



## Management Group Meeting Agenda

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April, 7pm, Estate Office, Applecross House**

**Present:** Archie MacLellan, Chair (Applecross Trust), Alistair McCowan (Historical society), Alasdair Macleod (Community Council), Owen Kilbride (Archaeological Society), Tom Kilbride (co-opted member), Lorna Lumsden (Applecross Trust), Jacqui Liuba (co-opted member).

**Apologies of absence:** Derek MacLennan, Mike Summers, Gill Fairweather

The minutes of the MG meeting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2011 were approved by all present and will be made available via the ALPS noticeboard and the website.

### **Update**

Works on the Clachan church have been advertised in the Press & Journal, the West Highland Free Press, the Scottish Government's Public Contracts website, and locally. So far there have been 16 notes of interest in addition to the original preferred contractor. David Somerville has suggested a pre-qualification system to make sure that only those contractors with the prerequisite skills and experience go through to the second stage. The deadline for tenders is the 2<sup>nd</sup> May (Monday).

Cathy Dagg (archaeologist) was contracted to do a 'Written Scheme of Investigation' (WSI) on March 14<sup>th</sup> in response to queries made by Historic Scotland on the lines of the proposed bay paths. This has been completed and Historic Scotland are now satisfied. Planning for three of the paths has been approved, with work due to start in the second week in April on the Cruary-Heritage Centre path. There is likely to be disruption to access to the initial 50m of the Cruary-Sand path for about four weeks, and also to the Heritage centre carpark that will act as an access route to the central section of the path. Final planning conditions have not yet been received, but will involve a 'watching' archaeological brief for the final descent to the Heritage Centre. Scheduled Monument consent and a new planning application will be required for the Heritage Centre-Estate Road path that would skirt around Clachan. It is possible, but not certain, that this will be granted. The process may take a few months to conclude. John Malcolm (Historic Scotland) is currently considering our proposals informally



to help give an initial steer of our chances of success. Work continued intermittently on Smiddy Wood during March.

The Council continued working throughout May on repairing priority sections of the Bealach dykes. Five locals successfully attained their LANTRA level 1 dry stone dyking certificate on the 19<sup>th</sup> March.

A community 'archaeological' Timewalk was organized for the 12<sup>th</sup> March to finalise the route of the proposed Archaeological/heritage trail. Bob Brown (NT path expert) was subsequently contracted to investigate the route which is radically different from that originally proposed in October 2009 for which we have specifications which acted as the basis for funding. A report has not yet been received but is likely to recommend vegetation management as opposed to actual path construction.

Martin Wildgoose visited the limekiln and Hebridean barns on the 31<sup>st</sup> March to update and finalise a specification for recommended works. This will act as a basis for tenders to undertake the work of the limekiln (in 2011), and remedial work on the barns if funding is forthcoming. A specification has been finalized for the archaeological training project. This contract opportunity has been advertised locally, in the West Highland Free Press and via the Scottish Group of the Institute for Archaeologists. The deadline for tenders is the 21<sup>st</sup> April. The ALPS website has been translated into Gaelic and will be live before Easter. It is currently being proof read.

A draft management plan for Milton Loch has been drafted. Some specialist information on plant diversity around the loch is still required, and once received, the plan will be circulated for comment. It is aimed at the community and the anglers rather than at planners.

The Trustees visited Applecross on the 16<sup>th</sup> March. SB gave a talk on ALPS progress and made an additional request for funds to 1) conduct immediate remedial work on the Hebridean barns to prevent imminent collapse, 2) enable the repair of Smiddy dykes, 3) fund a portion of what is likely to be a ca. £40K shortfall of the South Coast Deer Fence, even assuming a successful CCAGS application. They are considering these requests.



Work has continued on developing an ALPS training plan. This is a funding requirement and needs to be completed by the time of the next HLF report. It is hoped that a draft will be available for comments late April/early May.

### **Minutes:**

The meeting began by AMac providing an update on discussions between The Trust and Scottish Woodlands regarding the long-term forest management plan for the Estate, part of which will be funded by ALPS under the 'Gateway Woodland Project'. There is still some degree of uncertainty as to what combination of compartments may be the focus of the ALPS project, but AMac confirmed that Compartment 8 (an area of 78 hectares, predominantly of Lodgepole Pine) would be the most appropriate main area for restructuring, with this compartment (including windblown sections) felled. Scottish Woodlands have suggested that the most cost-effective way of dealing with this area of low-grade low-value timber is to chip it on site, and Bruce Taylor is drafting up costings based on this method. The area would subsequently need to be fenced before replanting with native broadleaves, although the area to be replanted would be reduced to 46 hectares. Wood chip from the felling process would still need to be taken out of Applecross by truck. MG enquired whether Carnoch Woodland came under the long term management plan being drafted by Scottish Woodlands, as this woodland is of high conservation value but is suffering from little regeneration due to deer grazing. AMac said that it wasn't being considered by Scottish Woodlands. SB confirmed that a management plan for Carnoch needs to be developed under ALPS and that he will begin to collate all the existing information on the woodland over the summer period with a view to identifying management priorities. TK enquired enquired about the broad strategic planning/connectivity under The Trust and ALPS, and emphasised the importance of joined-up thinking. He gave the South Coast Deer Fence as an example, enquiring whether much thought had gone into how that would impact on woodland areas outside the fence such as Carnoch to the north, which would likely receive greater grazing pressure as a result.

SB provided an update on the Archaeological Trail. Based on the line confirmed during the community Timewalk event, SB walked the route with Bob Brown, path builder with the National Trust. A report on path works needed is pending, but Bob was of the opinion that minimal path work would be required for the route specified, with the focus of work needing



to be vegetation management and snedding of branches in plantation areas. If this was the case, works would be considerably cheaper than the budget. OK thought that some path work would be required. SB agreed to get a second opinion from George Mundell, contracted to do other paths under ALPS in the bay area. OK also enquired whether funds under the Trail could be used for conservation of focus sites. SB thought some funds could be used for the purpose – but probably only to a limited degree – and reminded the group that the costings provided for this project were based on a new path build specification, and that the funders had provided financial assistance to improve access rather than conservation of historic sites, and that this would need to be kept in mind. If funds were to be used in this way, the funders (HLF and ERDF) would need to be approached. OK requested that this is clarified. It was suggested that some of these funds could be used for the construction of path through Smiddy Wood. It was agreed to discuss this topic again once a report from the path builder is received and it is known what the likely cost of suggested works are.

SB updated the group on path building around the Bay Area. George Mundell will begin work on the 12<sup>th</sup> April, starting on the section of path between Cruary and the Heritage Centre. SB reminded the Group that he had to pull the application for the Clachan path due to it clipping the Ancient Scheduled Monument, but that he would be submitting a new application and requesting Scheduled Monument consent the following week. The path had to be pulled to enable other path works to continue as they were all viewed as a single application. SB said he was hopeful that scheduled monument consent would be granted as the path line would be on top of a pre-existing culverted path, and works were unlikely to cause further damage to the monument site. It was enquired how long path works would take. SB said that the contractor estimated 12 weeks.

SB provided a brief update on Milton loch, for which a draft management plan has been prepared based on all ecological and past management information currently available. SB has contacted the local Fisheries Trust (Peter Cunningham and Jonah Tosney) to come and assess the loch and discuss with the local Angling Society existing stocking levels and the need for restocking. A vegetation survey has been scheduled for July which will inform future vegetation management which will likely involve some clearance.

Some concerns were raised about the development of the interpretation plan and the 'Story telling' angle adopted by the contractors. All agreed that this was a fairly uncomfortable



albeit necessary process. SB stated that the opportunity was advertised locally, and although there may have been someone suitably qualified locally to undertake the work, nobody came forward with a tender. SB confirmed that the contractor's remit was only to help facilitate the development of a plan regarding key themes, messages and media, and that ALPS still had full control of what is eventually implemented, and by whom. All budgets related to interpretation are intact and have not been committed. It was agreed that significant local talent existed and that ideally, much of the interpretation would be led by local societies/interested local individuals. SB stated that it was important that whatever misgivings people might have about the process, that the MG engage with it and forward their views on interpretation to ensure the plan is based on local wishes.

Next Group meeting scheduled for the Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> May