

ALPS update for Management Group 12 February 2013

- **Claims & funding: ERDF** – Notification of Change has been approved. This means match funding for additional pathworks, match funding for Walled Garden project and an extension to 31 December 2013 for all projects.
 - **LEADER** – funding project finishes 31 March 2013. JW has been applying for an extension to 30 September since beginning December 2012. LEADER has issues with claiming process for all revenue projects, along with a small overclaim on two capital projects. These are not a huge problem and will just require additional time. We are awaiting feedback on the Bardic School project; a five year business plan and budget has been produced and submitted, along with three Change Requests.

- **Medieval Chapel:** JW has a meeting booked with Mia Scott (Highland Buildings Preservation Trust) for 20 February to find out progress on the chapel. Individual costs already generated amount to over £7,000 so it is necessary that, as part funders, we should have an understanding of the work that has been done, is still to be done, as well as the intended finished product.

- **Path works (Kenmore-Applecross glen):** it was agreed at the January board meeting that George Mundell should be awarded the contract for Kenmore-the Applecross glen. George will begin work w/c18 Feb. Signage has been ordered for this route in preparation.

- **South Coast Deer Fence (deer grid):** work began 14 January. The grid was complete and drying by the end of January and surfacing will take place 15 February. **(deer fence)** Kevin Ronaldson has been contacted to build the final length of fence from the grid to the water and will confirm a date asap. AM applied for an extension for CCAGS grant applications; an extended deadline to 31 March has been agreed which leaves enough time to ensure the grid and fencing can all be included.

- **Hebridean barns:** JW has sent the draft Conservation Plan to Cathy Dagg for input. As soon as this is complete, JW will draft a proposed work plan which will be circulated to the management group for approval. **(south barn)** Planning consent has been granted by the Highland Council for the south barn. JW is awaiting written confirmation before work can commence.

- **Lime kiln:** Martin Wildgoose has eight days remaining on the project but has promised that the first sight of sunshine will bring him over this way. The remainder of the Lime Kiln budget is now being put to match fund the Walled Garden/greenhouses project.

- **Gateway woodland project:** AM has submitted the application for the pier. Awaiting feedback but all elements that were causing query have been addressed within the revised application. AM is working with Angus Biofuels to reduce the costs of the project. A meeting is being set up with Bill Watson to go through costs for each part of the project.

- **Bealach dykes:** it was agreed at the January board meeting that Geoff Walker and Darren Jones would be awarded the contract for the latest phase of dyking works. Geoff has been able to get started straight away on a small amount of work but both will begin in earnest early April. In the meantime, JW, Archie, Alistair and Geoff met to discuss further works over the Bealach and around Keppoch. Geoff has drafted a spec and costs which will enable JW to advertise further works.

- **Interpretation:**
 - **Booklets – (Wildlife & Heritage)** both booklets have been delivered to the ALPS office. JW is in discussion with Gordon (Heritage Centre) and Tracey (Information Centre) to agree a way to sell the booklets throughout the year. **(Geology)** text is due to arrive on email w/c 11 Feb from Geologist, Donald Fisher. Images being sent from photographer, Seoris McGillivray at the same time. **(Archaeology)** Text (drafted by Cathy Dagg) has been edited by JW and sent to Owen for comment. JW has chased Cathy Dagg for the illustration of the broch.
 - **Interpretation Panels** – panels are due to be delivered w/c 11 Feb.
 - **Signage** – JW has ordered the signage and is awaiting details of lead time and proofs from the contractor.
 - **Bealach Interpretation** – Dan Macrae to begin work end of Feb (weather permitting)

- **Hazel Woods & Roundhouse: (Hazel Woods)** Les Bates (hazel regeneration expert) held a second volunteer coppicing day on 26 Jan within the fenced area of Càrnach Woodland. There was a really good attendance (15 people) and Judy provided lunch which was eaten sitting on the edge of the pits in the hebridean barn. Les will be hosting further volunteer days throughout the spring to coppice the hazel and to work on other monitoring elements. The next event is 16 February. The school will be planting hazel trees after Easter with a follow up session in the classroom. **(Roundhouse)** The reed is drying and the thatcher has been contacted to set a date for completing the roof. There is further work that needs doing to complete the frame and Lesley is sourcing the hazel.

- **Broch:** James Goldthorpe is in the process of constructing a new shed for the site (wooden) and this will also form the backdrop for the broch interpretation. **(broch leaflet)** JW has sent draft text (written by Cathy) to Owen for comment.

- **Walled Garden Greenhouses:** approval has been granted for match funding (ERDF). Initial discussions have begun to put together a project plan with outputs. A meeting is being set up between Peter, Jackie, Duncan McCowan and Alistair McCowan on site to look at practicalities and to prepare a specification with costings.

- **Bardic School:** progress for the 2013 event is on hold currently while we resolve funding issues with LEADER. JW has submitted a five year business plan and budget showing progression post funding to financial sustainability. There is still some work to be done to secure funding for this year but we are doing everything possible to ensure that the Bardic School can continue.

- **Training:** the chainsaw course is booked for 11-15 March.

- **Land Conditioning & habitat improvements:** work has begun on this project which will aid the regeneration of the land within the South Coast Deer Fence. We are looking at projects proposed by the individual townships, such as hedging, tree planting, wildlife corridors and ditching; to date, Ali and Duncan have both proposed projects and work is being undertaken to apply for funding through CCAGS. Scottish Woodlands has visited the Milltown site to investigate the prospect of tree planting and it will be producing a proposal in the coming weeks. These are long term projects that should aid the deer fence in changing the landscape into something that can be used in the future.

- **Policies Woodland:** a new project has begun to improve the woodland in the policies. The aim is to plant 500 native trees as well as to undertake some extensive tree surgery where required. JW has spoken to Bruce Taylor at Scottish Woodlands; he will be organizing a survey which will show where trees require management. There is a management plan in place and a budget of £13,600. We hope that this project, like the Land Conditioning, will leave a legacy that will be appreciated for a long time to come.

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