

Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership – 6th Partnership Board Meeting

29 March 2017, 14:00hrs at Castle Douglas Town Hall

Partnership Board Attendees:

Sir Alex Fergusson	Chairman
Teresa Dougall	National Farmers' Union, Scotland
John Dougan	Forestry Commission Scotland
Ed Forrest	Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere
Patsy Gilroy	D&G Council – Councillor
Helen Keron	Glenkens Community & Arts Trust (GCAT)
David McNay	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
Chris Miles	Scottish Natural Heritage
Lyndy Renwick	Working Group Chair (<i>Community, Economy & Volunteering</i>)
Mary-Ann Smyth	Crichton Carbon Centre

Apologies:

Christine Clarke	Third Sector, Dumfries & Galloway
Emily Taylor	Working Group Chair (<i>Landscape, Wildlife & Land Management</i>)
Graeme Dickie	Scottish Power
Iain Howie	Working Group Chair (<i>Cultural & Built Heritage</i>)
John Raven	Historic Environment Scotland

Officers in Attendance:

Simon Fieldhouse	D&G Council, Countryside Services
McNabb Laurie	Galloway Glens Development Officer (Minutes)

1. Welcome + Apologies

- 1.1 The Chairman called the meeting to order and apologies were noted from the above.
- 1.2 John Raven had provided some comments in his absence and the Chairman would ensure these were included in discussion.

2. Minutes of last meeting

- 2.1 The minutes from the 5th meeting were unanimously approved and would therefore be published on the scheme website accordingly.

3. Partnership Board Actions Table

- 3.1 McNabb updated members on the actions outstanding and updated the table attached to the bottom of these minutes.

4. **Governance**

a. **Partnership Agreement**

- 4.1 With great excitement, McNabb was able to advise that all member comments had been incorporated, D&G Council Legal Team amends had been addressed and the partnership agreement had therefore been circulated for approval – marked as ‘*Partnership agreement 20170329 – FINAL*’
- 4.2 Members were happy to consent to this. The only query was from David McNay as SEPA’s legal department were still undertaking a final review – although comments had been raised and incorporated previously so this was hoped to be a formality.
- 4.3 In light of time passed, it was confirmed that the agreement would be signed in its current form by all members willing, in the hope that this could be completed by SEPA after the meeting (when the signatures of the absent members would also be sought).

b. **Risk Register**

- 4.4 McNabb circulated a copy of the risk register, giving members an overview of contents.
- 4.5 A couple of amends were suggested regarding scheme publicity and also better highlighting change in risk, i.e. whether each risk had increased or decreased.
- 4.6 McNabb would incorporate these amends after the meeting and this would remain under review.

c. **Development Stage Finance Overview**

- 4.7 McNabb circulated a spreadsheet giving an overview of the development stage finances, welcoming any queries.
- 4.8 Members noted that, with HLF consent, some additional work had been commissioned to assist the development work but that the Development Phase was still looking at a projected underspend, which was a cause for comfort.
- 4.9 Scheme staff were working closely with HLF to keep this under review and incorporate any additional work as would assist the scheme.
- 4.10 All work had been subjected to relevant value for money processes – e.g. quotes received or full tender process. While acknowledging that the best submission for the Scheme must be chosen in each case, members felt it would be interesting to calculate how much work had

been contracted out to D&G companies. **ACTION: Clarify the proportion of Development Stage Activity let to D&G businesses.**

d. Communications Update

i) Social media

4.11 Members noted the ongoing social media activity.

4.12 With the projected underspend in mind, and feeling a strong aim of the development phase was to build the social media presence to support the subsequent delivery phase, it was suggested that Staff consider outsourcing the social media activity to a professional. This has been done, for example, on the Wild Film Festival with very good results. **ACTION: Staff to consider outsourcing Social Media to a professional support organisation.**

ii) Newsletter

4.13 The first e-newsletter had been distributed and the paper version was under design.

4.14 It was agreed that members would publicise the GG Newsletter through their own networks.

5. Commissioned Studies

a) Landscape Character Assessment & Historic Environment Audit

5.1 The constituent reports had been received in draft format, with the consultant (Northlight Heritage) now working on an overarching document to give an overview of findings and specifically feedback the content of the consultation efforts.

5.2 The consultation events (the 'Sights & Sites' programme) had been well attended overall and initial results are that there has been a lot of input from local people on what they see as their 'landscape' and what makes it special.

5.3 Suggested project ideas were included in the reports received and these would be considered further and returned to the Board for consideration as appropriate.

5.4 The draft reports themselves would be circulated around the internal steering group for comment and all Board members for comment/information and potential onward circulation in their networks.

b) Education & Heritage Skills Steering Group

- 5.5 The first meeting had been held on 27 March. Particular thanks to Helen and Iain for attending as Board representatives.
- 5.6 The meeting had been fairly strategic, setting the tasks out for the consultant (North of England Civic Trust) to proceed with drawing up a programme of work that will be of educational or training benefit to people of all ages throughout the delivery stage.
- 5.7 It was intended that by the next meeting, some of this detail could be presented to Board members for consideration.

c) Arctic Charr Reintroduction Feasibility Study

- 5.8 It had been hoped that by this meeting, a clear position would have been provided on whether Arctic Charr could be reintroduced to Loch Grannoch. Sadly, due to a number of factors, this decision point has not yet been reached, partly due to the amount and complexity of consultation in the Arctic Charr community.
- 5.9 Galloway Fisheries Trust, leading on the feasibility study, is working as quickly as possible to analyse data collected. The Translocation license hasn't yet been sought but it is hoped that the benefit of these extensive consultation efforts will be that the members of the Translocation panel have already had a chance to raise any concerns before submission.
- 5.10 The focus is currently on water quality, particularly pH. Detailed readings are currently being considered but initial findings are that pH is within the limits of acceptability but slightly lower than ideal. Examples of population in equivalent pHs are being sought.
- 5.11 Members sought assurance that Scheme staff were working with parties involved to get the quickest possible results.
- 5.12 Separately, and to address any concern that the project is just going to benefit the enthusiasts, HLF were currently considering an additional package of works (costing a max of £2,000) whereby Galloway Fisheries Trust develop their connections with the local schools, making use of classes of biology students to encourage a 'citizen science' dimension.
- 5.13 Members noted that while the initial work could appear to benefit only enthusiasts, the long term benefits were much broader.

5.14 David McNay mentioned that SEPA might have historic pH data for the loch, which could be made available if necessary. McNabb had assumed this had already been sought but would ensure this was the case.

d) Loch Ken Fishery Study

5.15 The initial project suggestions presented to the January meeting (e.g. Fishing platforms, biosecurity measures and fish spawning habitat work) were being developed into detailed projects that could be included in the Stage 2 bid.

5.16 The Study as a whole would run to August 2017 to capture 12 months of data.

5.17 McNabb and Karen Morley were attending a meeting, organised by Chris Miles, with SNH Board members on 18th March to introduce the Scheme and specifically the Loch Ken Fishery work.

e) Natural Flood Management

5.18 McNabb gave a detailed update on work in this area to date, including a meeting with landowners in the Carsphairn area and culminating with attendance at the Carsphairn Community Council meeting earlier this week.

5.19 The modelling was complete and focus was being targeted to upstream and tributary areas as this was where the potential benefits from Natural Flood Management measures were proportionately higher. This week the consultants (Natural Power) were visiting, with landowner consent, the sites involved and 'ground-truthing' the model's findings.

5.20 Teresa Dougall had attended the landowner meeting in Carsphairn, which was greatly appreciated, and was able to give an update from her point of view.

5.21 McNabb circulated a map of the model's initial findings and much discussion took place including:

- The merits of the project must be advertised strongly to landowners – e.g. reduction in bank erosion, increased biodiversity, land only impacted in times of flood etc.
- Staff should seek the most ambitious projects possible but due to the nature of this approach, a project should not be dependent on 100% or maximum buy in.
- Perhaps projects would develop from an initially low remit as buy in increases over time

- SRDP funding stood out as a match funding opportunity.

5.22 Teresa felt the Carsphairn landowner meeting had gone well but at times had veered onto historic arguments outside the scope of this study.

5.23 McNabb assured members that he was working really hard with the consultants to be able to progress this topic and would be able to report considerable progress at the next meeting.

f) Access Audit

5.24 McNabb gave an overview of ongoing access discussions and aspirations, separate from the discrete projects being considered as part of the Scheme already.

5.25 Discussion took place about the speculatively mentioned *Glenkens way*, a 20 mile off road route from New Galloway to Carsphairn. Members felt this tied in with a number of broader themes and looked forward to being able to consider it in more detail following further design and landowner contact etc.

6. Commissioned Studies

a) Budget Overview

6.1 Members noted the proposed delivery stage budget resulting from decisions made at the January meeting.

6.2 The HLF grant of £2.7million was currently £250,000 overcommitted but this was not felt to be a cause for concern by Staff due to the assumptions and development work still to take place.

6.3 This HLF grant could only be spent on a maximum 53% intervention basis, across the scheme as a whole.

b) Feedback from January Board meeting

6.4 All projects had been advised of the decisions made at the January Board meeting

6.5 Member's attention was drawn to the two canoeing projects – the long distance canoe trail and the white water kayaking project. As agreed at the last meeting, the Chairman and McNabb had met representatives of Scottish Power to discuss their concerns.

- 6.6 Scheme staff would continue to work with Scottish Power to explore every opportunity to progress these proposals in a way that absolutely met their concerns but also addressed the public interest and clamour for formal canoeing developments.
- 6.7 McNabb thanked the Chair for his input on these discussions.

c) Project Scheduling through the delivery phase

- 6.8 Members reviewed the first attempt at project scheduling through the delivery phase.
- 6.9 It was noted that no 'Heritage Hub' projects had been pencilled in for activity in year one of the delivery phase. McNabb advised this was due to match funding requirements but members asked if this could be explored if at all possible as otherwise this programme had no activity in year one.

d) Heritage Small Grants Scheme

- 6.10 Discussion took place about the proposed small grants scheme, with comments including:
- 6.10.1 Concern about specifying a maximum project cost, with the suggestion that if the grant from GGLP was 'small' then it met requirements
- 6.10.2 This was countered by the suggestion that the Small Grants Scheme should be focussed on small projects, as a point of distinction but also to ensure the GGLP input was a significant percentage of each project.
- 6.10.3 It was mentioned that projects under consideration in the main programmes were sometimes small and had been limited to 40% intervention – it was important that these not be unfairly treated if they could have received more funding through the Small Grants Scheme.
- 6.10.4 Members wanted to consider criteria that would be used on projects. While it was a great opportunity not to be too prescriptive, the scheme would have to be advertised with a clear focus and criteria/requirements of projects.
- 6.10.5 On this point it was agreed to be better to be too tight in requirements initially and then loosen criteria over time, rather than the other way around.
- 6.10.6 It was acknowledged that the scheme would have to be under regular review by the full board.

6.10.7 It was suggested that the proposed 'panel of five' be considered from a skills/sectoral angle to make sure e.g. cultural heritage had a representative

6.10.8 Wording of '*Normally*' and '*There is a preference for*' was suggested to give the decision makers some flexibility but also advertise to applicants the hopes for the scheme.

6.10 The Chair thanked members for their input into this discussion and asked the topic to be considered further by Scheme staff in light of this and returned to the next meeting

ACTION: Small Grants Scheme proposal to be reviewed and returned to next meeting

7 Broader Scheme Issues

a) Landscape Conservation Action Plan

7.1 The current headings proposed as part of the LCAP, the governing document for the delivery phase, was circulated, with comments welcomed. These included:

7.1.1 It was suggested that additional focus be given to the experience of living or working in the area – i.e. through the eyes of a resident.

7.1.2 It was also suggested that the potentially negative angle regarding historic departure and demographic challenges be presented in a balanced way

7.1.3 Farming could be a core focus of the 'current landscape' section, potentially as much as Hydro Scheme etc.

7.1.4 The presence of the Biosphere and its ethos should be woven through each stage of the LCAP, with its role in the exit strategy of the Scheme.

7.1.5 It was stressed that the studies underway, particularly the LCA & HEA would directly influence the LCAP and that no assumptions should be made.

7.1.6 Members felt the current draft perhaps didn't acknowledge the need for sustainability and the schemes legacy as much as it could. These headings should be drawn through each stage of the document. The Helix project was mentioned as having a good legacy and long term sustainability plan.

7.2 McNabb thanked members for their comments and, while this was obviously still early on in its drafting, these would be considered further and incorporated where possible.

b) HLF Mid-Point Meeting

7.3 This had been deferred to 21st April. Ed Forrest had agreed to attend on behalf of the Partnership Board. The Chairman expressed his particular thanks to Ed for this.

c) Galloway Hoard

7.4 It was noted that the GG Scheme had taken a neutral position regarding the destination of the Hoard, sought by Dumfries & Galloway Council and the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh.

d) Other Landscape Partnerships

7.4 Members were assured that efforts were ongoing to keep in contact with other Landscape Partnerships, particularly those at a similar stage of development.

7.5 McNabb and Karen Morley were scheduled to visit Assynt in April, in part considering the results of the recently completed Coigach-Assynt Landscape Partnership.

8 Next Steps

8.1 The main steps in the lead up to submission of the stage 2 application on 11 August were presented to members for noting and comment.

8.2 Discussion took place about how best to review the LCAP and this would be considered further as things progressed.

9 AOB

9.1 Chris Miles advised that due to his upcoming retirement, this would be his last meeting.

9.2 The Chair thanked Chris for his input and was comforted to know that his replacement was due to attend the next meeting to retain SNH's involvement and support of the Scheme.

10 Date & Time of Next Meeting

10.1 McNabb would circulate a Doodle poll ASAP to arrange the next meeting (on or around 31 May).

10.2 The Chair brought the meeting to a close at 16:30hrs.

Outstanding Partnership Board Actions

Action Ref	Issue	Who?
2.5.3	Partnership Agreement to be signed by Partners	ML
3.9.4	Recording of Partnership Board attendance Attendee time to be investigated	ML
5.4.3	Potential new working group members to be presented to the Board	ML
5.5.2	Board member volunteers sought for the meeting with HLF	ALL
5.5.17	Newsletters to be drafted and circulated, with hard copies going to each Community Council and other distribution opportunities.	ML
6.4.10	Clarify the proportion of Development Phase expenditure going to D&G businesses	ML
6.4.12	Consider the appointment of a Social Media consultant	ML
6.6.10	Small Grant Scheme detail to be reviewed and returned for consideration	ML