



Management Group Meeting Minutes

Monday 22nd August, 7pm, Estate Office, Applecross House

Present: Archie MacLellan (AM), Chair (Applecross Trust), Richard Wills (Applecross Trust), Derek MacLennan (Bealach group), Mike Summers (Applecross Crofters), Gordon Cameron (Heritage Manager), Alistair McCowan (AMcC) (Historical Society), Alasdair Macleod (AMac)(Community Council), Gill Fairweather (Walks and Traditional crafts group) Tom Kilbride (co-opted member), Jackie Liuba (co-opted member), Mary Gibson (adviser), Elodie Matthews.

Apologies of absence: Sam Bridgewater, Owen Kilbride (Archaeological Society), Lorna Lumsden (Applecross Trust).

The minutes of the MG meeting of the 18th July 2011 were approved by all present and will be made available via the ALPS notice board and the website.

Updates

AM read the update on progress provided by SB (available as a separate update).

Minutes

Smiddy woods

Bruce Taylor had been invited to this meeting but had to send his apologies.

AM provided an update of the project finances which revealed that Bruce Taylor's anticipated over spend of £1,500 is actually more likely to be approximately £13K. AM sought the Group's view on use of HLF contingency in order to reduce the deficit.

AM reminded the group that the matter had been raised a few months earlier, regarding the use of contingency for mulching of replant areas at Smiddy Wood but SB had advised against in such an early stage of the project. RW asked if any of the works consisted of extra tasks requested by ALPS after the quote had been provided by Scottish Woodlands. AM confirmed that the specification hadn't altered significantly. AM also made clear that although each project had a 10% contingency built in its budget, HLF did not feel compelled to release this money systematically. AMcC pointed out the fact that if contingency was sought out now, it would not be available at a later stage.

TK expressed his disagreement with the interpretation of certain terms of the specification, resulting in a dissatisfying outcome. MG asked about any costs related to on-going management of the site, in particular rush control within the reseeded area. AM confirmed that on-going grassland management costs were not part of the ALPS budget. AM also explained that the land needed consolidating prior to any further mechanised maintenance works. TK voiced his concern regarding the Gateway Woodlands project being managed by Scottish Woodlands. It was agreed that the specification for Gateway Woodland would have to be developed and considered very clearly. AM stated that the long-term forest plan had to be approved by the Forestry Commission before any

further grant-aided woodland works could be undertaken. TK addressed the matter of extracting shipping the wood by road and all the consequences of increased traffic of lorries on the roads.

MS pointed to some deficiencies in the fencing of Smiddy Woods. Wire hadn't been properly connected to posts and a gateway still required a gate.

Clachan Church

AM reminded the group of the tenders submitted through David Somerville for undertaking the works in the church. He informed the group that the cheapest tenderer (Irish company) had since withdrawn and reported disappointing experiences with the second cheapest. He also pointed out some significant discrepancies between the quotes with the need to clarify differences to make them comparable. JL raised the issue of the quotes being higher than the budget. Due to this, it was recommended to try and attain further quotes. AMcC required a clarification of the timing of the works, pointing out that although Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent would be awarded shortly, that Scheduled Monument Consent had still to be approved. AM acknowledged that the new quote may be above budget but suggested the costings were known before a decision on amending specification was made.

MS raised the issue of Church bookings and the need to follow the system in place. Bookings can be made through MS or directly through the Trust Office in Inverness.

Path Ard Dubh /Coillegillie

George Mundell was asked to survey the path and provided an indicative quote for renovation of the path. AM reminded the group that this project was B-listed and did not have full funding in place. AM offered a suggestion that, as the path is on common grazing land, the relevant township could apply for a grant to upgrade the path through the Land Managers Option Menu Scheme. JL was concerned that the path would then need to be brought to a much higher standard, when it was generally felt that it should not be modified too deeply. AM reassured that this would not need to be the case but acknowledged that the process of mobilising the crofters into scheme administration and the timescale of grant applications could offset any advantage of securing the modest grant. The group agreed that drainage should be sorted with the available money. Bob Brown has been asked to survey and provide a specification for the path to be used as the basis for tenders.

Interpretation

Verity Walker produced a plan with some sketches suggesting elements of interpretation for the Bealach and the Beechwood path and the group was asked for their comments on them. AMcC generally agreed with the suggestions but recommended to keep everything as low-key as possible. RW reported the Trustees' will of keeping a feeling of Applecross being 'unmanaged'. The marking stone was generally dismissed for being obtrusive. MG pointed out the fact that the Bealach and its car park had been identified in the development phase as important places to implant interpretation, and the specification had been left vague to keep it low-key. RW thought that a proper orientation table similar to the existing cairn would suffice and felt that anything else would only detract the visitor from the view. TK suggested to have a low wall on the northern edge of the car park but JL opposed this feeling that nothing should obstruct the view. The directional slab was preferred on ground level rather than raised. The group agreed that the car park had to be given a nicer finish. Gravel surface was suggested but maintenance issues related to this were raised by others.

The interpretive bench on the Beechwood Path was regarded as too obtrusive. A simple log, possibly beech, was suggested instead but the group had to be reminded that there required to be a

commitment to carry out a degree of interpretation on site, given the Outputs listed in the grant funding packages . The retaining wall was considered favourably if reduced in length.

Other means of interpretations were discussed, such as a book on the peninsula and milestones which offered discrete information which could be cross-referenced to an App. and an App. and an App.

Signage

DM explained that the prominence of Gaelic on the future signage had been discussed with Verity and it had been agreed that signs should be made bilingual, unless the text was too long. GC thought Gaelic should have the priority on signs. Both DM and GC were satisfied by how the Gaelic policy has been addressed in the interpretation plan. MS raised the issue of names that cannot or should not be translated.

Hebridean Barns

Permission was still not granted at the time of the meeting. This has delayed the intervention of Martin Wildgoose, who advised against starting limework so late in the year and suggested beginning in May 2012 instead. AM asked EM to liaise with Martin to see if a start date for late September could be managed.

Other matter arising

Geoff Walker has started the second part of drystone wall opposite the coal shed, under the paths budget

The CCAGS applications for the South Coast deer fence were successful. The remaining shortfall, however, is significant. RW raised the issue of fence maintenance. AM highlighted the presence of a ten-year maintenance budget included in ALPS. The development of a further maintenance budget was also discussed.

The date of next meeting was set for the 26th September.