



## **Management Group Meeting Minutes**

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 7pm, Estate Office, Applecross House**

**Present:** Archie MacLellan, Chair (Applecross Trust), Alistair McCowan (Historical society), Derek MacLennan (Bealach group), Alasdair Macleod (Community Council), Mike Summers (Applecross Crofters), Gill Fairweather (Walks and Traditional crafts group) Jacqui Liuba (co-opted member).

**Apologies of absence:** Owen Kilbride (Archaeological Society), Tom Kilbride (co-opted member), Mary Gibson (adviser), Lorna Lumsden (Applecross Trust) attended the meeting by video link.

The minutes of the MG meeting of the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2011 were approved by all present and will be made available via the ALPS notice board and the website.

### **Update**

Work on the Cruary-Heritage Centre path has begun with good progress made. It is anticipated that this first path will be largely complete by the end of May. SB informed the group that the final section (down to the Heritage Centre) is being delayed until such time as a 'Watching Brief' (a condition of planning) can be arranged with Cathy Dagg. On completion of this path, attention will focus on opening up drainage of the beechwood path.

The first stage of the interpretive planning process began on the 4th and 5th April with Verity Walker and Steve Wiseman holding an initial focus group meeting, with subsequent 'drop-in' sessions for the community. A draft structure for the plan has been prepared for comment. This process was generally acknowledged as being an uncomfortable one due to an 'outsider' being involved, but has generated healthy debate as to what is and isn't required/appropriate in Applecross. The planning phase will continue on the 20th May with three dedicated discussions planned on 'themes' and 'messages' in the Community Hall (10am-12noon; 3pm-5pm; 7pm-9pm), with all welcome to participate in whatever sessions they are able to attend. SB said he hoped that this event would broaden out the consultation process.

SB informed the group that a new planning application and Scheduled Monument Consent have been applied for the Clachan path. It is hoped that this will be granted during the three month period that the contractors will initially be on site.

The deadline for all tenders related to Clachan Church work was the 2nd May. There were fourteen initial notes of interest with five going to a full tender. Consideration of these quotes will be done at the next Management Group meeting in June.

Work has continued on Smiddy Wood with the fencing phase of the work nearing completion, and tree planting beginning of the north-eastern corner.

Jeff Walker from the Highland Council has continued to lead work on the restoration of the Bealach dykes (phase 1). Excellent progress has been made. Potential future work extending this programme of restoration (funding required) will be discussed with him on Monday 4th May.

Tender specifications have been finalized and prepared by Martin Wildgoose for the limekiln and securing the northernmost Hebridean barn which is in a perilous state of repair. This contract opportunity has been advertised in the WHFP and in the May edition of An Carranach.

Counterpart funding has now been fully approved by ERDF and the first two claims (capital and revenue projects) have been submitted.

A Gaelic version of the ALPS website is now live (<http://gd.visit-applecross.org/index.asp>)

A wildfood walk event with Miles Irving (author of the Forager Handbook) was held on the 23rd April with 27 people attending.

A weekend workshop on willow weaving was held on the 16th and 17th April, led by Jane Wilkinson. Ten people attended this event.

A First Aid course has been organised for the 30th April (Training programme). Ten people have booked into this one-day course.

## **Minutes**

### **Bardic School (27<sup>th</sup> June-1<sup>st</sup> July 2011)**

DM and SB provided an update on progress. A programme of events/speakers for the Bardic school has been finalized and a website launched ([www.sgoilbhardachd.co.uk](http://www.sgoilbhardachd.co.uk)). Press releases and adverts for the course have been submitted to almost all local and national newspapers. Major universities were also made aware of the event by sending promotional postcards and invitations. The line-up of artists booked is good, with famous bards, singers and writers attending (Rody Gorman, Roddy Maclean, Miles Campbell, Angus MacNicol, Peter MacKay, Kenny Thompson, Meg Bateman, Kenna and Seumas Campbell). Bord na Gaidhlig has offered extra funding for Gaelic classes, which will be part of the fringe events. DM said that the lead in time was very short and there were concerns about getting sufficient numbers (the target set is 35 people) despite the line up.

### **Path building**

SB updated the group on path work. The path linking Cruary to the Heritage Centre is almost finished but still needs a little work before being fully accessible. Concern was expressed by AMcC regarding the building materials and the weather-proof character of the path. It was agreed to get back to the contractor regarding the finish of surfacing and possible drainage issues which may need to be revisited once the path has been left to settle and it can be gauged how it responds to heavy rain.

### **Clachan Restoration**

From the previous meetings it had been agreed that the air-sourced heat pumps were a cost-effective environmentally-friendly solution, but not appropriate for the aesthetics of the space if they were to be mounted on the central beams of the church. SB said that Bill Hall (Heating Engineer) had been invited back to look at the possibility of mounting the heat pump units on the wall of the balcony which would remove most aesthetic objections. Bill was of the opinion that this placement would work from a heating perspective, and it was generally agreed that this was a pragmatic, viable solution, although agreement has still to be obtained from Historic Scotland. No alternative solutions/viable heating options were raised.

Regarding the restoration of the roof, SB informed the group that a bat survey will be conducted by Steve Austin late May/beginning of June with the view to obtain the bat license necessary prior to any works.

### **Archaeological training and trail**

SB gave an update on progress. After a procurement process Cathy Dagg has placed the only tender for the archaeological training project and has been contracted to coordinate the training. Concern was raised about the attendance of local people and meeting the targets set. To maximise local involvement it was suggested to wait for the end of the summer and the busy tourist before organising the majority of events.

SB stated that he had walked the proposed archaeological trail with Bob Brown (National Trust path builder) and George Mundell, for additional advice on the original specification. They both agreed that the recommendation for a built and surfaced footpath is unnecessary. It was suggested instead to focus on vegetation management and snedding to clarify the line, the construction of stone steps where needed and sensitive waymarking. The possibility of re-allocating a proportion of the budget for the conservation of buildings of archaeological and historical importance was raised. SB clarified that the funders had provided the money primarily for improved access, although conservation of sites where they might be adversely impacted by walkers would be eligible. The line of the potential path through Smiddy Woods was raised. Although this was seen to be worthwhile, it was thought that it would be premature to start any path construction through this area until the majority of work in its restructuring had been undertaken, with path works best delayed until 2012.

### **Training**

Although some elements of training under ALPS are tightly prescribed (e.g. dyking), a significant proportion has yet to be finalised. SB clarified that the only constraint is that any training organised must facilitate the implementation of ALPS and/or help the partners of the scheme to continue their work. An example would be a chainsaw course, which could be related to the opening of the archaeological trail as well as supporting any future fuelwood initiative. SB reminded the group that an advert had gone out locally for anyone interested in helping establish a fuelwood supply chain to contact SB or EC. Ian Gillies was the only person to do so, and it was proposed to put him through his CS30/31 with a view to assisting on ALPS projects (e.g. Archaeological Trail/Roundhouse Construction) as well as other broader initiatives. Ian Cameron was also raised as a potential candidate. In relation to the Milton Loch project and the issue of the Japanese knotweed present on site, SB enquired whether a training course in herbicides and knapsack spraying pesticides (2 days; Lantra PA1 and PA6) might be worthwhile. Training in these skills will also be necessary for the upkeep of paths. AMcL said he would enquire about the opportunities to do such a course with SAC. SB said that Carolyn Petersen had agreed to assist with training consultation with a view to devising a more detailed training plan before the next meeting.

### **Interpretation**

SB stated that a second consultation day is planned on 20<sup>th</sup> May, with three two-hour sessions throughout the day to gather more feedback. Doubts were expressed about the value of the process. SB tried to assure the group that the process was necessary and the plan that will be produced by Interpretation in the end will be what the community wanted and not simply imposed ideas from an outside party. The question of interpretive dyke features and their location was raised. A few suggestions were made, including the top of Langwell, the Beechwood path, Cruary path and the Walled Garden. The main concern expressed regarding the features is their intrusive character and the group agreed that they should be kept as low-key as possible. It was decided to collate

feedback on the preferred type of feature. The idea of having carved stone is seen favourably and it was suggested that some might include a piece of Applecross poetry, such as Coille Mhuiridh.

### **Smiddy dykes**

Jeff Walker has agreed to write up the specification for a selection of works and will place a quote to do them. Seumas Campbell, the master dyker who supervised the first session of the dyking training has also been asked to give a quote for the job. Both dykers have been made aware of the requirement for local employment.

### **Smiddy Woods**

The management group has addressed certain issues regarding the lack of communication from Scottish Woodlands. In an email read to the group, OK flagged up the damage done to an old stone-lined water way above Smiddy Cottages. It was felt that this damage could have been avoided with more communication between contractors, sub-contractors and the project manager. SB said that a meeting with Bruce Taylor has been arranged to discuss the ongoing communication issue.

Once again, doubt was expressed about ever achieving the community vision for Smiddy Wood. It was agreed to express these concerns to Bruce Taylor on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Other matter arising**

Next MG meeting will be held Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June.