ResULTS project: case study C, interview 203

Face to face interview with local agency, conducted 27/2/21

Interviewer: I

Respondent: R

I We’re particularly interested in where there are trade-offs, and trying to identify where is a decision point, where is a tipping point, something goes and the results are either very positive or very negative. What would you understand as resilient?

R I suppose in terms of, how I see resilience, it impacts on tourism because it affects the landscape, and that’s what people come here for. If the livestock aren’t here the landscape changes quite dramatically and so that would impact on tourism, it would impact on the ecology which is another step in affecting tourism. Obviously birdlife, all these things change so that impacts.

Also, if there is a cut, a dip in [inaudible] you might get a loss of a generation in terms of producers with skills, so while we do have plenty of people interested in coming back to crofting now, things have jumped a generation, the parents haven’t been crofters but the grandchildren want it but they’ve lost the skills, and there aren’t always people around to help them with the skills. There are training institutions but there are kind of skills that you can learn and skills that you get it or you don’t. I suppose that’s a big chunk of how I see resilience.

Then I think the social cohesion that happens around it. I’m very fortunate in that I live in a crofting township where the majority of crofters are under 30, which is very unusual. A lot of young guys come in, and they come because of the wind farm, because of the wind farming benefit, because the crofts are tied into income from the wind farm so they do have the incentive to invest and stick around, and they’re able to build houses on the crofts.

So it’s very systemic, what will affect resilience, or the impact. If its livestock production stops, and you’ll go to townships around [area C] where there is no livestock effectively, and the ecology is dead, rush-infested areas, which is appalling and not a lot happens there.

I I’m interested that you say there’s a lot of younger grandchildren wanting to come back into crofting.

R They’re either grandchildren or they’re incomers completely, the people that would like to take on crofts. Because the Crofters Commission [inaudible] this very clear steer to get abandoned or crofts that are not in use, back in use, that is slowly having an effect. So you are getting either new crofters or a jump in generation.

I Why do you think people have become interested in crofts again?

R There’s a number of different reasons. I think let’s say the 20th century and the 21st century, there were a number of times when there was a kind of a feeling of, whether it’s return to the land or looking for change in lifestyle and livelihood, I think it’s just part of that. I look at it as a sort of cycle that we’re [inaudible]. I think that’s affecting it. Social political things. I think in terms of say the Highlands, particularly [area C], you see often people after high school go away for tertiary education, some come back after tertiary education, some don’t come back until their 30s-40s, and so there’s life change at that sort of stage. Some come back to retire, and some come back to be buried, they’re not a lot of use.

I There seems to be three ways in which people understand resilience, one is about absorbing change, maybe you take a hit in your income for that year because it wasn’t a very productive year, and buffering those changes. Or if you try and do some incremental changes to adapt to reduce your exposure to whatever that change is, whether it’s a weather change or whatever. Another way is to transform, to change what you’re doing altogether, your example of wind farms would be doing something very different or getting engaged in tourism much more. Do you see those three as having a role, do they make sense to you?

R Yes, diversification is the big one. I think it’s also the capacity that people have to see how investing in this bit over here makes this bit over here work. So, I have a croft, by itself financially it makes no sense whatsoever but the fact that I have two south-facing properties on the croft, I market them on the fact that it’s a working croft, and it works. Essentially it’s the non-livestock production side of things supports the livestock production [inaudible] by itself. It’s a question of seeing how one particular resource can be transformed, it’s about asset transformation.

It’s also being able to see how certain types of grant support can be helped to develop different things. For example, you can get a CAGS grant to build a shed or put a water supply or electricity supply. You can do that, what you might want also is you take advantage of that water supply and electricity to do another farm diversification, croft diversification activity, which might be certainly nothing to do with livestock production but it makes the whole thing more resilient.

I Do you think that your self-catering if people, the tourists wouldn’t want to come if it wasn’t a working croft? If you decided that actually the sheep aren’t making, or whatever it is you have on the croft, are not making any money, would you be tempted to give that side of it up?

R I think it enhances your offer, it enhances… There is a niche product there, people want to go and stay on a working croft and some people aren’t bothered, but it’s one particular bit of that holiday-making market that is attractive.

I In terms of [organisation 3], how does that fit in with the resilience building?

R [organisation 3], because we, today and more last November the event we had there which was called [area C] on a Plate, we were trying to put together primary food producers with the hospitality industry, making the market work a bit more, make people aware of who is producing what, whether it’s producing, smoking salmon locally, smoking cheese, whether it’s getting local mutton, whether it’s getting vegetables. Our role there was to put them together so they could make contact. Economists love to assume things, assume a perfect market which doesn’t exist, so we were playing the role there of making the market work a bit better.

This, which we are closely involved with, the Taste Local Awards, is local food producers awarding the hospitality industry for using local food products. The nominations come in and then the judgement is made by local food producers themselves how many local products are on the menu. That then becomes a selling point for the businesses that supports them, so that really our role is there, facilitating that process.

I Do you find there’s a lot of uptake from both sides of that story?

R Yes, it’s making people realise that… It’s the whole supply chain thing and it will encourage people, encourage people that have just taken on crofts or thinking about new croft venture. There is a market there and there are mechanisms to help get products to market.

I If you think about some of the functions, if you think about something being resilient it usually means that you need to try and maintain some kind of function, something that you’re keeping going. We’ve come up with some suggestions of what the literature says we need to maintain to be resilient, or those are the things people seek to maintain. Are there any of those that are resonant particularly?

R I think contribution to social cohesion is important. Food security, provision of [inaudible] product. Adding value, certainly I would say from 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 those there, private interests, 11 multiply and effect, yes. Public goods, the whole biodiversity, carbon sequestration clearly [inaudible].

I What would a cohesive society look like?

R Recently I lost a calving cow because I wasn’t around at the right time, and a neighbour sorted the problem for me. Then last weekend we had to bury them both and another neighbour had a digger, so they just turned up, dug a hole, popped her in. So there’s kind of support there. There’s support that’s developed through mentoring, how do I get out of this problem, what do I do sort of thing, there’s shared work, could we when we get stock off the hill it’s about five or six people are involved in it, and it’s chaos for a few days. At one stage I was two cows up [inaudible] righted itself by the end of the week.

It’s about working together and sometimes it works well, other times it doesn’t, it’s a lot to do with individuals. Not all communities are really cohesive and people’s desire to work together varies, sometimes you’ve got a common interest and speak a common language, common values or beliefs it will work better than if it’s just disparate groups.

I How does that work with new entrants, do they fit in quite well usually?

R It depends on the individual, depends what they’re trying to do and how they go about it. Some people it works well, other people haven’t quite got the idea of how it is to work or live in… I think if you haven’t lived in a rural environment it can be quite challenging. In terms of how to behave, what you say and what you don’t say or how you ask the question, and probably thinking linearly, whereas you actually, or thinking I should say two-dimensionally when you need to think three-dimensionally. The logic of the professional, professional project manager, it has a name, an objective, an activity, it’s not the logic of a community, you’re dealing with some resistance there, and there you’re dealing with stakeholders’ right to say something, right to think something. It’s a different sort of system, thinking it’s soft systems, which is very different to hard systems.

I Can you give me an example of something like that?

R A classic, the Apollo Moonshot was all set up on hard systems and afterwards people thought, we can use this to solve inner-city problems, and they tried to implement it and it failed completely because they didn’t have buy-in. Buy-in is the key thing. In [area 2] where I stay we have a wind farm, there were huge problems with it, getting it passed initially, it divided the community hugely, and a lot of people’s positions if you looked at it didn’t seem logical to people driving the project. As a consequence their facilitation was poor and people who often take a position but it’s not totally logical, they support the wind farm because they don’t like somebody that opposes the wind farm, not because they really support it. An insult that was thrown in the fank three generations still carries weight today in some environments.

I In terms of recirculating money, where are the key points where it recirculates do you think?

R I guess in local economies you’re looking at how many times does it circulate before it buys an import. It’s quite complicated to make those calculations but let’s say this hotel here, what percentage are they taking money from guests or whatever, what percentage then of that income is then used to buy inputs that come from [area C], the Highlands, outwith the Highlands. That’s the kind of measure of leakage. So they’ve taken £100 in a day, in terms of there might be £10 profit on that, £90, how is that split up? In terms of the wages paid to people, are they all living here, that’s going to be a bit more circulation, in terms of the supplies they buy, that could be a bit of more circulation or it could be leaking. So it’s those sorts of calculations.

I Those are the sort of functions, and you’re quite strong on the social side of things. What are the key challenges, disturbances, they could be opportunities or threats, although it seems to be ? threats. Are there any here that particularly resonate?

R Obviously subsidies are massive. [Area C], level of subsidy, agricultural subsidy is about £4.5m a year, just for [area C]. For individuals it’s variable, depending on whether they’ve got sheep or cows, and I think over the current agricultural budget while we’re in the EU those with cattle will go up, those with sheep will go down. For us infrastructure is important, slaughterhouses are key. Demographic pressure, those with skills.

Concern about meat production, I think that’s changed significantly over certainly the last… I went to Agricultural College and for a number of years after that I was a vegetarian, so I was at Agricultural College in the 70s and I became a vegetarian because of animal welfare issues. Those issues I think largely have been addressed, you can always make improvements but animal welfare conditions now compared to the 70s are much better. So those things change, there’s always health issues but I think that’s swings and roundabouts, but certainly you can feed more people if they’re not wholly [inaudible] if their diets aren’t completely meat.

I Do you see those particularly affecting [area C], getting tourists from all round the world, will that impact on the food you’re trying to grow? For example, needing more native food.

R To an extent. It depends whether the type of travellers or visitors we’re attracting are the sort of genuinely inquisitive travellers or not. I would think probably a percentage, say the bucket shop people just ticking things off, they’re probably not that bothered or inquisitive, but there is a chunk of people that come here that want to experience local food. I think there’s an increase and interest in veganism, vegetarianism. If you look at how the menus have changed over the years, places like this establishment. The first time I came here was in 1974, I pitched my tent out at the back here, the hotel was here but the bar, there was drink, there was strong drink and crisps, and I think some orange juice somewhere. That was it, and the hotel menu was limited, it was pretty good, there was always a good history of cuisine but the innovations coming in the last 20-30 years.

I How well do you think [area C] can respond to providing a vegan menu?

R It depends on the chefs, or the people involved in the hospitality industry. We’re under threat now because of Brexit. One of the reasons this has become such a foody island is the chefs that are here come from a huge range of backgrounds, and nationalities. If we can’t recruit and employ them because of Brexit, we’re going to have a big problem.

I So there hasn’t been taken up by local people, I suppose it takes time.

R Yes, the sort of crossovers, and like a lot of the chefs from here go away to work, come back, bringing those influences, so there’s great crossovers but if we’re not able to do that it’s going to seriously affect things.

I What has attracted top-end chefs to come here?

R I think having businesses like [restaurant 2], like [restaurant 1] [inaudible] those places that have got the rosettes, and the availability of some amazing local food that is there, and the fact that it’s always been a holiday destination.

I Do you think the quality of the food is good consistently? I don’t mean just the restaurants but the supply of what’s produced here, is it all good quality?

R It’s variable I’d say, we’re still developing consistent by-product. But in terms of things like, say the livestock produced here, the store cattle and store lambs, the quality of them as live beasts is pretty good because we’ve got good biosecurity, and that helps a lot.

I Do you have to put something in place, some quality control, or do the restaurants know who to go to, have they got established places? How do people know to go where they can get [inaudible]?

R I think it’s the crofters that are kind of go-ahead and really want to produce locally are producing quite reasonable food, and pretty reasonable quality, they’re using their skills and husbandry, and stocking density is not high.

I You mentioned demography as being a bit of a challenge.

R For the island demography is a challenge because we don’t have a nice bell-shaped curve, we have a coffin-shaped demography. That’s for a number of reasons, if people leave it’s very difficult to come back, or it’s very expensive for them to come back. A lot of people that move here might move here with financial means but they don’t have family to support them when they’re in their older age, so that puts a pressure on the care system or something like that.

But the numbers of, I think last year’s the first year for about five or six years that the school roll at the high school has gone up. At the time that my children were there, the youngest is 21 now, there were three of them, it dropped, it was over 700 when [child 1] the eldest went, it was about 500 when [child 2] my youngest left, and that was over… It’s just started to go back up by small amounts. Demography takes such a long time to kick back. While there’s a housing shortage, housing is a real problem, businesses can’t expand because they can’t recruit people because there’s nowhere for them to live.

I Why is there a housing shortage?

R Because of tourism, it’s more profitable to either let the cottage property out for self-catering or bed and breakfast or something, than to put it out on a long let.

I I was interested you didn’t mention weather, because a lot of people told me that it’s got a lot wetter over the years and that’s challenging in terms of livestock production ?

R Yes, animal welfare. I think the weather is a lot less predictable, people always knew that there were distinct seasons, but we don’t seem to have those at all now. It’s changed in the 20 years that I’ve lived here certainly.

I You don’t see it as something you have to cope with rather than paying particular [inaudible]?

R I think it can be overcome but it requires capital. Whether it’s housing accommodation for livestock or whether it’s open-air corral fields where you drain [inaudible] build a feeding area or things like that, it can be overcome. But I think it would probably means the type of breeds that will flourish and survive is probably changing quite a bit.

I In what sort of direction?

R Happy to be knee-deep in water.

I So it’s [inaudible] more native breeds?

R Yes, it’s more native breeds, because they take a lot longer to mature and that changes the cycle a bit. People are using European bulls, that could be an issue in years to come.

I What about the sheep side of things, because they’re all blackface or Cheviots?

R Blackface Cheviots. Every now and then people try other ones. Blackies are ok, I don’t know about the Cheviots, I don’t know enough about sheep [inaudible].

I What sort of adaptations or mitigation strategies are people adopting or what do you think they should be adopting?

R Adding value, processing… Reserve production capacity, raw material stock, finished products and… I think a key thing is being able to add value to what we have here. But the challenge there is also that given there’s very few crofters that are crofting full-time, croft production, they’ve usually got other jobs, it’s actually easier just to store beasts and sell them on, rather than work with them the whole way, because that makes the management system much more complicated.

The abattoir is a logical thing to have but the number of people with the capacity to manage change to that type of production rather than just store is just [inaudible]. It’s like on the hospitality side, it’s very easy if you’ve got a property to go with an online travel agency now, yes they take a percentage but actually for the work and everything, rather than doing it all yourself and fighting for search engine optimisation, get your single website up above the others, which you’ll never do, it’s easier to [inaudible] path of least resistance. The added, the rewards have got to be significant or you’ve got to be very dedicated, it’s a kind of values thing I think.

I Could you see anybody taking stores from other people and rearing them to finish?

R Some people will. If they’ve got access to ground, resources, yes they will do that.

I Is there prospect for [area C] to become more self-sufficient? Or is it mostly about feeding [inaudible]?

R There is a chance of [area C] becoming more, we can’t feed everyone. The demand for local produce way exceeds what is, the demand exceeds the supply by a long way. If you can grow some vegetables, if you can actually take some cattle or pigs or sheep on, finish them, you’ll be able to sell it, no doubt. It’s amazing how fast news gets out, if you’ve got some meat to sell it’s incredible.

I Is that predicated, a lot of people have said abattoir is the key, you sound a bit more sceptical that people will be able to make use of it.

R In theory they would but it’s how many people are prepared or fully appreciate how much their management system will have to change.

I You mentioned infrastructure, if it’s most of the subsidies going to crofters, farmers, a percentage of that went into infrastructure and the subsidy was for infrastructure, how do you think that might work? How would you feel about that?

R You mean things like abattoirs? I think it’s infrastructure but it’s also how the collection systems work, there’s no milk produced on the island any more. But if you look at small-scale milk production say in Europe, the collection system for it is adapted to the fact that there are 50 small-scale milk producers in their area. The supply chain and the people that do the processing of the milk work differently to how we do it in this country where you have to have minimum 200 cows to make it worthwhile anyone coming to collect the milk you produce because that’s how that bit of the supply chain is set up. We’re not geared up for [inaudible] production really.

I Do you think other places in Europe are?

R Yes they are, but we’re very good at gold-plating EU regulations. Things that happen in other parts of Europe could easily happen here. I was at a meeting where there was a woman from an alpine farmers group and they had an on-farm killing unit and the local vet was informed the day they killed, and that was it. Sometimes the vet didn’t always get there but it all works and they make salami, they make sausages, all on-farm. It’s the mentality as much as, but also the system, the infrastructure has to be there.

I All big production and export [inaudible] Could you see [area C] starting producing milk products again?

R Given the level of [inaudible] interest in provenance, you would like to think so. It will take a long time though, and it will probably come down to regulation, and yes, the investment required. I think the last [inaudible] either in [town 1[ or on [area 8], in the 60s or 70s.

I The Westminster Parliament looks like it’s intending to subsidise environmental management and the Scottish Government is looking to do something different, how do you think that might work on {area C]?

R Subsidising, I guess it depends on how they reckon they’re going to do it. Are they going to carry out plant counts and say if you’ve got a certain level of [inaudible]. I can’t see that happening at all. I don’t have an idea of how policies like that could be implemented.

I I get the sense that environment, biodiversity is not such a big deal here.

R No, I think… Historically the crofts were fairly diverse, in the 70s up to the mid-80s, but now its livestock production is the majority, horticulture is a minority but growing and there is potential for it. If you have [inaudible] and drainage you can grow an awful lot of stuff here.

I You mentioned the landscape, that people come here for the landscape, is there an interaction between the crofting and the landscape something you think is key to…

R Yes, it affects everything, that’s what makes the place so attractive to come to, and livestock play a huge role in that. You’ve got problems, where there’s been the introduction of say the sea eagles, and they’ve been very successful, and where they’ve clobbered sheep and take the lambs, it’s a complete nightmare because people are stopping producing… Our neighbours, which is one of the few big farms on the island, they have just got rid of their flock completely because they couldn’t sustain the losses, and that’s down to sea eagles.

I What happens if the sheep and the cattle go, what happens to the landscape?

R Because there’s no grazing, just the whole, the vegetation changes completely.

I Is that bad for the tourists?

R I would say so, yes.

I Let’s say there was an ideal [area C] that was really resilient, what would it look like, rom your perspective?

R The economy would be more diverse than it is now, there wouldn’t be this heavy… There’s two things we’re reliant on here, the public sector and tourism, and you can say they’re about a third each. So, a more diverse economy I would say would be one side of things, more local food and more food produced with added value. I think those would be the main things I would say.

I It’s interesting you didn’t come back to social resilience.

R I think that’s got to, that is all bound up. Increased access to housing, so reduced house prices would be a great thing, and more social housing, that would be part of it certainly. Increased infrastructure related to IT, so improved connectivity would be a big thing as well. It’s quite interesting that when the puffers were puffing around the coast, most places were not regarded as isolated, once the puffers stopped and there weren’t roads suddenly they became isolated. That seems to be replaying itself in a number of different ways, but particularly with the internet and all that sort of stuff.

I Do you know are people producing food and selling it online much?

R There is a very limited amount. I think you’re meeting [person 11], a project he’s working on at the moment is looking at online sales of meat, and I think that would be locally. What’s very interesting is what the guys in the food link vans discovered recently is that there’s people like the wholesale food sellers come to the island with vans that are full, they’re all going away empty but they’d very happy to go away with [area C] produce on them. So I think in terms of increasing production locally, we’re thinking a bit too much just about supplying local need, we could actually supply national as well. Any transporter would like to have return loads, so there’s a possibility there.

I Are you involved in the [area C] mutton project?

R Only from the point of view that they were a part of our [area C] on a Plate last year. It was putting them in touch with, putting mutton producers in touch with hospitality providers but also giving the chefs an opportunity to work with mutton, saying here’s a challenge for you, historically one thinks you just boil mutton for hours and hours, it’s smelly and it’s tough or whatever, let’s do something interesting, and they did. We had a nice little competition with the students of , did a few[local college] trial recipes, they worked with the chefs on the island, the top chefs, and really came out with some good stuff.

I So you think that mutton is a…

R Definitely, yes.

I How important is [local college] for transmitting new skills, field preparation skills?

R It’s very important, but they haven’t quite got it right. They’re putting on courses that people don’t necessarily want, or they don’t fit in with working practice. It’s a real challenge that they’re struggling with at the moment, they’ve got fantastic training kitchen in [town 1] but it’s just not used because they haven’t quite got it right, the types of courses they’re offering that people want, and not the industry. There’s a mismatch there and they’re struggling with that.

I You said it was about timing, what do you mean by timing?

R Fairly easy if you’ve got a young person who’s just left school, but somebody joining the industry later on in life, or how much time do they spend on training and how much time do they spend working. Before I went to Agricultural College I was working on a farm for a year, and during that year I did City and Guilds, and that was day release. That was pretty good and I think they need to develop more, but the apprenticeship schemes the models aren’t quite, they haven’t changed enough. It’s also quite difficult if it’s a long training, in an environment where the hospitality is seasonal it’s quite difficult say for the hotels and kitchens to keep them on year round.

I Is there anything you wanted to say you’ve not had a chance to say?

R I don’t think so. I think if we had a little bit more renewable energy with community benefit we could do a lot more. If you look at what we’ve been able to do with our training budget, we spend about £12-15,000 a year on support for training in a range of things, it’s not just young people leaving school, we’ve trained older people, we’ve trained people to, one woman is now a multi-faith celebrant but we were able to support her, it was two years’ worth of training. We’ve supported joiners, we’ve supported people to get bakery qualifications [inaudible] go and work off-shore. We’ve supported people to become nurses, we’ve been able to do that, and that’s through the wind farm benefit fund.

I Do you see any growth in wind farms [inaudible] interconnection of the [inaudible].

R Yes, it depends on the capacity of the grid to take energy from [area C] will affect [inaudible]. It is going to be upgraded, how much more energy that will then take, and whether it’s from the existing farms upgrading or whether there will be new farms I don’t know. Or whether we could start introducing tidal energy into that supply, I don’t know. [area C] is I think about 120% self-sufficient in energy. If you could do a virtual calculation we ought to have our energy for free.

I What would the energy companies say to that?

R They’re just interested in models, if it could be made to work I don’t think they’d worry because they made their money. It depends how it… We’re about to, if everyone agrees at the AGM, we’re going to carry out an energy audit for [area 2] just to see how much people are using, to see if we could set up a system based on calculations of virtual energy, and do some calculations. We might be able to cut people’s bills by a few percentage, even if it’s 10 or 15% that would be great.

I That would make quite a big difference because energy prices here are shocking. Do you think there’s a general will that wind turbines are a good thing, does it conflict with eagles or farming or tourists?

R How well do you know the landowning fraternity on [area C]? [person 12] is the laird of [area 2], he is stereotypic, and he was asked that question, he said, who wants to see a \* eagle if you can’t see a \* turbine. The amount of studies and surveys that have been done in and around [area 2], and I think the conclusion they have come to is that they don’t know really what’s going on. Because there’s so many other things that are affecting… There hadn’t been a fire on the hill in [area 2] for about 40 years, and when we had one last year it was wild, it got out of control, and people said it’s done a lot of good. It’s changed vegetation significantly because there was so much old growth there, and the population of raptors I know for a fact peaked about three years after the wind farm had been constructed, and it’s now gone down. It might start to go up again now, now that we’ve had this massive burn. It’s complicated.

There’s this thought that wind farms would destroy tourism. The year it went up we had our best year ever in our self-catering cottages, and they’ve been going up ever since and the wind farm is clearly visible. It’s like people going on about the fish food factories, you come over the bridge and it’s a bit of an eyesore, doesn’t look that beautiful but it’s providing very good diversified employment, good salaries. Those people who are going to live here have families that are going to engage in the local community and you’re going to get a much more authentic form of tourism as a result of that.

Two places I’ve been to that I’ve had good holidays are Crete and Corsica, big islands with big diverse economies, and they all have factories, they’ve got quarries, they’ve got polytunnel farms. I didn’t go and see any of them but I had a really good holiday and the fact that factory as we come over the bridge doesn’t spoil [inaudible] [ or landmark 4]walking down the glen. The best view of [area C] is probably from [area 8], and if you look a bit that way you’ll get it complete with highland cows and quarry [inaudible] massive scar but if you look that way you don’t see it and [area 8] is an amazing place to visit, it doesn’t spoil it.

I It sounds like you’re resisting it becoming some kind of theme park?

R Yes. It’s a living, working environment. Some of these myths that it’s a massive wilderness. The wildernesses in this world, northern Canada, maybe Kalahari Desert, places like that, but this has been a working landscape. What’s interesting is when all those studies were done to try and identify wilderness or whatever, if you looked at it over time the places that were identified were places that were heavily cleared and people taken away. No, we mustn’t become a theme park.

I Is there any interest in the archaeology of the area?

R Yes, and it’s very underexploited I would say. There’s a massive amount here. I don’t know if it’s as good as [area D] but maybe it is. Yes, it’s a very underutilised resource. The thing about it, 1) it’s there, not well known or promoted, 2) it would help with dispersal of people around the island because it’s in some places that… One of the hotspots of the landscape is getting to archaeology it’s not going to other places.

I Who would promote it if anybody did?

R We’d be keen to. There are archaeologists that are putting stuff together themselves at the moment, and if we could find funding we’d be certainly interested. That would be one sort of area that we would look at, and that fits in with what we want to promote, which is slow tourism, it’s value of culture, contribution of culture and heritage to the visitor experience. It has huge potential.

I When you say culture, Gaelic culture?

R Yes.

I I get the impression that a lot of tourism is [organisation 4] and things like that, people coming in for a couple of days.

R Yes, social media has been driving all that. They’re variable, the backpack [inaudible] what they do. [Organisation 4] I think are pretty good, and they take a serious view, they want to promote and show off the island’s culture as best they can. I think they have been quite responsible because they’ve told me they could put on probably double the amount of buses than they do at the moment because demand is so high to come to [area C]. And you see there’s a lot of them around already.

I Thank you very much.

End of transcript