass bottomed boat at Lochmaddy although it wasn't clear how this had gone and whether it was still there.
- The group thought that genuine local participation was required, not just consultation but participation and engagement between agencies, NGOs and people or else the whole process simply won't work.
- Felt that education was required at all levels.
- Believe that cash is needed if agencies are to be serious about the protection of the lagoons.
- Thought it was important to consider and promote the economic and social aspects of the saline lagoons.
- Thought it might be necessary to employ a land officer who could visit communities and actively engage them. It is all well and good to talk about participation but if people don't even know that such an opportunity exists it is necessary to go out to communities to get them on board.

**CASTLEBAY PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL – BARRA 15<sup>TH</sup>  
DECEMBER 2003****Post-it Notes**

- Don't pollute the water/sea. Build a few more trees. Leave them alone (bumblebees).
- Keep what we have for future generations.
- Stop dumping sewerage into the sea.
- Provide more bins and skips instead of dumping stuff into the lagoons.
- Bumblebee – keep certain areas of land for bumblebee with plants they find appealing.
- If you save them then more people will come to Barra which will bring tourism and more money.
- The bees help pollinate the flowers, and if they're not pollinated, the flower species will die out.
- Provide flowers to gardeners and ask them to not pick them and leave them for the bees.
- Bumble bee – set aside areas to keep the plants they thrive on.
- A living tourism.
- Woodlands – Good – more birds. Bad – trees will attract midges, lightning storms.
- Plant more trees in your garden.
- Woodlands – Good – animals live there. They take the CO<sub>2</sub> out of the air. Bad [left blank].
- They make oxygen and get rid of carbon dioxide.
- They help prevent flooding.
- Woodlands – because they are nice looking.
- Woodlands – plant trees, plant other plants, protect trees.
- Start planting more trees and keep the area fenced off.
- We need trees as homes for animals.
- Trees mean cleaner air.
- Woodlands – Good – They can look good to tourists. Shelter for animals. Bad – can attract flies. They could fall down and hurt someone.
- Woodlands – Good – More birds – They make nice scenery – They might give animals sheltered homes. Bad – it might attract midges, trees can block the other scenery, if there's more animals more hunters will come, they attract lightning.
- Woodlands – Good – more birds around. Bad – it will attract midges. Lightning storms.
- Saline lagoons – less pollution, more ferries (means less bridges)
- Bumble bees - don't use herbicides.
- Don't give bees a reason to sting you.
- Things to keep bumblebees in Barra and Vatersay are to stop using pesticides and herbicides and not to mow your garden as often.
- Bumblebees – put cattle on hills.
- Never mow your garden.

- Bumblebees – grow more flowers; stop pesticides; let people know about the bumblebees and how special they are to Barra and Vatersay.
- Bumblebees are popular in Barra and Vatersay because of the nice weather in the summer and the smell of flowers.
- Bumblebees are popular in Barra and Vatersay. Best place.
- Don't use pesticides.
- To increase the bumblebee you can:
  - Increase the amount of flowers in your garden;
  - Ask your mum not to mow the verges;
  - Don't use pesticides.
- We have to protect nature and living things on Barra from diseases and pollution. It makes Barra look good and attracts tourists.
- I don't think animals are important but we should keep grass for cows and sheep.
- Sense of well-being.
- We have to protect nature because it is special to Barra and Vatersay. If we protect them they can increase and make Barra and Vatersay nicer places (if that's possible?).
- If one animal increases that can mean that more increase because there will be more food for the rest.
- You have to protect nature and animals to help the population.
- We have to protect other living things from pollution.
- They're good to look at and they're living things.
- Two reasons to help plants and animals are:
  - You have to protect nature to keep the population going forever.
  - Nature like insects and animals are popular on Barra and attract tourists.
- You need to look after plants and animals.
- You need to look after plants and animals so you can eat them and also to keep the food chain going.
- You need to look after animals and plants because we are all part of a food chain and if one part gets taken out the thing is affected.
- Stop the use of pesticides.
- We need to keep our plants to keep the food chain going so we don't kill out animals that are important to us.
- Keep it pretty for tourists.
- Keep it pretty for tourists so that they will come and visit our island.
- Be careful what you stand on and what you weed out of your garden.
- Woodlands – plant them up the hills because they crowd up the crofts.
- Plant trees in different areas.
- Stop dumping stuff in the waters.
- Keep water clean so fish don't die.
- Keep the place nice for us to live in.

**NOTES TAKEN WHILE SPEAKING WITH CASTLEBAY SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS – YEARS S5 AND S6****Woodlands**

- Generally, at first, didn't seem so keen on the trees in Barra.
- 'Trees in Barra will look weird'!
- 'Where are the trees in Barra'?
- 'Crofters will go mental, they don't want the trees'.
- 'Trees have been planted but sheep eat them'.
- 'There are a lot of trees if you think about it – you've got to look for them'.

**Bumblebee**

- Down in Eoligarry where I stay we have the cows out in the summer and there are flowers everywhere – primroses...there are bumblebees everywhere.
- 'I've seen an underground bees nest'.
- 'I've heard our dog barking at a hole where buzzing was coming out and it sounded like bees – I never thought it would be though!'

**Saline Lagoons**

- Debris washed up on the beaches is a problem. Every year there is a clean up but debris and rubbish continue to get washed up on the beach.
- Not as much the locals.
- The locals use the skips but there are not enough skips in Barra. They will throw stuff on the beach when the skips are full.
- Some sewerage goes straight into the sea.
- Didn't think fish farms were a problem – they can never remember any fish farms being in Barra although they thought that could be a bit more of a problem for Uist.
- 'I think Barra's biggest problem is erosion'.

**General**

- The pupils believed that most local folks were fairly aware of environmental issues on the island. They thought that crofters didn't perhaps care as much about environmental issues. They discussed the corncrake as an example of an environmental initiative that had really worked. They said that 10 years ago no one had heard of the corncrake but now the crofters cut the hay differently to protect the bird. There never used to be any corncrakes around my house but now I have two outside my house. In the summer I can't get to sleep at night because of the noise they make!

**What Needs to be Done**

- Do what they did for the corncrake.
- Set aside land to grow suitable habitat for the bumblebee.
- Make it more formal, not just voluntary.

- They didn't think that there was any point putting trees here there and everywhere. It would take some thought and planning to decide where to put them.
- People should change their habits in gardening and to get people interested in the first instance you could give them the flower seeds.
- They believe it is a good idea to put information in the local paper.
- Spoke briefly about the burning off of *seigen*<sup>2</sup> and the importance to manage it effectively. They said in the summer that sometimes it can look as if the whole island is on fire.

### **NOTES TAKEN WHILE SPEAKING WITH CASTLEBAY PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS – PRIMARY 5 AND 6**

We initiated a discussion with the younger students by working through each of the colourful posters and asking them if they knew what particular pictures were on the posters. The children were really responsive and seemed to understand what all of the pictures are with the exception of some of the pictures on the saline lagoons poster. But they understood it was the coastline of the Western Isles and that the foxtail stonewort was a 'sea plant'. We asked them if they knew of words to describe the images on each of the posters. The students suggested many words for example 'trees' 'wildlife' 'landscape', 'environment', etc. One little girl said: 'Isn't it our nature?'

#### **Bumblebee**

- Have special areas for wildflowers to grow in.
- Look after the flowers.
- Keep the sheep out of the flower fields.
- Protect holes for the bumblebees.

#### **Woodlands**

- Don't knock them down – or don't knock so many down, take some and leave others.
- Try and prevent fires.
- Look after them.
- Only put in places where the trees won't be blown down.
- One student told us about the millennium tree planting.

#### **Saline Lagoons**

- Don't throw rubbish.
- Get people not to throw stuff into the water.
- Use skips and bins more – we need to remind people to use them.
- Stop building things into the water.

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<sup>2</sup> This referred to dead grass and bracken which is burned off to assist regeneration.