



## **Management Group Meeting**

**Monday 29th November, 7pm, Estate Office, Applecross House**

### **Present**

Owen Kilbride (OK) (Archaeological Society), Derek MacLennan (Bealach Group), Alistair McCowan (AMC) (Historical society), Alasdair Macleod (AML)(Community Council), Gill Fairweather (Walks and Traditional Crafts Group), Jacqui Liuba (co-opted member), Gordon Cameron (Heritage Centre Curator), Sam Bridgewater, Elodie Chopin.

### **Apologies of absence**

Archie MacLellan, Chair (Applecross Trust), Lorna Lumsden (Applecross Trust), Mike Summers (Applecross Crofters), Tom Kilbride (co-opted member), Mary Gibson (Adviser). The heavy snow made it problematic for a number of the group to attend. In the absence of Archie MacLellan, it was agreed that Sam Bridgewater (SB) would chair the meeting.

### **Proposal of minutes of Group Meeting 25.10.2010**

The minutes were approved by all present and will be displayed on the ALPS notice board.

### **Update on progress**

SB provided an update on ALPS progress. Gordon Cameron took up his post on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November and was welcomed by the other Management Group members. The first report and financial claim has been submitted to HLF. The first report and claim has been completed for LEADER but not yet submitted. Once a final grant offer is provided by ERDF, a claim will be made to cover any final shortfall of money spent. The recent LEADER funding application for Clachan Church was successful and, associated with the Applecross Trust's commitment to underwrite any remaining shortfall of the outlined budget (if needed), if further funds are not forthcoming, it will allow the start of preparations for undertaking all work specified. Fund raising will continue. Tenders for the manufacture of Clachan Church windows have been organized through David Somerville and four tenders are in to date, all well within budget. All Applecross building contractors have been approached and invited to tender. Although Listed Building Consent has not yet been approved, it is hoped that the contract can be awarded before Christmas 2010, with work starting in the New Year. Equipment for the archives digitisation project is currently being bought by the Historical Society. A series of events and activities relating to geology, Carnoch woodland conservation and roundhouse, and drystone dyke training have been organized for January 2011. They have been agreed by SNH who will be the primary funder and who have requested that their financial commitment to ALPS for 2010 is spent by the 1st February 2011. After the tender assessment process, the evaluation and monitoring contract was awarded to Rowan Tree Ltd. (Inverness), the website contract to Ronan Martin & Associates (Skye), the Bardic School co-ordinator position to June MacPherson, and the community interpretation plan to Interpretation. Work on the community interpretation plan will not start until March 2011, but will be completed by June 2011. It is hoped that the



ALPS website will be live by Christmas 2010. Evaluation work will start immediately. The first ALPS newsletter was launched mid November and seems to be receiving positive feedback. The next edition is planned for February 2011. After initial discussions of the Bealach Group, the end of June 2011 has been earmarked for the first Bardic School event. Organisation is in an early phase but it is probable that the main venue will be the Venture Trust, with fringe events and perhaps some of the core events held at other locations around Applecross. Tenders for the South Coast deer Fence are due in on the 1st December. One tender is currently in.

### **Paths tenders**

Four tenders were submitted. SB explained that there has been a delay in awarding the Applecross Bay Coastal Trails contracts, due to the great variation in tender values and submitted tender formats. All contractors have been asked to revise their bids. There remains a degree of uncertainty as to the final line of the proposed Beechwood path, and a path specialist from the National Trust has been contracted to clarify path lines and the All Ability specification, so that there is no longer any doubt amongst contractors as to what they are costing for. It is still hoped that this contract can be awarded by Christmas 2010.

OK and AMC asked for clarification about the scope for training opportunities in path building, as there seems to be interest from local people. SB stated that the path tenders currently out only concern the Coastal Trail project. He clarified that a training component had been written into the tender specification and local employment would be created with all contractors agreeing to employ and train local people. The question of the quality of the training was raised, as the concern was that the awarded contractor would be more likely to hire people for labour work rather than give a proper recognized training. It was decided to look at the existing general training budget to see what scope there is for including path building/maintenance. SB and EC agreed to research official path building training programmes and report back at the next meeting.

### **Broch update**

Work is progressing well on the final presentation phase of the Applecross broch. Path building work has started with Innes Sutton (Skye) undertaking the path work and Duncan Frazer (Applecross) undertaking the presentation guided by the conservation archaeologist Martin Wildgoose (Skye) and the Archaeological Society. Although the team had to face technical problems with the dumper and bad weather conditions, work on both aspects should be complete by Christmas 2010.

### **Drystane dyke training course location**

A drystane dyke training course has been organised for January 2011, with five places available. SB raised the question of the selection of the trainees if more than five applied. It was suggested that a five-day commitment to the course, with the expectation of attending further courses, should be part of the selection process, and that no formal application was probably required. Regarding the location of the training course, the sites mentioned during the previous meeting (Cruary path and Ardban) were no longer regarded as being favourable. SB transmitted Archie MacLellan's suggestion of a low wall being built along the coal shed. This is required by the council before a future proposed crafts shop at the site of the shed can be developed. The general feeling of the Management Group was that there were more suitable places around Applecross for the training in the first instance, and it would be preferred to see existing walls being repaired. The piers opposite the old shop, and in Camusterrach, were suggested as places that could benefit from a training course. SB wondered whether dyking related to pier restoration was specialist work, and as such perhaps not the best



place to hold a beginner's course. This view was not shared by other MG members. Regarding the coal shed suggestion, Gordon Cameron also raised the issue of health and safety related to working near a road corner. SB agreed to discuss potential sites with the dyker trainer who will be visiting Applecross before the course. AML emphasised the importance of restoring the Bealach dykes, some of which might provide suitable locations for training, although prior to any decisions there is a need to separate which sites are not suitable for repair (e.g. parapet walls, knocked down because of the snow drifts and plough works), from features such as retaining walls/culverts which must be restored.

#### **Visitor infrastructure update**

The parking spaces and facilities available around Applecross have been investigated by EC and potentially problematic sites identified. Lonbain is one of them, as well as the Broch. For the latter, new parking could be made in the space available between the farm and the old dam. This was conceptually approved by the Management Group members present, although works would be needed. It was noted that there is an unpleasant refuse dump under this area which shouldn't be disturbed if works are to go ahead. The use of such a site for car parking would depend on the Trust's future plans for the farm and area, with additional consultation needed before any plans are further developed with relevant crofters, the campsite and local residents.

#### **Fuelwood survey**

As suggested during the September and October meetings, a survey has been designed to gauge the current and future use of fuelwood in Applecross. It was agreed that Carolyn Petersen would conduct the survey in The Street/Milton, Sam Bridgewater in Lonbain/Callakille/Toscaig, Alasdair and Alison Macleod in Camusteel/Camusterrach, Gill Fairweather in Culduie, Jacqui Liuba in Ard-Dhubh, Owen Kilbride at Craite Barn and Elodie Chopin at the Venture Trust/Pub/School/Community Hall (for larger places like the Community hall, although they have no fuelwood use, it would be useful to know what their energy consumption is). It was suggested that Tom Kilbride might be willing to do the north coast area between Cuaig and Arrina. The survey is to be completed by the 17<sup>th</sup> December.

#### **Other matters arising**

SB mentioned that the conservation Architect Andrew Wright had been in contact offering to make an approach to the appropriate authorities to schedule the Top Barns. In his opinion these features are of national significance, and their scheduling might open up new avenues of funding from Historic Scotland, with potentially 100% of all research/management plan costs and 50% of restoration costs covered. This component of ALPS is currently only half-funded, with HLF the only contributor. OK expressed concern over the footprint of the potential scheduling and was keen that it should not impact on planned excavation work of the broch. He also clearly stated that the broch should not be included in any scheduling approaches made at this time. OK also wondered how scheduling would impact on the costs of restoration work as scheduling would restrict what and how things should be done. AMC agreed with this point and suggested that further clarification about footprint and cost impacts was needed. SB agreed to raise these matters with Andrew Wright.

The next Management Group meeting is scheduled for Monday 10<sup>th</sup> of January 2011.