

ALPS update for Management Group 31st October 2011

General

- **South Coast Deer Fence** The Applecross Trust has agreed to fund the existing shortfall (ca. £25K), and final offer letters have been received from CCAGS for Toscaig, Camusterrach and Culduie. One for Milton is pending, the delay relating to clarifying the cost of the deer grid at Milton, and whether this is eligible under CCAGS. Once this has been resolved, a contract can be issued and the work started. It is still anticipated that work can begin in November 2011 and completed by April 2012.
- **Funding claims** All backlogs with reports to ALPS funders have now been cleared, with four approved claims made to HLF, five to LEADER, one to SNH, nine to ERDF, two to the Highland Council, one to Commun na Gaidhlig and one to Bord na Gaidhlig. These equate to an average of ca. two claims/month.
- **Training** 189 people have received training under ALPS during 2011 (NB. Some people have done multiple training courses, and have been recorded more than once where this is the case), of which 19 have received an accredited qualification. Training events have included a dry stone dyking course (Level 1) (six attendees), website design (11 attendees), basic First Aid (10 attendees), book keeping (7 attendees), bee keeping (15 attendees), path maintenance (two attendees), Equality Act and Access (two ALSP staff members attending) and archaeological training (10+ people attending). Planned for the autumn period are courses on digital photography (no dates finalised; 30 attendees booked), advanced First Aid (8th, 17th & 22nd November, ca. 12 booked), drystone dyking (Level 2) (14th November; six booked) and bee keeping (7th & 21st November; follow up course for 15).
- **Clachan** All statutory consents (Planning, listed building and scheduled monument) with the exception of a bat license are now in place. The bat license will not be ready in time to enable roof works to be done in November 2011. Thus, this element of the work will need to be delayed until March 2012. After getting revised tenders based on omitting non-essential elements of work, we are now able to proceed with the funding secured. The contract has been awarded to William MacDonald and works will start on all components other than the roof on the 31st October. Initial ground works will be done under a Watching Brief supervised by Cathy Dagg.
- **Community Interpretive Plan** Two final hard copies of the Community Interpretive Plan have now been received and are available for downloading from the ALPS website (<http://www.visit-applecross.org/press.asp>). This project is now complete.
- **Holy Well** A spur of the beechwood trail now leads to the Holy Well. A small amount of ground works has been undertaken around the well so that the spring, part of which was

flowing around the side) is channeled back through its original course. A wooden barrier will be erected so that the Holy well can only be viewed rather than 'visited'.

- **Ard Dubh – Coilegille.** After a contractors meeting with the path designer on the 12th October, four tenders were received on the 25th October. These will be assessed during the Management Group meeting of the 31st October.
- **Guided Walks programme** The guided walks season is now complete. Although a full analysis has yet to be done ca. 30 walks were guided with 150 people attending i.e. an average of five per walk. The themed walks included natural history, the walled garden, Applecross heritage and archaeology. A report on this programme will be drafted during the autumn.
- **Bealach dykes (phase 2)** A continuing programme of dyking works has been proposed by Jeff Walker after a site visit with Alistair McCowan and Sam Bridgewater. It is proposed to put this out to tender during November 2011, with a view to the work being undertaken asap thereafter.

Gordon Cameron/Heritage Centre update

- **Digitisation of archives** Scanning of documents and photographs continues – the focus is on scanning materials not already digitised. In time we need to revisit previous donors of materials to rescan original documents and photographs that were initially scanned at too low a resolution. Prices have been obtained from a preferred contractor to install a dedicated off-site server, to install a Collections Management System package (CMS) onto that server, and to host the CMS by payment of monthly fees. The preference is to install CollectionSpace - an open-source package that allows much more dynamic inter-relationship building between records.

Currently, as an interim measure, but with regular assessment being carried out on its effectiveness, an open-source package called eHive is being utilised and populated with digitised data. This package is free to a certain level (i.e. 500 Mb of stored data, with fees payable beyond that) which should suffice initially, but does not offer the functionality of CollectionSpace. However, the advantage is that all programming is already done and data is hosted on an external site which the Historical Society/Heritage Centre's own site can link to.

Further information will be provided about training for digitisation.

- **Place names project** Collection of names is ongoing with informants from the local community being interviewed on both a formal and informal basis. Database work ongoing.

Project boosted by loan from Richard Wills/Applecross Trust of a map of the Applecross peninsula drawn by Ken Griffin, with names from the late Donnie Cameron; and by information from Annie Fraser, Alexander Gillies, Donald Cameron, Donald Ferguson, Ali MacRae and Mike Summers, and through the Carmichael Watson project at University of Edinburgh.

With the Heritage Centre closing for the season on 29th October, it is hoped to increase the volume of place name collection by interview.

- **Burial ground mapping project** Local volunteers have continued to help the surface mapping exercise. Section I of the old graveyard has now been completed and work is well underway on Section II – however we need more volunteers!! (There are four sections – I, II and III in the old graveyard, and the new section IV to the south of Clachan Church.) Section I has yielded over 300 individual person records so far from visible headstones. Where possible, genealogical/biographical data is being added.

Gravestone photography is complete. Next step is to unify the file sizes of photographs to reduce load on computers and subsequent web usage. Documents have been provided to the Heritage Centre which detail unmarked graves at Clachan. This information cannot immediately be verified and may/will be incorporated when the time is right.

For spring time, we need to look at the possibility of permissions from Historic Scotland and other stakeholders to carry out a below surface probe (to 30cm) to uncover and record fallen headstones. However, this process is fraught with 'regulatory requirements' and requires further volunteers to de-turf and lift stones ...! Approach taken by Highland Family History Society is "... just do it and then worry about Historic Scotland later!"

Aerial photography has been purchased.