



Management Group Meeting Minutes

Monday 9th January, 7pm, Estate Office, Applecross House

Present: Archie MacLellan (AM), Chair (Applecross Trust), Alistair McCowan (AMcC) (Historical Society), Gill Fairweather (Walks and Traditional crafts group) Tom Kilbride (co-opted member), Mike Summers (Applecross Crofters), Alasdair Macleod (AMac)(Community Council), Jackie Liuba (co-opted member), Sam Bridgewater, Elodie Matthews. Murdo Duncan MacRae (Camusterrach clerk), Duncan Murchison (Culduie clerk), Duncan Fraser (Toscaig clerk)

Apologies of absence: Derek MacLennan (Bealach group), Gordon Cameron (Heritage Manager), Owen Kilbride (Archaeological Society), Mary Gibson (adviser), Lorna Lumsden (Applecross Trust). Uisdean Ferguson(Milton clerk)

South Coast Deer Fence

SB and AM introduced Kevin Ronaldson, the appointed fencing contractor, to the crofting clerks present. KR has started at Toscaig and is now working his way North using a Swedish machine to transport material. A helicopter lift is planned on 18th-19th January to transport materials for Culduie and Camusterrach but might have to be postponed depending on the supply of materials. SB asked about the timescale of the job. KR confirmed a four to five months timescale before completion, going progressively from South to North, unless the steelwork ordered was delayed, in which case Milton would be the next working area after Toscaig. No difficulties had been encountered with the nature of the ground yet. KR stated that he is happy to strip the old fence and keep it in bundles and coils to be collected by interested parties. The clerks stated that they would like to keep any old gates. DM asked about keeping the old fence in place in some parts. KR agreed that it might be beneficial but not feasible in the least accessible parts. DM and KR to discuss and finalise the number of gates for the Culduie section.

AM informed the clerks about the payment system required by the CCAGS grant.

MDM raised the question of timing of fence works which might occur in the lambing season. The issue is to be discussed by KR and each clerk when more accurate dates are known for the timing of works in each township.

Habitat improvement

AM reminded the group of the importance of habitat improvement with the SCDF area in the HLF grant conditions. He advised of the possibility of applying for a CCAGS grant for capital works (fencing, drainage, ditching, reseeding) or for setting up SRDP schemes for biodiversity. Bracken

control is one of the crucial elements in any CCAGS application and could take place in July, especially if using Azulox. AM reminded the group that the product needs to be used before the end of 2012. Any applications through SRDP must be applied for before the end of March 2012. AM suggested that the different townships gathered to discuss their needs and whether possible biodiversity schemes could be set up. Collective applications would have a stronger chance of funding. GF enquired about another source of funding for more horticultural projects. SB and AM to look into the options. It was agreed to set up meetings on a township basis to review interests in habitat improvement.

Interpretation

DML informed the group that he had been approached to collaborate with one of the potential contractors tendering to design interpretive leaflets and booklets associated with ALPS. SB informed the group that three tenders had been received, based on the specification provided, and circulated a report on the tenders. Valerie Hodgkinson put in the lowest tender and SB advised the group to therefore favour her tender as she had a strong portfolio and sufficient experience to undertake the work. According to the specification, the appointed designer will provide new maps for walks leaflets as well as specific trail booklets. SN reminded the group that receipts for some aspects of this work had to be received and submitted to funders by mid February. In response to OK's question related to the content of the leaflets, SB confirmed that text would be supplied to the designer by the ALPS group.

Dyking tenders

SB reminded the group that both Bealach dykes and Smiddy dykes contracts had been advertised. Unfortunately, because of bad weather conditions, the site meeting for the Bealach dykes had had to be postponed several times and at present not all interested contractors have had an opportunity to view the work. For the Smiddy dykes, contractors had a site meeting and seven tenders had been submitted. The two lowest tenders (exactly the same) were provided by Geoff Walker and Darren Jones. SB explained that DJ was local to Applecross and had been trained through ALPS, having attained Level 1 DSWA certificate and completed a Level 2 course (examination pending). The work of GW was known to all as he has worked on the Bealach. There was considerable discussion on the merits or otherwise of employing someone inexperienced which was considered risky. However, the support of local employment was seen as beneficial. As they provided the lowest tenders it was finally agreed to split the contract between DJ (120m) and GW (170m), with the contract to DJ conditional on being advised by the master dyker Seumas Campbell from Skye during the first week, with a repeat visit a week later to highlight issues on quality should any arise, and on completion to the satisfaction of the board of the first 20m.

Other matter arising

SB asked the permission from the group to go ahead with the production of the Bealach and Beechwood seats. Once all the final amendments to the text are in, it was agreed to continue implementing these projects.

SB informed the group of the high costs for the proposed Smiddy path (Smiddy Cottage to Keppoch), and associated difficulties (existence of stumps). It was agreed to by all present to put all other path works proposed under the Archaeological Trail (other than this section) out to tender at this stage, and to reserve judgment on the Smiddy leg until such time as a clearer idea on the Milton to Street path has been achieved. It was generally agreed that if such a path was possible, it would be an excellent legacy for ALPS.

The date of the next meeting will be Monday 6th February.