

## **ALPS Management Group Meeting Minutes**

Thursday 10th March, 7pm, Estate Office, Applecross House

### **Present**

Archie MacLellan, Chair (Applecross Trust), Alistair McCowan (Historical Society), Alasdair Macleod (Community Council), Owen Kilbride (Archaeological Society), Derek MacLennan (Bealach Group), Mike Summers (Applecross Crofters), Gill Fairweather (Walks and Traditional Crafts Group), Tom Kilbride (co-opted member), Gordon Cameron (Heritage Centre Curator), David Somerville (architect), Sam Bridgewater, Elodie Chopin.

Lorna Lumsden (Applecross Trust) attended the meeting via video link.

It was decided to record the meetings from this date forwards to assist with the writing of minutes.

### **Apologies for absence**

Jacqui Liuba (co-opted member), Mary Gibson (adviser).

### **Proposal of minutes of Group Meeting 07.02.2011**

The minutes were approved by all present and will be made available via the ALPS noticeboard and the website.

### **PART 1: BRIEF UPDATE ON PROGRESS**

The second ALPS newsletter was printed and distributed on the 4th March. So far feedback has been positive.

Emma Shirley from Planning (Dingwall) visited Applecross on the 8th March to inspect the proposed path lines related to the submitted ALPS planning application. Her immediate response was positive and barring any unforeseen objections believes that permission should be granted by the 1st April. They have, however, asked for clarification of 'micro routing' of the paths to avoid sites of archaeological interest such as 'St Maelrubha's cell'. Cathy Dagg has agreed to respond to them on our behalf and undertake any marking out of sites where appropriate. She will be visiting Applecross on the 12th March.

A CDM (Construction [Design & Management] Regulations) coordinator has been appointed for the path work (Chris York) and a CDM plan is being devised. This is a statutory requirement. The CDM co-ordinator's role is to advise the client on health and safety issues during the design and planning phases of construction work. A Minor Works Contract has been drafted for the path contractor, George Mundell.

Good progress has been made with the Bardic School. A flyer and program are currently being drafted. Confirmed speakers so far include Kenny MacDonald, Aonghas MacNeacail, Aonghas Pàdraig Caimbeul, Kenny Thompson, Rody Gorman, Màiri Sine Caimbeul and Maoilios Caimbeul.

Work has continued on drafting the CCAGS applications related to the South Coast Deer Fence liaising with the crofting clerks, with Archie MacLellan taking the lead on this. It is hoped that these applications will be submitted by the end of March once they have been approved and signed by the clerks.

The Council has begun work on 'Bealach dykes' phase 1 (about 15 small pieces of work, including culverts repairs and drystone features), with Geoff Walker undertaking much of the work. They hope to have this completed by mid April 2011.

After meeting with HLF in Edinburgh in early Feb., SB was asked to supply updated cashflows, risk register and 'ALPS management & responsibilities' documents as the ones supplied in the original application were thought to be out of date. This has been done. They have since asked for a revised Training Plan.

Two claims have now been submitted to HLF, one to LEADER, one to SNH and one to HIE. Those to HLF, SNH and HIE have all been approved. The LEADER claim is in the process of being considered. ERDF have still not provided a final offer letter, and AM, SB and EC have been working to finalize this.

Interpretation will start work on the interpretation plan on the 4th and 5th April with informal 'drop- in sessions' for community consultation organized. The plan should be completed by the end of June 2011.

Spring ALPS contract opportunities related to evaluation surveys and path building have been advertised in the ALPS newsletter and on local notice boards. There seems to be significant interest in the survey work (at least four notes of interest to date) with only one expression of interest so far in the path building work.

SB has been in discussions with Venture Trust about driving forward and funding the 'Regeneration by Adventure' projects. As there has been a significant time lag between when the plans were first drafted, we are looking at the original proposals in detail to see if they are still relevant, and if so, if there is any need to amend aspects of them.

Bruce Taylor has provided a draft species/planting schedule for Smiddy Wood and work has begun on removal of gorse behind Smiddy Cottages.

A proposal has been drafted for the Forestry Commission's 'International Year of Forests' program for support for the Hazel woods and festivals program. The IYF grants are small (less than £5K) and support community initiatives. It is hoped to submit this claim in the next financial year (April 2011)

A community walk has been organized for the 12th March to visit all the sites that would come under the archaeological trail. A path builder (George Mundell) and archaeologist (Cathy Dagg) will accompany the walk. The aim of the day is to provisionally mark out and waypoint a route that could link all sites under one trail.

An open meeting to discuss fuelwood has been arranged for the 29th March (community hall, 7pm). This follows on from the fuelwood survey.

## **PART 2: MEETING MINUTES**

### **Clachan Church (updated plans; heating; tender process; consents; timing of works)**

David Somerville gave an update on progress with the Listed Building Consent which has now been granted for the windows. Due to dropped keystones around the windows and the stonework required to repair them, DS suggested that rather than replacing the windows in spring 2011 as originally scheduled, this component of restoration should be undertaken at the same time as all other works which are likely to start in October. All present were in agreement.

Regarding heating for Clachan, an air source heat pump appears to be the cheapest and most efficient system on the market, although concerns were voiced about the appropriateness of installing such a system in Clachan due to 'aesthetics'. DS expressed his preference for a wood fuel stove, although issues of maintenance and management were raised by others. It was suggested that the visual impact of the heating units of an air source heat pump (which would be attached to the underside of two beams, above the aisle) could be reduced by a box hiding the systems. Other heating options have been variously considered (underfloor heating, wood burner, electric heating) but have been dismissed due to expense, efficiency or maintenance issues. The group voted unanimously in favour of an air sourced pump heating system which is considered as the most cost-effective solution. The only other viable (but less green and more expensive) alternative is storage heaters. Listed Building Consent will be required for the installation of the toilet and for the heat pumps.

The best original tender for works at Clachan was submitted in 2009 came from Laing Construction. SB clarified HLF and LEADER conditions which state that all contracts of this size have to be openly advertised. DS confirmed that the tenders submitted in 2009 did not come from an open advertisement but from a few solicited requests for tenders, but reckoned that there were only very few contractors able to undertake the works. It was decided to re-advertise the contract opportunity openly as well as asking Laing Construction to revise their quotes.

SB raised the recruitment procedure of the appointed architect to ensure that funders' procurement conditions were met. It was agreed that SB would investigate whether or not it was a requirement to advertise the architect's position if they had been associated with the project from the beginning and were charging standard fees. Assuming costs were acceptable, it was generally agreed that ALPS should try and work with the present architect.

### **Training Plan**

HLF has asked for a revised plan for all training to be undertaken under APS. The type of training needed, the beneficiaries and local training opportunities need to be investigated. Several training options were raised, such as website designing for local businesses, chainsaw courses or book keeping. SB asked the Management Group to provide input on options. OK suggested that thatching skills, required in the building of the roundhouse, could be one option.

### **Roundhouse**

The question of the management of the Roundhouse in the longer term was raised, as well as the number and type of events to be held within/around it. GF reckons that the summer holiday will be

the heaviest use time, with activities (traditional crafts, story-telling, outdoors fire lighting, stone-age cookery) organised for the school, local people and possibly tourists.

SB recommended setting up a committee dedicated to the building phase of the project, and then also the management of the roundhouse. Regarding the building phase, although desirable to involve the community with a series of weekend workshops, the issue of available 'people hours' was raised due to the small population and other projects also vying for volunteer support. SB suggested employing one person to oversee the construction. OK suggested having Brian Wilson as an adviser/coordinator, to supervise the construction and teach the volunteers, with TK suggesting that Leslie Kilbride could provide advice on how to proceed. SB agreed to consult Leslie for advice.

### **Applecross paths**

SB agreed to liaise with Cathy Dagg on the 12<sup>th</sup> March to make further necessary checks regarding all archaeological sites and respond to the council. Assuming she is able to quickly submit a response to the council, and that her response is accepted it appears likely that paths works can start in April. The entrance of the Beechwood path will have to be moved up from the corner of the road, to ensure a minimum of 60m of clear view. SNH have agreed the path line, with a response from the Forestry Commission pending.

### **Smiddy Wood species plan**

Bruce Taylor provided a map of the area, based on initial feedback from the MG members on preferred species. The position of the various copses within the grassland will be decided once the condition of the site is examined. It was raised that some species present in the Gaelic alphabet (e.g. gorse/ivy) might not be appropriate for use on the proposed Gaelic trail. It was decided to forward to Bruce any further comments about the species that should be used.

### **Other matters arising**

John Malcolm and Andrew Wright contacted SB regarding Clachan Chapel restoration project. It appears that Historic Scotland is keen to support the vegetation management aspect of works. This project is currently being managed by Mia Scott of the Highland Building Preservation Trust. She has prepared tenders related to the design of the chapel, vegetation removal, bat surveys and potential repairs and will approach HS for funding on our behalf.

Next MG meeting 4.04.2011