

4th Meeting of the Community, Economy & Volunteering Thematic Working Group

13 December 2016 14:00hrs, Castle Douglas Town Hall

Minutes

Attendees

Ed Forrest	Southern Upland Partnership
Elizabeth Tindal	Freelance Ranger
John Blaikie	Outdoor Access Forum
Karen Morley	DGC – Countryside Services
Kerry Monteith	DGC - Employability and Skills
Lyndy Renwick	Forestry Commission Scotland (Chair)
McNabb Laurie	Galloway Glens Development Officer
Tom Henry	DGC - Ranger Service

1. Welcome & Apologies

- 1.1 McNabb welcomed all to the meeting. Lyndy Renwick was the group's designated chair, therefore also sitting on the partnership board, but for simplicity it was agreed that McNabb would act as chair of this meeting.

2. Minutes from last meeting

- 2.1 The minutes from the 3rd meeting of the group, in September 2016, had been published on the Scheme website, as would minutes of this meeting in due course. No queries were raised.

3. October 2016 Board Meeting

- 3.1 McNabb gave an update on the discussions at the October Board meeting. Board meeting minutes would be published on the Scheme website once approved at the next meeting, but in summary:
- 88 Project ideas received
 - Approximately 50 were asked to proceed into development
 - Very few projects were simply advised that they would not be developed, usually seeking to harness the enthusiasm and the project idea to blend with others under consideration
 - Board members very thankful for the time put in by working group members in considering the projects, it had been very helpful

3.2 All 88 project ideas had received a letter in response. Those to be developed had completed an application form by 02 December 2016 and were now being compiled for consideration by the Board in January

4. Commissioned Studies – Update

4.1 Karen gave an overview of the studies commissioned and progress to date, summarised as:

Study	Undertaken by	Update
Landscape Character Assessment & Historic Environment Audit	Northlight Heritage	Commissioned November 2016. Work getting underway in earnest January 2016, including public engagement. Estimated completion Easter 2017.
Natural Flood Management Feasibility Study	Natural Power	Work well underway to identify areas of the valley that could support a natural flood management project. Estimated Completion Easter 2017
Arctic Charr Reintroduction & Migratory Fish feasibility study	Galloway Fisheries Trust with University of Belfast	Arctic Charr underway, initial meetings held. Migratory Fish feasibility study is under review due to the limitations in place.
Loch Ken Fishery Study	Galloway Fisheries Trust	Work well underway, public events held. Estimated completion: Summer 2017, although initial findings expected March 2017.
Education Programme Development	Mary Smith	Assessing the 'Education' projects currently received and the gaps in what is being considered to provide a coherent programme for the delivery phase.
Access Audit	D&G Council	Public meeting held. Mapping & landowner identification being undertaken. (Note: Incorporates Loch Ken long distance walking routes)
Interpretation Study	TBC	TBC
Promotion & branding feasibility Study	Coigach Consulting	A short brief, exploring branding opportunities for 1)Galloway Glens 2)Glenkens, 3)Lower Dee, 4)Loch Ken and 5)The Galloway Glens as part of the Biosphere. Estimated completion January 2017.
Heritage Skills, Training & Economic Opportunities Audit	North of England Civic Trust	Draft report received.

A number of comments were raised by members, including:

- The Landscape Character Assessment will need to be appropriately branded to encourage people to participate and to state what they see as making their landscape unique and special.

- The Natural Flood Management project should output working models to illustrate the action of the water based on different weather events and to quantify the benefits of potential natural flood management schemes.
- Loch Ken Fishery Study: if initial outcomes do show a positive position for fish stocks then this positive message should be pushed by all stakeholders. The promotion of this might form the substance of a project supported through the scheme.
- Access Audit: Agreed it was vital to pull together the different access proposals into a coherent programme.
- Promotion & Branding: To include the Galloway Glens area as a destination within the Biosphere
- Heritage Skills: It was noted that the recent Merrick pathway had to be contracted to companies from Northern Scotland as the skills couldn't be found locally.
- It was queried whether input from the Council's planning department could be included in the heritage skills programme as they could be involved in anticipating building practices that would be supported or required in coming years.

5. EoI Projects Under Development

Reviewing the projects under consideration and the suggested groupings, members raised a number of points including:

a. *Accessing the Galloway Glens*

- The proposed Canoe Trail is better referred to as 'Dalry to Tongland'
- The spin off benefits from the canoe and white water kayaking projects include potential for car uplift services, accommodation etc.
- Crossmichael to Castle Douglas Cycle Path: the multi-use aim, while acknowledged to significantly increase costs, should not be dismissed as it would be unfortunate to complete a project that excluded any group. Other members felt that with reasonable control measures, the path could be made accessible to all.

b. *Wildlife & Landscape of the Galloway Glens*

- Black Water of Dee restocking project should include a strong public access element due to proximity to Raiders' Road – perhaps stretching to a land management plan for the Raider's Road area?
- It was agreed that contact would be reinitiated with Keith Muir at FCS.

- Muirdrochwood project should not just look to perfectly replicate the commercial forestry practices but build on these to incorporate sustainable and ground breaking approaches – i.e. continuous cover.
- The Peatland Connections project was reminiscent of a previous Biosphere project that employed a storyteller + puppet – further details can be sought if necessary.

c. Heritage Hubs in the Galloway Glens

- Concern was raised over the number of cafés proposed and whether this impacted sustainability, however this was partially countered by others who said that each café should be unique and provide their own offering.
- It was noted that Castle Douglas was currently missing from the proposed ‘heritage hub’ trail. It was hoped this could be addressed through some proactive work by Scheme staff, or perhaps using Threave?

d. Education in the Galloway Glens

- Acknowledging the education programme development that was underway, members did want to stress the need for ‘life-long learning’, and the demographics of the area that meant older age groups should be emphasised in the education plans.

e. Visiting the Galloway Glens

- Much discussion took place about the App idea – with concern raised about the potential cost and the need for a clear remit – i.e. should it be personalisable to your available time or areas of interest. Would it be consistently updated?
- GG22 and GG15 were clarified as providing information for visitors and locals respectively. Members felt these should either be pursued separately (or combined) as a chain of information hubs, making sure there was standard benefit for all areas of the Galloway Glens. The Glasgow Smiles Champions scheme was mentioned as a comparator.
- The Dark Sky Visitor Centre was supported by members but it was asked whether the applicant could seek to make contact with the dark sky rangers and other spin off activities as there could be some mutual benefit that results.

f. Understanding the Galloway Glens

- The Raiders Road deserted settlements project could form part of the aforementioned Raider’s Road landscape project, including the Black Water of Dee project.

- The DAMP project was noted and supported by members, with queries raised about whether it could focus on the issue of land use change, and incorporate the land use surveys undertaken of the area in the early 20th century.
- The Gaelic Place Names project caused much discussion, with members agreeing with comments made at other meetings that it shouldn't just focus on the Gaelic place names but should look at the origin of place names across the Galloway Glens. It was looking increasingly like this project had two main parts – a scholarly element and a general public engagement part.

6. Project Omissions

6.1 Members wanted to add to the list of project omissions:

- Reopening of Tongland Power Station visitor centre.
- Composting toilets – they do provide a credible alternative in 'off-grid' places and the lack of facilities is a limitation for anyone leading groups of visitors. Members asked that this be looked at again in light of these concerns.

7. Galloway Glens Overview

7.1 Members noted the overall budgetary considerations of the Galloway Glens Scheme.

7.2 The only comment made was on the suggested staffing and the vital importance of the financial control. An 'administration assistant' had been suggested in the paperwork but members recommended this be amended to 'finance officer'.

8 AOB

8.1 McNabb thanked members for their input, which would be very useful in the run up to the Board meeting in January 2017.

8.2 The meeting was brought to a close at 16:30hrs.

4th Meeting of the Cultural & Built Heritage Thematic Working Group

13 December 2016 09:30hrs, Castle Douglas Town Hall

Minutes

Attendees

Alistair Livingston	Local History Enthusiast
Anna Campbell	Carsphairn Heritage Group
David Bartholomew	Minister/Local History Enthusiast
David Devereux	Local History Enthusiast
Iain Howie	Stewartry CVS (Chair)
John Malcolm	Historic Environment Scotland
Karen Morley	DGC – Countryside Services
McNabb Laurie	Galloway Glens Development Officer
Richard Polley	National Trust for Scotland
Ted Cowan	Local History Enthusiast

1. Welcome & Apologies

1.1 McNabb welcomed all to the meeting. Iain Howie was the group's designated chair, therefore also sitting on the partnership board, but for simplicity it was agreed that McNabb would act as chair of this meeting.

2. Minutes from last meeting

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3. October 2016 Board Meeting

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3.2 All 88 project ideas had received a letter in response. Those to be developed had completed an application form by 02 December 2016 and were now being compiled for consideration by the Board in January

4. Commissioned Studies – Update

4.1 Karen gave an overview of the studies commissioned and progress to date, summarised as:

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Heritage Skills, Training & Economic Opportunities Audit	North of England Civic Trust	Draft report received.

A number of comments were raised by members, including:

- Milestones still existed along the Eastern side of Loch Ken – of note for the access audit but also the Landscape Character Assessment
- Landscape Character Assessment should directly contact bodies such as the Glenkens Story and Kirkcudbright History Society

- It was queried whether Robin Ade was involved in the Fish studies. He has been in contact with the Scheme but would be contacted to make use of his knowledge of the area's fishing.
- It was stressed that the School of Heritage Gardening be included in discussions surrounding the heritage skills.

5. EoI Projects Under Development

Reviewing the projects under consideration and the suggested groupings, members raised a number of points including:

a *Accessing the Galloway Glens*

- It was noted that The National Trust for Scotland held a number of Douglas Watson's paintings which could be made available to support the Watson Bird Centre Project
- The heritage angle of being able to use Carlingwalk should not be overlooked. As well as leisure benefits, this was the canal created to extract fertiliser from the loch and was of significant heritage interest
- The Dalry Burns walk might be better widened out to include the surrounding villages and their connection to Burns.

c *Heritage Hubs in the Galloway Glens*

- The Parton Motte might be able to be cleared, with match funding from HES
- The Parton slate quarries were also notes as a site of interest which could benefit from the proposals in Parton.
- Members felt the covenanter history should be acknowledged further, perhaps with a dedicated hub in the chain of proposed heritage hubs.
- Covenanting history can be quite complex to interpret, especially by contemporary standards. Covenanting history therefore benefits from the use of audio-visual equipment
- Roots tourism appears to have been overlooked in the current heritage hub proposals – this should be stressed to all project partners as it is a growing sector
- It was acknowledged that having a project under consideration at this stage did not mean necessarily that it enjoyed 100% community support. It was agreed that Scheme staff should endeavour to clarify to the Board any concerns they may have encountered regarding projects under consideration.

- Efforts should be made to control signage and quality standards of interpretation used as the broader branding opportunities would only work if all sites were up to a required standard.
- It was noted that Castle Douglas was currently not represented in the suite of potential 'Heritage Hubs'. Scheme staff should leave open every possibility to include a proposal, either now or as the scheme develops.

e Visiting the Galloway Glens

- Connections should be developed with the Heritage Tourism course at Crichton Campus
- Members felt the Dee Treasures project had the potential to encompass a number of different interests and information sources – e.g. a covenant data layer on the app.
- #GG202 and #GG15 were felt to be truly effective as part of a broader chain of information hubs.
- It was felt that all projects involving visitor information must include both Kirkcudbright and Carsphairn to acknowledge the Scheme area.
- It was commented that volunteers are vital for the effective and sustainable operation of many of the discussed projects, but the use of volunteers came with its own challenges.

f. Understanding the Galloway Glens

- The Forbes collection in Falkirk was mentioned as a good source of maps and archive material
- After much discussion, members felt that the GG Scheme shouldn't focus on Gaelic Place Names, but should focus on 'The Origin of Place Names'. While this was the applicant's area of interest, it was felt to be too restrictive.
- Members also considered that perhaps the place name work should seek two discrete outputs, to satisfy 1) the academic interest and 2) a wider general public interest.
- Satisfying the former point might increase the cost of the project but would prevent it from being another amateur piece of work with little weight. For this reason it was vital that the academic community be included in its undertaking. Members were heartened by the reported interest of the University of Glasgow.
- Members suggested that Simon Taylor be included in discussions, and Alan Jones from Gatehouse.
- It was suggested that the specific point of 'change of place names' be considered as this could be the most interesting, tracking the changes in cultures and influences.
- D&G Ethnology project may have equipment and expertise to assist with the oral history project

6. Project Omissions

- 6.1 Members noted that work was ongoing to make sure any potential omissions were included in discussions.

7. Galloway Glens Overview

- 7.1 Members noted the other likely costs that need to be considered when planning the overall delivery stage budget.

8 AOB

- 8.1 McNabb thanked members for their input, which would be very useful in the run up to the Board meeting in January 2017.
- 8.2 Iain echoed his thanks to members for all their support through the year and brought the meeting to a close at 12:00hrs.

4th Meeting of the Landscape, Wildlife & Land Management Working Group

14 December 2016 10:00hrs, Castle Douglas Town Hall

Minutes

Attendees

Adrian Pringle	DGC - Landscape Architect
Andrew Jarrott	Forestry Commission Scotland
Chris Rollie	RSPB
Emily Taylor	Crichton Carbon Centre (Chair)
Jackie Graham	Galloway Fisheries Trust
Karen Morley	DGC – Countryside Development Officer
McNabb Laurie	Galloway Glens Development Officer
Oscar Yerburgh	Landowner
Peter Norman	DGC - Biodiversity Officer

1. Welcome & Apologies

1.1 McNabb welcomed all to the meeting. Emily Taylor was the group's designated chairman, therefore also sitting on the partnership board, but for simplicity it was agreed that McNabb would act as chair of this meeting.

2. Minutes from last meeting

2.1 The minutes from the 3rd meeting of the group, in September 2016, have been published on the scheme website, as would minutes of this meeting in due course. No queries were raised.

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Heritage Skills, Training & Economic Opportunities Audit	North of England Civic Trust	Draft report received.

A number of comments were raised by members, including:

- The Landscape Character Assessment should make use of DAMP assets – maps etc.
- Newton Stewart Museum has 7000 slides of Historic Galloway, could be of use for the LCA?
- Arctic Charr – there needs to be clear understanding of why the population failed initially.

- Arctic Charr – members suggested the project consider the recent efforts to reintroduce Trout to the Fleet for information.
- Loch Ken Fishery Study – If fish populations are doing well then the focus of activity may be more on improving access to the loch to increase the angler opportunities.
- The Promotion and Branding feasibility study should acknowledge ‘landscape’ in line with the overall Landscape Partnership
- RSPB offered the kite trail visitor statistics which could support the Stage 2 bid. This offer was gratefully received.
- Members were thanked for their input into the heritage skills study.
- Heritage Skills: Demand is key – it is imperative that people are not trained or encouraged into roles that are not sustainable.

5. EoI Projects Under Development

Reviewing the projects under consideration and the suggested groupings, members raised a number of points including:

a. *Accessing the Galloway Glens*

- It was queried whether the Castle Douglas Bird Hide, recently vandalised, could be considered as part of the Castle Douglas footpaths project. This was not included in the current project and land ownership and access arrangements would need to be clarified/formalised but would be explored outside the meeting with RSPB who have recently been approached by an interested group.
- Regarding the canoeing projects, members suggested the project align with the recent work to create canoe access points across the Lake District

b. *Wildlife & Landscape of the Galloway Glens*

- The volunteer element to the proposed black water of dee project was noted.
- Discussion took place about SPEN plans for the new pylon route through the area, the implications this could have on projects under consideration, both potentially negative and positive (i.e. access tracks). It was noted that Scheme staff were meeting SPEN in the New Year.
- It was suggested that this category be better named “Wildlife & Habitats of the Galloway Glens”

d. *Education in the Galloway Glens*

- Members suggested that the heritage skills work should be closely aligned with the education programme, and there should be a focus on traditional skills and crafts.

- Members reiterated the point made at the other working group meetings that the education programme should not focus solely on school age children.

6. Project Omissions

- 6.1 Members noted the list of perceived project omissions at present. It was suggested that Peter Ross, from the Outdoor Access Forum, could provide useful insight into the forestry project.
- 6.2 For the volunteer surveying skills, members stressed that it was important to have a clear outcome for participants, who wanted to be reassured that the work they were doing was useful. Therefore this element might be better aligned with another project under consideration – e.g. Black Water of Dee project.

7. Galloway Glens Overview

- 7.1 Members noted the overall budgetary considerations of the Galloway Glens Scheme.

8 AOB

- 8.1 McNabb thanked members for their input, which would be very useful in the run up to the Board meeting in January 2017.
- 8.2 Emily drew the meeting to a close at 12:30, stressing that if members wanted to feed anything directly back to the partnership board then they should let her know.