



## **Management Group Meeting Minutes**

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June, 7pm, Estate Office, Applecross House**

**Present:** Archie MacLellan, Chair (Applecross Trust), Owen Kilbride (Archaeological Society), Alistair McCowan (Historical society), Derek MacLennan (Bealach group), Alasdair Macleod (Community Council), Mike Summers (Applecross Crofters), Gill Fairweather (Walks and Traditional crafts group), Tom Kilbride (co-opted member), Jacqui Liuba (co-opted member), Mary Gibson (adviser), Gordon Cameron, Sam Bridgewater, Elodie Chopin.

**Apologies of absence:** Lorna Lumsden (Applecross Trust) attended the meeting in part by video link.

The minutes of the MG meeting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2011 were approved by all present and will be made available via the ALPS notice board and the website.

### **Updates**

SB provided a brief update on progress (available as a separate update).

### **Minutes**

#### **Interpretation**

Discussion during the meeting focused primarily on the draft interpretive plan received from Verity Walker (*Interpretation*). MG expressed concerns about the length of the document, preferring a shorter and more objective result. AM, TK, JL and AMc also stated that the document should be condensed and factual with all subjective and individual 'illustrative quotes' removed. It was also agreed that any comments/information that could be related to known individuals should be deleted. However, in broad terms the group was in general agreement about the individual themes and messages, although it was voiced that although suggestions were welcome, nothing specific (in terms of actual sites and media) should be explicitly written into the plan at this stage. It was agreed that the group would collate their thoughts and provide feedback to SB within a week; SB to attempt to collate and synthesise it into a consensus document. SB reminded the group that Verity had been contracted to help write a plan, and not to implement it, and that they have the power to delete/change anything. DM raised the matter of the Gaelic policy, and said he would be discussing this direct with Verity. MG highlighted the fact that despite showing some weaknesses, the conclusions written in the document were good and the plan would only need refining, to get rid of its irrelevant content. SB highlighted the need to move forward quickly on certain aspects of interpretation due to the limited timescale of funding from certain donors. The Bealach feature was pointed out as the most urgent. The group generally agreed that the sketches submitted by SB for an interpretive low drystone wall was a good starting point for further discussion. Examples of interpretation styles at Beinn Eighe were shown to the group, some of which (e.g. carved stones/benches) were judged to be in keeping with the peninsula. AMc stressed the importance of not turning Applecross into a West Coast 'Benidorm' and that having a low sympathetic footprint was essential.

## **Smiddy Woods**

Scottish Woodlands work at Smiddy Wood was discussed. There was a general feeling that this has been a problematic project. The area at the base of the slope has now been sown with grass seeds to create a grassland area, but rolling has not been possible in many areas due to the softness and unevenness of the ground. OK raised the issue of potential damage done to Achincork during raking and associated burying works and expressed concern that one of the underground culverts may have been impacted, although the extent of damage is not clear. SB said that Bruce Taylor (BT) was aware of the sensitive area prior to works and had reported that this issue was discussed with the sub-contractor. It was agreed that this was a failure in project management both by Scottish Woodlands (as main contractor) and also ALPS, and that greater care has to be taken with all other work to ensure further archaeology isn't damaged. SB expressed concern about the rather nebulous costs of the budget and agreed to clarify all costings (past and projected) with BT. TK informed the group that Les Bates might be able to provide five hundred trees (rowan, berry and nut trees, etc) to be planted in the 'food forest' area.

AM provided an overview of progress on the Gateway Woodlands project and initial outline plans provided by BT. Although the group could see the potential economic attractiveness of chipping all trees on site before transportation, pointed out that this form of fuelwood was useless for the local community, as no residents are equipped with chip burners. Thus, it would all be for export out of the area. AM and SB reassured the group that at present Scottish Woodlands are only investigating what options are available for restructuring compartment 8 on an economic basis. Provision of roundwood could also potentially be included. SB raised the issue of procurement and that due to the potential size of the project, the funders would demand any contractor selected to undertake work should be chosen through an open tender process.

## **Regeneration by Venture**

SB stated that the project, as originally written in the development phase needs to be considered again to check that it is still considered a priority for the main project partner Venture Trust. SB thought it likely that the project would need some refining with VT, and could perhaps be strengthened by the addition of other project partners. He also pointed out that there is considerable scope for forestry training under the project, with ERDF a potential co-funder. OK and GC expressed an interest in creating a mountain bike trail and wondered whether this could be made part of it. SB agreed to contact Angus of VT in the first instance to see what aspects of the project are still of interest to them and what role they would like to have.

## **Other matter arising**

Next MG meeting will be held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July.