

## ALPS update for Management Group 18th July 2011

- After several delays in finalising specifications, and a further one week's requested extension from short-listed contractors, the deadline for tenders related to the restoration of Clachan Church is Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July. Assuming costings are within budget, it is hoped that a contractor can be appointed during July, with work starting as soon as statutory permissions are granted. Planning Permission, Scheduled Monument Consent, Listed Building Consent and Building Warrants have all been applied for. David Somerville (architect) has received comments from the building control department. They are looking for some changes e.g. intumescent paint on the new timber linings amongst others, and he is currently responding to these requests. David has assured us that he is vigorously pursuing Planning Permission with the Highland Council. Other permissions related to Historic Scotland and NHM (bat license), can only be applied for once planning permission is granted. Not all work will require a bat license. The Scottish Lime Centre visited Clachan on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July to take lime samples for analysis, and an initial bat breeding survey and report has been completed.
- Path work has progressed well along the Beechwood path (Coal Shed-White Gate), with the entire line now open and the majority of drainage issues resolved, including the particularly problematic boggy northern end. Work has now begun on building the bridges (x 3) and removing temporary culverts over streams before crusher dust will be added and the path line rolled for a second time. Some work has taken place on landscaping. A chipper will be brought in to tidy up the felled trees/branches of the northern section. All permissions are now in for the Clachan path (Scheduled Monument Consent was required), and work will begin on this during the week of the 18<sup>th</sup> July under a watching brief led by archaeologist Cathy Dagg. Once completed, the contractor will also make all necessary drainage repairs to the Cruary-Heritage Centre path, including the fitting of water bars, replacing surface material where lost and use a vibrating roller to consolidate all material. An analysis of costs undertaken during the week of June 27<sup>th</sup> 2011 indicates that the project is currently within budget.
- The first Bardic School was successfully held between the 27<sup>th</sup> June and the 1<sup>st</sup> July with a superb programme of Gaelic poets and singers appearing throughout the week: Aonghas Dubh MacNeacail, Rody Gorman, Maoilios Caimbeul and Meg Bateman. The Applecross Bardic School took William Ross and his love poems as a theme, with Pàdraig MacAoidh also speaking about the life of Sorley MacLean. This week-long event has also seen the Venture Trust successfully used for a residential public event for the first time. Gaelic classes were held throughout the week and there was a unique focus on the Applecross Gaelic dialect. The organizers are still in the process of analysing attendances, but ca. 20-30 people attended each event (minimum of two events per day). Feedback of attendees has been very positive. A number of lessons were learnt by the organising group, and it is hoped that a second school can be held in 2012. The aim of this component of ALPS is to have a self-sustaining economically sustainable school by the end of the initiative.

- The Forestry Commission approved a £2,800 grant application on the 12<sup>th</sup> July to help support the September tree craft festival and Carnoch hazel woods and round house project.
- A book keeping course explaining the broad principles of accounting systems including financial statements, cash flow forecasts, balance sheets etc. was held on the 11<sup>th</sup> July in Lochcarron and attended by seven people from Applecross, including Elodie Chopin. It was hoped that this course would help local societies involved in ALPS and local businesses to feel more confident about managing accounts and events.
- Following feedback from the Management Group, a heavily edited draft interpretive plan was returned to *Interpretaction* at the end of June. This has since been further edited and returned to the ALPS Management Group for final comments, together with a first draft of an audit of existing interpretive features (Appendix B). It is hoped that a final consensus document will be ready by the end of August and that then the interpretive element of ALPS can proceed in earnest. An initial meeting has been arranged at the top of the Bealach on the 14<sup>th</sup> July to discuss what interpretation (themes & media) might be appropriate at this site.
- Work has continued on the Carnoch Iron Age roundhouse. All but one of the foundation pillars are now in place with the roof beams now being sourced.
- The first bat watch (led by Steve Austin) was held late evening on the 30<sup>th</sup> June, with six people attending in addition to Steve. Those present enjoyed using a bat detector and learning about the bats of Applecross. A second event has been planned for the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> July. A dragonfly identification event was held on June 13<sup>th</sup>. This was a poorly attended event (two only from Applecross/Kyle area), although a further four participants were involved for part of the day. Those present had the chance to see 10 species either as flying adults or nymphs. During the day three new species were added to the 10km x 10km grid square NG74 Odonata list taking it to 12.
- Snedding of the first section of Torgarve plantation of the archaeological trail has been completed and an attractive line has emerged showcasing an abandoned township and iron age fields. Further snedding will be undertaken during July/August. It is anticipated that the entire line will be open by the autumn 2011.
- The first event of the Community Archaeological Training Programme has been organized and will take place on the weekend of the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup>. The two-day training session will focus on identifying and recording corn kilns, typical, but under-recorded features of post mediaeval farming and living on the west coast. Training will include an introduction to archaeological recording of structures, using taped offsets, identification of new features in the field and reporting new archaeological sites to the Highland Historic Environment Record.
- The Guided Walks programme has begun, with two themed Heritage and Natural History walks organized to date. There has been mixed uptake of these, and those involved will be

meeting in mid July to discuss how to improve marketing. With the beginning of the holidays it is hoped that there will be greater attendance for the remainder of the summer.

- Specifications have been drafted for the northern-most Hebridean barn, and Highland Council planning approached for permission to consolidate the structure on a like for like basis without the need for listed building consent. It is hoped that work can commence towards the end of August.