

ALPS Update

Management Group Meeting 25th August 2010

Although we have only been in Applecross for only two weeks Carolyn, Cassia and I feel extremely happy here. Everyone has made us feel very welcome, and we've enjoyed meeting loads of people. We would like to thank Mike in particular for helping us to settle in the Bunkhouse and set up the office and showing us the ropes of Applecross which has made these first few weeks so much easier. Thanks also to The Trust for providing interim office space to Carolyn to enable her to complete an existing work contract whilst we are without telephone/internet at home.

Re. ALPS, work since starting on the 3rd August has primarily involved:

- Meeting the management group and other members of the community to learn more about Applecross, the background to the ALPS project and to understand the opinions/aspirations of the partners involved and the dynamics between them.
- Setting up of a functional office with furniture (to arrive in two weeks), computers, software, internet (access only after week 1), email accounts and the establishment of a BT phone line.
- Meeting with the original development officers (Hazel & Helen) for their advice, and transferring their hard copy files to Applecross office.
- Meeting with LEADER and ERDF representatives in Inverness to understand the processes that need to be established to meet the reporting requirements of all primary funders. HLF staff were met before departing Edinburgh.
- Preparing recruitment advert for the Heritage Manager post (advertised locally since last weekend, and appearing in the next edition of An Carrannach, West Highland Free Press and Press & Journal). Interview date scheduled for 6th October.
- Organising an Open Meeting for the community to discuss ALPS (22nd September).
- Organising a crofters' meeting to help drive forward the proposed south coast deer fence (30th August).
- Organising meetings with local SNH staff (scheduled for 30th August), and meeting with Geoff Walker (Council) to discuss the work scheduled for Phase 1 Bealach Dykes (due to start mid-late September whilst other essential road works undertaken).
- Meeting +/- regularly to discuss finances/work on the broch project with Owen (the only 'active' project to date).
- Reading through and familiarizing myself with paperwork related to the project.

With the late recruitment, ALPS is already behind schedule and the priority is to regain the initiative. Regarding the bat survey of Clachan Church scheduled for this autumn, I have spoken to Steve Aston (who did the original brief inspection) and SNH (Kinlochewe) and a summer dawn survey (May/June) that was originally requested to look for probable maternity roosts. Thus, we have missed the boat for this year and their advice was that it was not worth attempting a survey so late in the season as another would be required again next summer. It is highly likely that if we schedule in a dawn survey for May next year, a license will be required for us to do work (should we have the funds), and that the stipulations on the license will require that work is only done from October time onwards, with a bat worker needing to be present if the roof is altered. In the interim, if it is decided that any urgent remedial work should be done, then we should contact them.

Priorities for the end of August and September:

- Easing Elodie slowly into her job and bringing her up to speed on what we need to do.
- Provide admin. support as required for Owen for the forthcoming broch conference.
- Work with Owen & Martin Wildgoose to finalise presentation plan for broch (possibly further informed through discussions at conference).
- Obtain quotes for ca. 125 metres of broch path construction & necessary landscaping/presentation work (with final stage probably likely to start in October after the conference), with final decisions on work probably constrained by budget.

Try and catch up on project delays (ca. three months behind schedule), notably by:

- Putting the main paths/thoroughfares work out to tender (Coastal Trail etc. etc.).
- Putting the lime survey of Clachan Church out to tender (currently waiting for advice from David Somerville).
- Putting the Evaluation Plan out to tender (a project bottleneck).

- Putting the ALPS website out to tender.
- Putting the Community Interpretation Plan out to tender (another project bottleneck).
- Liasing with Archie/Derek and meeting with Commun na Gàidhlig and Bòrd na Gàidhlig to try and find the final outstanding money for the Bardic School, with a view to contracting a co-ordinator in October/November..
- Liasing with Gill and Leslie to start organising walks/festival programme for 2011.
- Pursue further funding opportunities for the Clachan Church restoration (Phase 2) (probably via LEADER), and dependent on the outcome of the crofters meeting, with CCAGS for the south coast deer fence. Also, liase with Bruce (Scottish Woodlands) re. SRDP funding for Smiddy Wood (in progress).
- Submit first reports/claims to HLF/LEADER/ERDF (early September)

Concerns:

- Presentation/path budget of broch very tight.
- Accommodation availability for participants of all larger planned events (e.g. Bradic school). Ideally events would be 'out of season'

Other points:

- Have booked holiday between 24th September and 4th October. Deadline for Heritage Manager application is the 22nd September. There should be enough time to sift through/collate post applications with Alistair and other interview panel members before departing. Elodie to liase with Alistair on interview invites (venue Heritage Centre). ERDF, LEADER and HLF reports to be submitted before departure.
- With the Management Group's approval, I would like to help establish a 'community forest discussion group' with a view to understanding/quantifying (in the first instance) current/projected energy/fuelwood demands and relating this to the available forestry resource. Although strictly speaking this is outside the remit of ALPS, forestry (and in particular fuelwood) has come up consistently in discussions as a theme of interest/concern. There could be significant potential linkage with various components of ALPS and this aspect of forest use is perceived as important by members of the community I have spoken to, especially with regards to potential counterpart funding from ALPS coming from timber extraction.