



APPLECROSS LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME
Sgeama Companas Dealbh-tìre Na Comraich

Management Group Meeting

Monday 25th October, 7pm, Estate Office, Applecross House

Present

Alistair McCowan (Historical society), Alasdair Macleod (Community Council), Mike Summers (Applecross Crofters), Tom Kilbride (TK)(co-opted member), Gill Fairweather (Walks and Traditional Crafts Group), Mary Gibson (Adviser), Bruce Taylor (Adviser), Nick Goldthorpe (Archaeological Society).

Apologies for absence

Archie MacLellan (AM), Chair (Applecross Trust), Owen Kilbride (Archaeological Society), Derek MacLennan (Bealach Group), Lorna Lumsden (Applecross Trust), Jacqui Liuba (JL)(co-opted member).

In the absence of Archie MacLellan, it was agreed that Sam Bridgewater (SB) would chair the meeting.

Proposal of minutes of Group Meeting 20.09.2010

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. Nine applications were received for the post of heritage curator, with two candidates interviewed. The newly appointed Heritage Curator is Gordon Cameron who will be taking up his position on the 29th November. Much of the work during October has involved liaising with potential contractors (including site meetings) interested in bidding for work related to website design, evaluation and monitoring, path building, co-ordinating the Bardic School and the community interpretive plan. An Open Meeting for the community was held on the 22nd September and was well attended. The community reaction was largely positive although a question was raised concerning securing local employment. It was clarified that the projects under ALPS were shaped largely by the requirements of the Heritage Lottery Fund, hence their focus on cultural and natural heritage. However, the provision of local employment/training opportunities is written into ALPS tenders and forms part of the assessment process. There was also concern expressed at the meeting about ALPS acting as a sink for funding which might have an adverse impact on other local organisations also wanting financial support. The Archaeological Society

organized a very successful and well-attended broch-themed conference on the 3rd October. The Historical Society met the tight deadline and spent the available grant (£1,000) for bi-lingual signs from Comunn na Gàidhlig on new signs for the Heritage Centre. A newsletter with feature articles is being developed to assist with local communication about ALPS. The first edition will appear in early November once all articles are in.

Tender selection process for web design, evaluation & monitoring, interpretive plan, Bardic School and path building

The deadline for these tenders was on the 21st October and all the bids are in. Interest was only modest in all components, although sufficient for high quality applications to be received. Interest was particularly poor for the website designing and the Bardic School elements, which raised the question of the effectiveness of the advertisement avenues chosen. It was suggested to advertise in the Press and Journal in future, as it is more widely distributed than the West Highland Free Press. All contracts will continue to be advertised locally and in An Carranach. Tenders will be assessed by each of the Board members using a form comparing the proposals against the specifications. Decisions to be made by Monday, 1st November.

Clachan Church window update & LEADER application

Tenders for the manufacture of Clachan Church windows have been organized through David Sommerville architects, with the deadline for tenders being the 22nd October 2010. Two bids are in and Listed Building Consent is now being sought. Architect fees will be an additional 12% to the contract cost. An application was submitted on the 9th October to LEADER for £52,000 to enhance Clachan church as a community facility, but its success will depend on providing evidence of funding for any remaining shortfall of the total £276,522 estimated costs of restoration. AM stated that the Community Council were happy for this application to be made. Assuming a successful application, the shortfall would stand at £62,000. Although a few potential funders remain, considering the tight deadline of the 9th November when the Local Action Group meets, the only available source of funding in the time available is from the Applecross Trust. SB agreed to contact the Trust to see how such a request would be received, but if such a request were successful, questions were raised by the Management Group as to whether this would be an additional contribution to the existing Trust's commitment or whether it would involve re-allocating funds within that commitment which might impact on the potential of other projects to be implemented successfully, such as the Gateway Woodland. There was discussion on the relative merits and importance of Clachan Church versus the Woodland to the local community. In an 'either or' situation, AM wondered which would be regarded as the most important, although such an eventuality of having to choose between them was not seen as likely. BT provided a quick overview of the Gateway Woodland. Plans still seem to be in a state of flux

with various management scenarios possible. A draft forest plan for Applecross will be completed shortly which will help drive this debate forward.

SNH ALPS funding deadline for Yr 1 & associated revised plan approval

Although the main ALPS funders are relatively flexible about timescale for expenditure, SNH require their funding for this first financial year (£5,149) to be spent by 1st February 2011. This money is currently partitioned between the Bealach Interpretation, Applecross Bay Dyke Features, the Interpretation Plan and Festivals and other events. With the contractors for the interpretive plan not yet appointed, it would be premature to attempt to implement any interpretation. SB proposed that the money be spent on a) five-day drystone dyking training course in January and the erection of a sensitive drystone dyke seating feature. SB proposed a site at the top of the rise on the Cruary to Sand path that would have good views. The practicalities of getting stone to this site was questioned by MS. Another suggestion was for the seating feature to be positioned overlooking Ardban beach or somewhere along the Ardban path. This received a generally favourable response from all those present and was considered worth investigating further. Additional ideas for events that would be appropriate for SNH funding was a geology day for the communities of Strathcarron, a community bryophyte day in Carnoch woods involving the school, and an associated final professional lichen survey to allow the development of a management plan for the Woodland. TK hoped that human use would not be overshadowed by biodiversity interests in Carnoch wood, and stated that it was important that any eventual management plan would look to provide the community with craft/other resources deemed as important, as well seeking to conserve nature. SB/EC will arrange a wildlife monthly talk programme in Applecross which could also meet the funding requirements. A final plan of how the money could best be spent will be drafted by SB for further comments by the Management Group.

Broch path/presentation update and artefact conservation

Presentation and path building will commence in November 2010 with contractors chosen after a review of quotes and availability for the work prepared by SB for the Archaeological Society. The preferred contractors for the final stage of work are Duncan Frazer & Innes Sutton. The Management Group approved of this going ahead. This remaining work can be done within the remaining budget. The next stage is for members of the Archaeological Society, the Trust, ALPS and the proposed contractors to meet at the site to agree a workplan.

Coherence of, and potential constraints to, Applecross visitor/interpretation plan, & how to proceed with sensitive sites to tourism without suitable visitor infrastructure e.g. Lonbain

The issue of the visitor management, local community sensitivities and the potential impacts of increased local and visitor interest in Applecross due to ALPS was raised. These concerns are different to the interpretive plan but should help inform it. It was pointed out that altered patterns of visitor/local movement, increased numbers of visitors resulting from the success of ALPS and the highlighting of sites currently rarely visited might have adverse consequences on sites/trails and the local community, and these should be considered in advance. The need for the interpretive planner to integrate this information with key messages was highlighted, with the promotion of Applecross to be done in consideration to the available infrastructures. The example of Lonbain thatched cottage was cited as an example of a heritage site that has poor infrastructure and which it would be problematic to promote as a result. The fish festival was cited as an example of an event that was too successful and had to be stopped due to too many visitors attending. Concern was expressed that ALPS might not be considering the real impact of its actions on the local community. It was agreed that SB/EC would prepare a map before the next Management Group meeting listing all heritage sites considered under ALPS, together with available infrastructure to support visitors and highlighting potential areas of sensitivity.

Fuelwood survey

As suggested during the previous meeting, a draft survey has been designed to gauge the current and future use of fuelwood in Applecross. The Board agreed that it was a starting point and a necessary first step and might help develop ideas related to the Gateway Woodlands project. It was suggested that the school could take part in canvassing Applecross houses. SB expressed concern about the local community getting questionnaire fatigue. The Management Group agreed to provide feedback on the draft survey, after which it should be conducted by SB/EC.

Other matters arising

The date of next Management Group meeting was set on Monday 29th November.