

ALPS update for Management Group 10th January 2010

- The ALPS website was launched on 16th December (www.visit-applecross.org). This is a work in progress, but the basic elements are in place. The website will be refined over the coming months, and we intend to have a Gaelic version of all permanent pages eventually. It should be a useful vehicle to keep people informed about the partnership and associated events.
- After receiving amended tenders for the paths of the Applecross area, the contract was awarded to George Mundell on the 18th December. His quote of £47,900 (with material subbase and dust costs to be bought by the project estimated at £25,000), should be ca. £10K under budget, even with the recent increase in VAT. He has agreed to take on local labour.
- After suggestions from the MG at the last meeting, path training qualifications were investigated through discussions with National Trust path builders. Formal routes are available but relate to undertaking options (e.g. ditching & culverts; vegetation management etc.) within broader env. management courses. However, these cannot be done locally in Wester Ross. Thus, any employment of the local community on path work will likely only provide a minimum salary, useful experience and improved employment local path maintenance opportunities (e.g. with the Trust), but no actual qualifications. Path building will take ca. three months, and thus, any apprenticeships will likely be short.
- HLF require that contracts are in place for all works undertaken as part of ALPS. Contracts have been prepared for consulting services (Community interpretive Planning Project & Evaluation & Monitoring), Events Management (Bardic school) and website development. A Minor Works Building Contract is being prepared for the path work.
- Work begun on de-stumping Smiddy Wood in the period between Christmas and New Year. Work is progressing well, although a few complaints have been received relating the Health & Safety issues. There was a feeling that there should have been improved signage warning of works, and that chippings were flying dangerously close to vehicles. This issue has been taken up with the contractor, and signs should be erected by Monday 10th October. Further work will now be largely away from the road. There was a failure in communication here, as due to the weather it was not clear if work would begin before or after New Year. Unfortunately contractors started whilst SB, EC and AM were away and sufficient warning and consultation was not given locally about the work and its timing. Hopefully this can be avoided in the future.
- A third meeting was held on the 15th December with the crofters of the southern coastal area. The four tenders received for undertaking the work were presented. The cheapest tender, which also appeared to be the best planned and have the greatest insight to local conditions was £92,632 (ex VAT). This is £10K more than the original estimate submitted to HLF. Additional costs will include the insertion of a grid at Milton which could cost up to £20K. An

application will be made by each township to CCAGS before Easter. However, even if successful, this would leave a likely shortfall of ca. £40K for this project.

- Andrew Wright has approached Ollie Owen at Historical Scotland regarding the scheduling the barns. The issue of the need for a small footprint due to its proximity the broch was made. The broch was not included in the proposal.
- David Somerville has been asked to update plans relating to Clachan Church based on the LEADER application so that they include heating and toilet facilities. He will be undertaking a site visit in January and meeting with all interested parties to discuss the plans. No date has yet been finalized for this. Planning permission has still not yet been granted for the windows; neither has the most recent LEADER grant offer been received. Work on the windows can't start until these are in place.
- The site for the 'beginner's dyking course' scheduled between the 20th and 26th January has been finalized. It will be associated with the coal shed. Please direct all ideas for sites for future courses to SB or AM.

Update from the Historical society

- **Digitisation project** Gordon Cameron (GC), Heritage Curator, is assessing suitable archival management systems and will meet with representatives from the International Council on Archives, National Archives of Scotland and University of Strathclyde for expert advice. The preference appears to be the industry-approved ICA-AtoM – an open-source application which could handle both archival management and a proposed genealogical database extension. Digitisation equipment has been purchased and is arriving now.
- **Place names** 'Second-generation' maps collated by the Historical Society some years ago have been rediscovered. GC is compiling a database of existing names from OS maps; a list of potential informants has been built up. GC is also investigating how best to display the collated material in both graphic (map) form and digitally, liaising with John McKeown to assess current plans of using Google maps.
- **Graveyard mapping** Given that December was the coldest month for a century, this project will definitely be a summer-based one! GC and Alistair McCowan continue to liaise on this project, as we await the arrival of detailed aerial photography which will enable the mapping process to take place. Local volunteers will be sought nearer the time.
- **Holy well** Limited progress so far on this project, other than that it has been discussed in terms of the new path to be laid between the Coal Cellar and the White Gate. Regarding interpretation, etc., an interesting dialogue with Gaelic place names experts suggests that the widely believed meaning of 'Stroupan a' bhile' (Spout well) may be wrong. 'Bile' referred, historically, to a holy tree – this will be followed up in the near future.

- **Extras** GC was interviewed about the Heritage Curator post, the ALPS heritage projects and the Bardic School for the Gaelic learners magazine 'Cothrom' which should appear in March.

ALPS Events planned for January 2011

10th January. Community lichen afternoon in Carnoch Woods. Meet at the Applecross Inn at 1300.

15th – 16th January. 9am – 4pm. **Building Across the Millennia - 'Bronze Age' Construction: Skills, Design and Techniques.** Two day workshop on craft techniques required to build an iron age roundhouse. Community Hall (mornings) and Carnoch Woods and surroundings (afternoons). Please bring bad weather kit and suitable boots!

20th – 26th (excluding the weekend). A beginner's five-day training course on **drystone dyke building**. The course will be free and there are five places available. It is anticipated that those wanting to participate will have a long term interest in drystone dyking and will be prepared to attend occasional subsequent higher level courses throughout the lifespan of ALPS, with attendees progressing through the various competence levels of the Drystone Dyke Walling Association. Application form required. Please contact Elodie for further details.

22nd January. 10am. **Carnoch's Carpet.** The West Coast of Scotland is world-famous for its diversity and abundance of mosses. Find out more about the luxuriant mossy flora of Carnoch Hazel Woods with experts from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Free. Meet at the Applecross Inn.

28th January. 7pm. Community Hall. **Scotland and the North and West Highlands - A Rock-Detective Story of Epic Proportions.** Donald Fisher, Geoscientist and Geo-Ranger, North West Highlands Geopark

29th January. 9am – 4pm. **Applecross Rocks!** Join a minibus tour driving back through time and explore the amazing geological features of the Applecross peninsula with a ranger from the North West Scotland Geo-Park. Meeting place to be arranged. **Free, but booking essential.**