

Youth Visit

Youths from the Timespan project and Durness youths.

The group known as Timespan's Youth Arts Group, OURS visited Durness last Saturday to meet up with some of the local youths. Ruth MacDougal who was artist in residence in a recent Durness Development groups scheme is the Youth Arts Curator within the programme and the kids have been meeting and doing workshops together since Sept last year. The 4 kids who attended the trip were core members from the group, all of whom will be involved in the summer environmental art workshops that will be taking place in KLB, Drumbeg, Achfary, Lairg and Bettyhill. The programme is sponsored by The Paul Hamlyn Foundation and the Scottish Art Council's Partners programme and on the Durness visit met youth workers Tony Jackson and Marjory Morrison and 6 Durness youths, Kelsey Keith, Sophie Macleod, Elizabeth Marsham, Christopher Arrowsmith, Martin James Mackay and David Corbett. The Helmsdale group gave a presentation in the youth cafe and then they all went for a meal at the Sango Sands Oasis and on to Sango beach for a few games. They visited Lotte Glob's sculpture croft and Smoo Cave whilst they were here.

Balnakeil Craft Village

Last Wednesday a meeting between the residents of Balnakeil Craft village and Councillor Robbie Rowantree and ward manager Andy Mackay supported by members of Durness Community council was held in Durness Village hall. Highland Council had been requested by members of the Craft Village to facilitate and organise a meeting in Durness to discuss the issues raised by the villagers. Several matters were amicably discussed including the roads, property owner's responsibilities, communal areas, signage car, parking and dog fouling. Residents and business operators are to arrange discussions to deal with issues and the Highland Council will address areas of their responsibility.

School

There is a busy time at Durness primary. The senior class have been involved in an environmental science project creating an outdoor wildlife

pond. The intention is to observe the mini beasts that are attracted and watch the habitats as they are formed. Unfortunately with the ongoing dry spell for the last 3 weeks the water has drained out but this is expected to be temporary.

This week the whole school spent a day at Arnaboll involved all kinds of outdoor pursuits.

Last Tuesday, leaving at 6.15 am class primary 7 which has one pupil Mary McCowan from Durness made a day trip to Orkney with head teacher Graham Bruce. They travelled with Tongue, Farr and Melvich primary schools to the Pickaquoy Centre in Kirkwall. There they met up with pupils from several other schools from Caithness and Orkney. The day was an informal mix of events with Kirkwall and Stromness High School choir, MacDonald Brothers from the X Factor and Keith Jack from the travelling Joseph production and drama but all spelling out an anti drugs message. The event *Choices for Life* was firmly focused on conveying an anti drugs message to young people. The north Sutherland contingent returned via John o Groats Brunswick passenger ferry after spending a further couple of hours in Kirkwall and was home after a long but enjoyable day by 9.30pm.

In two weeks time primaries six and seven return to Orkney with children from KLB, Scourie and Achfary to spend 33 days in a hostel on the north mainland.