



Peat, Diesel and Seaweed brief outline

This research study wants to find out how people in coastal communities in the NW Highlands feel about climate change and explore their hopes for effective climate action.

The project is a partnership between the University of the Highlands and Islands and the Northwest 2045 network of community organisations (hosted by Assynt Development Trust), and it is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council to run throughout 2023. The main researcher is Dr Mandy Haggith, who works for UHI Inverness and lives in Assynt, within the study area.

The project is a creative study, using arts methods including poetry to find out and express how people think and feel about climate change. We need to get from our current situation to a future where we achieve net zero carbon emissions in ways that are both practical and benefit local people by supporting livelihoods and wellbeing, so the project will encourage folk to express their concerns but also to dream about a better future.

After starting with a survey (<https://uhi.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/peat-diesel-and-seaweed>) addressing the broad issue of climate change, the study will focus on three topics:

1. peatland restoration
2. alternatives to marine diesel and
3. seaweed cultivation.

These could be very significant in terms of their impact on climate change emissions but have been less widely discussed locally than some other issues like road or air travel, energy generation, housing and food.

The project will have a focus on working with young people, particularly in the second half of 2023, and it will draw together relevant expertise from a wide range of people including land managers, harbour users, scientists, local businesses and other community members. The project findings will feed into a digital hub being created by NW2045, which is exploring innovative ways to design the 'green transition' in coastal communities in the northwest Highlands.

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