



Annual report 2008-9

Introduction: In the Trust's fourth year the rate of progress has increased significantly. The building project is approaching the crucial stages of the creation of the business plan and submission of a planning application.

Land purchase: The final acceptance of the definition of the parcels of land and mineral rights purchased in early 2007 has still not come from the Keeper of the Records in Glasgow, but there has been a message that the matter is at long last being dealt with.

Heritage Interpretation Project: The interpretation panels have had their first full year in place, and visitors are frequently seen studying them, and touring the collection with the aid of the walk leaflets.

The walk leaflets were made available in the summer of 2008. All 1000 of them were taken up by residents and visitors by the end of the year, and the Trust is ordering a new print run for this year. However, the cost of these will have to be met by charging for them.

Building Project, Development Planning Stage: In the autumn of 2008, the Trust applied to Investing in Ideas, part of the Big Lottery Fund, which provides funds for developing ideas for new projects. An application for the maximum grant available, £10,000, proved successful in early 2009. With an estimate of the costs of this stage being around £25,000, an application for match funding was made to the Argyll & the Islands LEADER scheme in February for £12,236, and approved at the end of March. The balance of the costs from the Trust will mainly be in the form of volunteer hours.

The concept of the project has been enlarged to make the scheme more attractive to residents, visitors, and potential funders, at a time when funding is becoming much more difficult and small local heritage schemes are no longer a priority for funders. The new concept, The Atlantic Islands Centre, will provide a 'gateway' experience of the culture and heritage of the Argyll islands, and encourage them to visit not just Luing, but other islands too. Luing heritage will be a key part, exemplifying the interactions of Sea, Land and Sky with the people that make the Argyll islands such wonderful places.

The exhibition area will also serve as a venue for arts events, with a planned seating capacity of up to 100. A gallery above the café/restaurant will be used for art exhibitions. The scope has been extended by a request from The Scottish Centre for Geopoetics for inclusion of a separate research and study room which they would rent from the Trust.

The Trust's architect, Shauna Cameron, appointed in 2006 after competitive tender and approved at a community meeting in Spring 2007, has prepared more preliminary drawings for the building, and a further community consultation meeting was held in February 2009. Now that the funding for the development planning stage is in place,

she and a ground engineer recently visited the site and she will produce the detailed plans for planning permission later in 2009. The Trust commissioned a report on waste water disposal from the site in 2008.

The project now has important backing from Highlands and Islands Enterprise as an 'account managed project', and part of this involves the provision of 6 days consultancy towards the Business Plan. Following this, the Trust will need to appoint a consultant to carry out market research to inform the Business Plan, with the completed plan submitted to the Trust by September 2009.

Funding: The Nadair Trust, which supported many projects in this area over many years, including ours, was sadly 'mothballed' during 2008.

HIE has 'adopted' our project, providing ongoing advice and support, and this is also now available from LEADER, to whom we will apply again in due course for a grant for the building. The Lottery funds are in a difficult phase, not just because of the Olympics, but also delays in opening the next round of Big Lottery Funding.

Environmental Improvements: A major breakthrough occurred in Summer 2008, when as a result of an approach to Argyll & Bute Council by the Community Council, and subsequent conversations between a council officer and Cullipool residents, ABC funded a contractor to carry out shore defence works above Cullipool beach, using slate from the old heaps in Cullipool quarries provided by the Trust. As a result the defences against Atlantic Storms have been much improved, hopefully for many years to come.

Sub-groups: Sub-groups of the Trust remain at three – the History Group, Playing Field Committee and First Responders. Other groups are welcome to approach the Trust to achieve the benefits of being part of a charitable organisation.

Grow Your Own Project: Fruit trees are being planted and vegetables will be grown in a polytunnel on Trust land at the back of Cullipool to provide nourishing food and help reduce our food miles.

External relations: The Trust was represented again at the Development Trusts Association 2008 conference held in St Andrews. Links with the Scottish Islands Federation continue, though the latter are finding it even more difficult than the Trust to obtain funding to become an effective organisation.

The Trust Board: At the last AGM one director (Jane MacLachlan) retired, one (Alastair Fleming) was re-elected, and one new director (Norrie Bissell) was elected, leaving three vacancies unfilled.

From the Chairman:

I must thank all those involved in the work of the Trust in what has been a busy year: fellow directors, for the work they do behind the scenes, and of course Members and Friends for continuing support.

John Robertson

16 April 2009

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