

The History of the Atlantic Islands Centre Project

2003 Autumn/Winter Two community consultation meetings formed a proposal for an integrated project:

- A home for the Luing History Group, with museum, archive, display areas, family history research area, café, offices.
- A welcome to visitors, with heritage interpretation panels around the island, walks and signage.
- Improvements to the environment involving old quarry restoration and access, picnic area, beach improvement, sea erosion protection.

2004 Spring Initial project design; bid for Heritage Lottery Fund grant within Nadair programme.

2004 October HLF grant was awarded to cover the whole project at 40% funding.

2004 - 2005 Spring Isle of Luing Community Trust formed, inaugural General Meeting in May 2005.

2005 June – 2006 February

- Land and mineral rights valuations obtained. Negotiations for the land purchases.
- The Senior Planning Officer raised problems over sites at risk from coastal erosion, and advised use of the Engine House site.
- Applications made to Scottish Land Fund (SLF) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) for land purchase grants. They required some re-valuations which resulted in one of the potential land parcels not being proceeded with.

2006 April SLF/HIE grants were awarded for land purchase from two separate landowners. One was a 'remnant estate' of the former quarry owner around Cullipool conservation village, the other was the old quarry Engine House, with adjacent land.

2006 June Difficulties in obtaining matching funding for the building project caused much delay and Nadair recommended separating the heritage interpretation and environmental improvements from the building project with the HLF grant being split. This was approved by HLF with matching funding awarded by Whelk Leader + and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).

2006 July Approval of business plan after lengthy discussions with Nadair adviser.

2006 August The plans to build a Centre on the Engine House site were put to a large community meeting and endorsed overwhelmingly, with only one vote against being registered. This decision is binding on the Trust and directors as the land purchase funding was provided on this condition by means of a legal Deed of Restriction. The appointment of an architect was also approved.

2006 October – December Land boundary problems delayed progress considerably but the Trust solicitor obtained time extensions and disputes over titles were eventually resolved.

2007 January The solicitor required 94 title deeds for land previously sold to residents of Cullipool and others. Wednesday 31 January: approval for the funding for land purchase granted.

2007 February Time to use the Nadair/HLF grant ran out, and the offer was withdrawn. The directors were advised to start again with a new HLF bid.

2007 April – December Efforts concentrated on the heritage interpretation and environmental improvement project. The 14 finished panels were designed and delivered at the end of the year and slate plinths prepared for their installation throughout Luing in 2008.

2007 November First draft plans from architect for the building on the Engine House site presented for community comments at a public meeting.

2008 February- May We learned that there would be no further Nadair funding programmes.

2008 July Nadair 'mothballed'; at their closure event, it was learned that HLF view was that Argyll had had its share of HLF funding, so a purely heritage-focused project would not receive funding. The directors revised and broadened the project to enable application to non-heritage funders such as Big Lottery, so the idea of an Atlantic Islands Centre (AIC) was developed.

2008 August Consultations with the Luing History Group, and a detailed document about the Centre was produced as a result. Article published in the Luing Newsletter of Winter 2008.

2008 October – 2009 February The development phase of the project was designed and costed, leading to a grant application to the Big Lottery Fund Investing in Ideas scheme (grant received in February), and to Argyll & The Islands LEADER (European Funding).

2009 February The detailed work of defining the revised AIC project was described at a community consultation meeting. The main points raised concerned the roof, waste water disposal and car parking, but no objections were raised to the concept itself, so the directors proceeded to take the project forward.

2009 March – April LEADER funding approved in March, and HIE considered the revised Centre project for one of its 'account managed projects'.

2009 May Trust AGM: a summary of the revised project and its development phase included in the Annual Report, and approved without comment by members present.

2009 April – November Development phase taken forward – visits to other island projects, clearance of the ground for the ground engineer, further architect's plans, and further consultation with the Luing History Group, including meetings with Argyll & Bute Council's museums adviser to develop a consensus on the design and use of the Centre. HIE provided consultancy for the Business Plan.

2009 December Architect's plans were presented at a consultation meeting at which many issues were raised including an offer of a new site at Fladda.

2010 January – February The directors considered at length the issues raised at the December meeting and tried to progress the Fladda site option, but despite requests no written offer was received. In addition the Trust was informed that no funding would be available to develop this option and it could not be completed within the extended grant deadlines.

2010 March Modified plans prepared with reduced length and height of the new wing of the Centre, and a dedicated space for the Luig History Group. Resolution to proceed with these to planning application and subsequent build was put to all Members of the Trust. Out of 77 Members, 63 voted to proceed with the planning application and subsequent build, 3 voted against and 3 registered abstentions; results were declared at a Members' meeting.

2010 July Planning application submitted.

2010 October Presentation of project to the Lorn Area Committee of Argyll & Bute Council.

2011 January Public planning application hearing by Argyll and Bute Council Planning Committee in Cullipool Hall, with presentations by supporters and opponents of the project. Application approved unanimously by the Planning Committee.

2011 March – June Early funding applications unsuccessful.

2011 October Meeting in Dunoon with representatives of potential funders convened by MSP Michael Russell.

2011 November Meeting at Scottish Parliament with Lottery funders. The Trust accepted as an Associate Member of Museums Galleries Scotland. An amended version of plans for the Centre developed to reduce project costs.

2012 February -March Big Lottery Funding application granted Stage 1 approval, and target of fast track to Stage 2, submitted March, with the help of financial consultant provided by BL.

2012 April ERDF application submitted under Priority 3 as part of Argyll and Bute Council's Community Planning Partnership package.

2012 May BL grant of £754,000 awarded; HLF application unsuccessful.

2012 August CCF application approved for grant of £72,000. Centre Planning Group formed – volunteers from the community to plan and organise events for the Centre

2012 September ERDF application re-submitted under Priority 2 following advice.

2012 October ERDF application approved for £361,000.

2012 November Funding for the construction project in place; open information evening held in Cullipool Hall to explain what happens next. Over 40 attended.

2012 December HIE to match-fund the Project Development Manager with BL - now full-time for 19 months. Advertisements placed.

2013 January Building warrant application submitted. PQQ notice to potential contractors..

2013 February Interviews held for post of PDM – Andrew Pinkerton appointed.

2013 March Andrew Pinkerton takes up PDM post.

2013 April Scoring of PQQ returns.

2013 May Tender documents issued to selected contractors, bids returned by end of May. Building warrant issued.

2013 June Contractor selected, selection process approved by funders, all legals completed.

2013 July Contract award letter issued to MacLeod Construction. Site handed to the control of the contractor for the period of construction.

2013 August MacLeod Construction commence work on site

2013 September Major rock fall into quarry while foundation excavations were progressing. Work stopped on safety grounds while problem assessed and solution proposed. Quarry face examined by a geotechnical

2013 October Geotechnical survey and project engineer produce a solution involving rows of minipiles to stabilise the ground and prevent further movement.

2013 November Architect amends plans to bring the engine house away from the quarry edge.

2013 December Non-material amendment to plans approved by Council Planning Department.

2014 January Construction work re-commences – foundations laid.

2014 February Foundation slab completed.

2014 March Steelwork completed

2014 April Leach Colour Ltd appointed to create and produce interpretative material for the Centre fit-out. On-going work continues until early 2015.

2014 June Structures reach roof level. Change of slate specification applied for to enable guarantee for roof.

2014 July Slate cladding completed on Engine House.

2014 August Windows and doors installed. Underfloor heating pipework installed

2014 October Slate specification change approved by full Planning Committee.

2014 November Interviews for the post of Centre Development Manager (CDM)

2014 December Trading Company revised structure agreed

2015 January Gales delay progress on slating the roof. Trading Company starts up.

2015 February Laura McIntyre takes up CDM post for 3 years. Slating work on roof of building completes.

2015 March Water-source heat pump system commissioned. Leach Colour install interpretative material inside the Centre.

2015 May Contractors complete the building and site construction work, with handover of keys. Internal fit-out of kitchen café, retail area, exhibition areas and Local History Gallery. Gradual opening of Centre with members of Trust and History Group, followed by first public use.

June 2015 Formal opening.

Isle of Luing Community Trust directors