

ALPS update for Management Group 20th October 2010

- Interviews for the Heritage Curator were held on the 6th October with the panel comprising Archie MacLellan, Alistair McCowan, John McKeown, Janet McKay and Sam Bridgewater. The position was offered to Gordon Cameron who was by far the outstanding candidate. He will be taking up his position at the end of November and moving to Applecross with his wife.
- A LEADER application was submitted requesting £52,000 to 'enhance Clachan church as a community facility' on the 9th October. The success of this application, that can be considered a project within its own right but within the broader restoration programme, will depend on providing evidence by the 9th November of full counterpart funding for the whole restoration project (£270,000). There is currently a shortfall of ca. £60,000.
- An Open Meeting for the community was held on the 22nd September. This was well attended and the background and funding of ALPS was presented. The community reaction was largely positive although questions were raised as to how ALPS can secure local employment and the danger of it exhausting potential donor funds that might be required by other projects locally. All specifications related to non-academic contracts clearly state that the provision of local employment/training opportunities is an important aspect of ALPS and will form part of the assessment process.
- A newsletter with feature articles is being developed to assist with local communication about ALPS. The first edition will appear in early November once all articles are in.
- Tenders for the manufacture of Clachan Church windows have been organized through David Sommerville architects, with the deadline for tenders being the 22nd October 2010.
- Much of the work during October has involved liaising with potential contractors (including site meetings) interested in bidding for work related to website design, evaluation and monitoring, path building, co-ordinating the Bardic School and the community interpretive plan. The deadline for all these tenders is the 21st October 2010. We have had modest interest in all components and it is anticipated that there will be between three and five tenders for each contract, with the exception of the Bardic school where there are only two expressions of interest.
- Specifications related to the proposed South Coast Deer Fence have been finalized with the relevant crofters and a fencing advisor. Tenders will be sought for this job during November. Two tenders are required to be submitted with any CCAGS application, and it is hoped that applications can be submitted by Xmas 2010. A second crofter's meeting was organized on the 6th October to finalise the proposed fence line.
- The Archaeological Society organized a very successful and well attended broch-themed conference on the 3rd October. Presentation and path building will commence in November 2010.
- A report has been submitted to ALPS by contractors commissioned to undertake a lichen survey of Carnoch hazel woodland and a community training education day. Concern was expressed in the report about the desirability (in terms of lichen conservation at least), of coppicing parts of the area, although there is scope for zonation of the woodland into sensitive and less sensitive areas. Liaising with SNH it is hoped to commission a bryophyte survey in January to provide all the necessary ecological information to devise an appropriate management plan ready for spring 2011.
- Although the main ALPS funders are relatively flexible about timescale for expenditure, SNH require their funding for this first financial year (£5,149) to be spent by 1st February 2011. This money is currently partitioned between the Bealach Interpretation, Applecross Bay Dyke Features, the Interpretation Plan and Festivals and other events, with the bulk (£3,299) earmarked currently against Festivals and other events. How to spend this money appropriately considering the stage ALPS is at (i.e. without an interpretive plan at this stage) is one item listed on the meeting agenda.
- The Historical Society met the tight deadline and spent the available grant (£1,000) for bi-lingual signs from Comunn na Gàidhlig on new signs for the Heritage Centre.
- A draft survey has been designed to gauge the current and future use of fuelwood in Applecross.