

ALPS update for Management Group 7th February 2010

- A planning application has been submitted for the four Applecross bay paths. The main planning issue is likely to relate to the entrance point near the coal shed, as a statutory 60m of sight will be required in all directions from the proposed path entrance.
- The beechwood path was walked by AMc and SB in January and sites of historical interest were noted and marked. These will be discussed with the contractor. Assuming planning permission is granted, work will start in April 2011.
- A second report has been prepared for HLF and will be submitted prior to February 15th. Payment for the first claim has been approved, although payment has been withheld until some final ALPS documentation has been clarified. This relates to delays in the official starting date of ALPS, and some minor changes since in HLF and ERDF funding packages. Due to this, it is possible HLF may wish updated cash flows and work plans before they release money. Confirmation on this will be received at a planned meeting with HLF on 15th February.
- Although all funding has been verbally approved, a final grant offer has not yet been received from ERDF. AM and SB have been liaising with ERDF to try and complete this process. There are some concerns that the exact partitioning of funds by ERDF in their final grant offer may not replicate exactly those requested and provisionally accepted in the funding application. Although this doesn't change the broad funding landscape, it may impact on potential surpluses within certain programmes if ERDF is given as match funding against LEADER or HIE for individual projects. This has been a frustratingly long process. This issue has been raised as a point for discussion on the agenda.
- A first LEADER report and claim has been submitted.
- The broch path has been completed. Final landscaping will take place at Easter.
- Application forms for the Crofting Agricultural Grants Scheme are being drafted. These will need to be approved by crofters before they can be submitted.
- A meeting was held at Clachan Church on Tuesday 18th January to discuss plans for its renovation. Those present were Sam Bridgewater, Gordon Cameron, Alistair McCowan, Elodie Chopin, David Somerville (architect), Nicola Tallach (SNH) and Bill Hall (heating engineer). David Somerville is currently revising plans for the church, and after approval from the management group, will seek a revised tender from Laing, the contractor that originally put in the best tender. Listed Building Consent has still not been approved for the windows. It is likely that due to bats, all other work on the church will not be able to start until October 2011.
- A number of successful public events were held in January including a community moss walk (22nd January; 11 attendees), a lichen education event (10th January; 13 attendees) a geological talk (28th January; 19 attendees), a geological tour of Applecross peninsula (29th January, 13 attendees) and a weekend training workshop on bronze age building techniques (15th & 16th January; 31 attendees). The latter was arranged as a precursor to the building of the round house. In addition, three special separate events were organized for the primary school related geology, moss and lichens.

- Six people participated in the first drystone dyke course between the 20th and 26th January. Led by the master dyker Seumas Campbell from Uig, Skye, this beginner's course was aimed at teaching essential construction skills with a view to attendees attaining the Drystone Walling Association (DSWA) Initial/LANTRA Level 1 Certificate. A number of suitable sites for the course were suggested to Seumas after discussion with crofters, the Trust and the Community Council, with the final selection made by him based on the needs of those participating. A number of the holes in the Culduie dykes were repaired, with the broken walls at the public toilets and close to the White Gate also rebuilt during the five day period. An examination date for certification (which has to be separate from the course) has been scheduled for the 19th March. Due to many of the participants being busy with other work during the summer months, the next dyking course aimed at attaining DSWA Intermediate/LANTRA Level 2 will take place in the autumn.
- Work has begun on the second ALPS newsletter which should be ready for printing by the 20th February.
- A response has been received from Historic Scotland (HS) related to the earlier enquiry about the potential scheduling of the hebridean barns. HS seems to consider that they are of national importance and hence worthy of scheduling; however, because of an accelerated programme to review listings on which they have already embarked, this is seen as a low priority. The response was surprising given that we were given a strong prompt to go down this route. It has been suggested that we attempt to secure a building repair grant, but have been warned that the form is problematic and the process fraught with uncertainty.
- Work has continued on the de-stumping Smiddy Wood. Scottish Woodlands have asked if more money is potentially available to improve the on-ground conditions of the compartment behind Smiddy Cottages before planting. Such money would have to come from ALPS contingency. Smiddy Wood is on the agenda for this meeting and clearly needs further discussion and agreement before further decisions are made.
- A report has been written based on the responses to the fuelwood survey. It is proposed to release the findings of this report in the next ALPS newsletter.
- A meeting was held with Angling Society on Tuesday 1st February to discuss plans for Milton Loch. Research is being undertaken on the best means of controlling rushes, with advice sought from RSPB and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV). The slow infilling of the loch is of concern. Rushes were formerly cut at the site. Further information will be sought on historical management techniques.

ALPS Events planned for February 2011

- **Deer management and reforestation in Scotland: lessons learnt from Creag Meagaidh and Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserves.** Peter Duncan, Scottish Natural Heritage. 24th February. 7pm. Applecross Community Hall.