

Annual report 2007-8

Introduction: The third full year of the Trust has been one of steady development and progress towards our current targets.

Land purchase: The final acceptance of the definition of the parcels of land and mineral rights purchased in early 2007 is still awaited from the Keeper of the Records in Glasgow. Further contact from the Community Land Unit (CLU) confirms that, whatever uses the Trust may have for the land it now owns, the Trust must retain control of the land, and may not dispose of it unless the Trust is prepared to return the grant. The Scottish Land Fund no longer exists, so it is unclear to whom the grant would need to be returned. CLU have appointed an aftercare officer, but we still await a visit from him to discuss the options and flexibility available to the Trust.

Heritage Interpretation Project: The panel designs were finalised in the autumn of 2007, and the finished panels were manufactured and eventually delivered before Christmas 2007. During 2007 a crew of volunteers, some 20 strong, put much effort into building slate plinths for most of the panels, and the Trust is especially grateful to Brian Heaton, Phil Robertson and Robert Benn, supported by Peter Hooper, for the care and expertise with which they completed these plinths to a high standard, worthy of the panels they now support. All the panels have now been installed to form a valuable resource for the community and visitors alike. The Trust also recognise the excellent quality of the design of these panels by Steve Pardue of Differentia Ltd. As well as Heritage Lottery (HLF) funding, the other major funders were Whelk/Leader+ and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the latter being expert advisers for the natural history content of the panels. The Trust is grateful to all concerned in these outside bodies for the support they have provided.

The benches and picnic tables, forming part of this project, have been made and installed by Dave Ritchie, and will hopefully be used during the coming summer. Finally, the walk leaflets, guiding visitors around the island, have been produced by Lasta King and Rosy Barlow, and their delivery from the printers is awaited in time for this year's walking (and cycling) visitors.

Building Project: The Trust's architect, Shauna Cameron, has continued to progress the design of the building intended for the engine shed site. Preliminary drawings were prepared, and a community consultation meeting held in November 2007 to enable comments from the community to be fed into the more detailed design stage that followed. The architect took away a good collection of comments, all of which have been duly considered. The plans have now progressed to details for the interior layout to meet the requirements of both the History Group, for exhibition and storage space to meet the requirements for museum accreditation, and the Trust, for the café and other facilities required in the building. The Directors look forward to receiving detailed building plans ready for submission for planning permission later this year.

Funding: The directors are taking a cautious approach to renewed grant applications for funding the building project. Four Members of the Trust are currently on a Business Planning course provided by the Scottish Government-funded project, Skills Building for the Future (SBFF). SBFF has enabled both Trust directors and History Group committee members to develop a wide range of new skills through numerous courses over the past three years. Other courses attended have been provided by the Development Trusts Association, Scotland (DTAS) of which this Trust is a full member, and one particularly valuable course was based at the Cassiltoun Project, near Glasgow, on the topic of Managing a Building Project. That project cost £5 million, took 10 years to complete, involved 23 funding bodies, and much volunteer fund-raising from a large community. And it was led by a team of professionals! We have a copy of their Business Plan to study and use to inform ours.

The present estimate of our project building costs is about £300,000, on top of which will be fit-out and furnishing costs for everything from café and kitchen to museum cases and shelving. Much on-going volunteer fund-raising will be needed to match the grants we hope to achieve.

The Nadair Trust, which has been the agent for HLF grants across the islands for several years, end this role in July, as their Lottery funding finishes. However Nadair will continue to provide support to local community trusts such as ours, though the support will have to be funded through successful grants applications. The directors have decided to work in co-operation with Nadair in making grant applications for the building project, and anticipate this relationship will reduce the heavy workload by volunteers that has been the norm for the past three years. The directors are particularly grateful to Julia Galbraith for the valiant work she has done in that time as the Trust's grant application manager.

Nadair have a new Chief Executive, Carlo Beuger, with whom we already have a close working relationship, and we look forward to an ongoing successful future partnership with Nadair. The directors recommend members to visit the Nadair website at www.nadair.org.uk.

Environmental Improvements: There has been no progress on these during the past year. Any serious investment on the Trust's part will probably need to be funded through grants for a wider project, for which environmental improvement forms a supporting part. We may have to await a change of mind from government concerning grants for such work.

Sub-groups: Sub-groups of the Trust now number three – the History Group, Playing Field Committee and First Responders. Other groups are welcome to approach us to achieve the benefits of being part of a charitable organisation. Insurance cover for the Trust is becoming a major expenditure, as it has to cover all the sub-groups and their possessions. Each sub-group is expected to cover the cost of insuring their possessions.

The Kilchattan Kirkyard book published by the History Group in early 2007 has been quite a success, selling about 130 copies to date, and still receiving orders. The book was entered into the national ENI Geological Challenge Awards 2007, and was well received as an unusual contribution, linking geology to local history.

The Trust printer has received even more intensive use in the past year. The History Group has been joined as a major user by the Scottish Centre for Geopoetics, with their annual gathering here in May 2007, involving a large number of the community in their activities. They received SNH funding to produce boxes of material created as a result of the weekend, most of it about Luing and its wonderful natural environment, and these materials have been printed on the Trust printer – a large undertaking.

External relations: Besides membership of DTAS, and our relationship with Nadair, a number of other organisations exist with which we need to relate. Last year we signed up with ABSEN (Argyll and Bute Social Enterprise Network), and the Chairman attended one of their meetings in early 2008. ABSEN covers both voluntary and non-voluntary enterprises, and ran a successful 'Dragon's Den' style conference in Dunoon in February, but unfortunately the Trust was not able to participate on that day, and win some of the prize money totalling £9000!

In November 2007, the Scottish Islands Federation (SIF) held its inaugural meeting on Mull. Your Chairman and Secretary attended for the Trust, and the Chairman has found himself on the steering committee. SIF will aim to provide a national voice for Scottish island communities, especially at government level. A similar and very successful organisation already exists for island communities in Ireland, though the Irish situation is not entirely comparable with the Scottish scene. It remains to be seen how successful this venture will become.

The Trust Board: At the last AGM one director was re-elected, leaving three vacancies unfilled. Jane MacLachlan agreed to re-election for one more year, but will not be standing this year. If the two retiring directors do stand again and are re-elected, there will still only be five directors. This is not an operational problem for the Trust – work can be done by Members who are not directors – but it does mean we are not building expertise as directors across a wider section of the community.

From the Chairman: I still feel the Chairman should change every three years, but I was unable to persuade other directors to consider taking over last year. My hopes remain...

Finally I must again thank all those involved in the work of the Trust in what has been another year of steady achievement:

- fellow directors, who have met less often this year – well-deserved relief!
- and of course Members and Friends for continuing support.

Alastair Fleming

1 April 2008



Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 22 April, 2008, Cullipool Hall, 8.00 pm

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Chairman's annual report
3. Treasurer:
 - (a) Draft accounts for past year
 - (b) Membership subscription for 2009/10
 - (c) Account reference date
 - (d) Accountants
4. Election of
 - (a) Directors
 - (b) Membership Secretary
5. Any other relevant business

From the Trust Rules:

- 11 (b) Any resolutions of which due notice has been given and brought to the meeting by the Directors. *No such resolutions have been proposed by the Directors for this AGM.*
- 11(c) Any other business brought to the meeting and notified to the Chairman in writing before the start of the meeting, at the discretion of the Chairman.