

HISTORIC RURAL SETTLEMENT GROUP

Minutes of Meeting Held on Tuesday 01st March 2005 At 2pm, NTS Offices, Hutcheson Hall, Glasgow

Present: Derek Alexander (NTS)
John Atkinson (GUARD, Chair)
Steve Boyle (RCAHMS)
Piers Dixon (RCAHMS)
Sarah Govan (HS)
Alex Morrison (GUAD)
Donna Stewart (HS, Minutes)
Richard Tipping (UoS)
Robin Turner (NTS)

- 1. Apologies** Malcolm Bangor-Jones (HS)
Chris Dalglish (GUARD)
Althea Davies (UoS)
Lesley Macinnes (HS)
Aonghus MacKechnie (HS)
Rod McCullagh (HS)
Ian Shepherd (AC)
Jack Stevenson (RCAHMS)

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (29th November 2004)

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Matters Arising

The main action point relating to the production by AOC/Jura Consultants of another revised option for the *SRPP* had been completed.

4. Scotland's Rural Past Project Update

RTu informed the Group that all three draft reports for the project planning stage had now been received;

(a) The Project Context Review which puts the project in context through review of similar projects and engagement at a local level

(b) The Audience Development Plan which is a specific requirement of HLF projects to ensure that the project delivers benefits to the local community. The last workshop had taken place in January with a group from Loch Lomond to gauge the interest of new users in the scheme. JA requested a copy of the draft on CD.

(c) The preferred Option '2.5' discussed at the previous meeting, which consisted of four staff working for a period of five years with 0.5 staff dedicated to data verification and input at a cost of £1.2 million.

Feedback was required on the drafts within ten days. A claim would be submitted to HS for reimbursement of payment to AOC shortly thereafter.

RTu and SB had attended a meeting that morning with John Graham, Chief Executive, HS to pitch for HS funding for the project at a cost of £50K per year for 5 years. The meeting had been positive and the project seemed to fulfil the objectives of the HS Corporate Plan and recent quinquennial /stakeholder review. The Steering Group would meet with RCAHMS soon to discuss partnership funding of about £10,000 per annum and the possibility of RCAHMS taking the lead role in the project, which would also produce savings. A claim for the Project Planning phase would soon be submitted to HLF and advice would be sought at that time as to how best to progress the application.

SG reminded the Group that HS was currently reviewing its grants streams and their thematic priorities and this may have a bearing on the award of any HS funding and advised RTu to submit a formal request for a response. RTu reported that HS's relaunched Heritage Grants Scheme emphasised the importance of community benefits and although archaeology projects in the main may not fulfil this function, the *SRPP* seeks to promote community involvement and educate like other successful archaeological groups, for example, NoSAS. SG pointed out that the Museum of Country Life at Wester Kitchside had not been formally approached about the project and yet they could be a key player in the delivery of the project aims. DA announced that a new education officer had been appointed by the NTS who had an archaeology background and could also feed into the work programmes.

The date for the application for Stage Two funding would be 3 months after the Planning Group meeting on the 15th March (9.15 am, NTS, Charlotte Square). Drafts of the project documents were available for comment and would be modified before submission to the HLF. The HLF committee meet every 3 months and will give a final decision within 9 months of the application submission. Initial contacts with a Senior HLF Adviser had been favourable but the scheme in Scotland is currently 5 times over subscribed. Once submitted, the application would be placed in a queue for scrutiny by Anna Ritchie, the archaeology adviser, before a decision was made. It was noted that it was unlikely that the project would be on the ground before mid 2006. SB reported that RCAHMS was favourable but cautious about being the lead body and that current HLF RCAHMS projects could not be compromised. SG acknowledged that the more funding partners that were involved the more difficult the project would be to manage, however, she stressed that all funding avenues should be explored, for example, the Russell Trust. Even if bids to other funders were unsuccessful, it would show willing on the part of the HRSG and be viewed favourably by the larger funding bodies.

5. Discussion Group Meeting (14th May 2005)

SB advised that he hoped the next DG meeting would centre on an extensive township at Auchtavan (NO29NW 7) on the Invercauld Estate. SG had visited the site and reported that there were plans underway to restore part of the remains so initial contact with Ian Shepherd may be useful. It was noted that land-rovers may be required to ferry people to the site and that the estate factor, Simon Blackett, should be approached for permission to visit the site at an early date. SB and PD would do a reconnaissance tour of the site with timings the following week and report back. If unsuitable, the Mar Lodge Estate could be used as an alternative destination.

It was hoped that the actual discussions could take place in one of the two village halls in Braemar, though other alternatives were available. PD would provide a talk on the recent surveys at Strathdon and RTi on paleo-environmental issues. It was suggested that Ian

Shepherd, Ann Miles or Rita Calendar could advise on a local society who may also be available to give a talk. Other possibilities included Shannon Fraser or Ed Martin.

The details would have to be finalised by the beginning of April and posted on the website.

6. Future Involvement of HS in HRSG

SG reported that she was being seconded to another Heritage Policy post for an 18 month period and would therefore no longer sit on the HRSG. The Ancient Monuments Division was also about to be restructured as the result of a recent review and therefore future HS representation on the Group was unclear as three Inspector vacancies also had to be filled. Dr Ann MacSween, Senior Inspector of Ancient Monuments, would act as an initial contact until SG's post was filled, which would hopefully be by the middle of May. RMC and LM would no longer feed into the Group in their revised team structures but could feed into specifics if requested. Malcolm Cooper has been appointed as the new Chief Inspector for both Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Inspectorates and will take up the post on 04 April. It is unclear whether one or two deputies will assist the CI but the general trend is towards a unified Inspectorate. SG added that there was no guarantee that HS could continue to provide the secretariat for the Group in the future and reiterated that this role should be rotational. SG would continue to be the HS contact until 01 April when Ann MacSween, Senior Inspector of Ancient Monuments, would become the initial contact point.

7. Round Table Project Reports

- DA advised that the Ben Lawers project had entered its second last quarter. A full update will be given at the advisory meeting on 15th March.
- RTu reported that during the next field season a geophysical survey taken at 0.5 m intervals and a topographical survey would be completed of sites on St Kilda which would be important for other similar geological sites. He had also completed a comparative cultural landscapes study at the request of the St Kilda WHS Committee [A copy of the report has since been circulated].
- PD had just completed the draft for a publication on the recent surveys at Strathdon. It would be a large volume, similar in size to the Eastern Dumfriesshire volume and would hopefully be in print by the next financial year.
- SG told members that HS intended to visit 10 parishes in the upper Strathdon area as part of its bi-annual scheduling trip in response to the recent RCAHMS surveys. It was acknowledged that the issue of how best to protect MoLRS sites required further investigation. In response to queries, SG advised that the pilot scheduling program, which had been devised as part of a public consultation exercise, would run on a 30 year cycle and targets for the number of parishes surveyed would be set. Two trips to two survey areas would be carried out per annum but ad hoc scheduling would also still be possible in response to specific requests.
RTu enquired about whether a representative sample of MoLRS was recorded on the schedule. SG advised that the crucial measurement was national importance, remembering that scheduling may not be the best method of protection, particularly for large sites. She agreed to provide an update on the current stance. RTu suggested that a better mechanism may come under the new Council of Europe Landscape Convention for which DEFRA had already drafted a report. This sought to protect and manage commonplace sites in addition to designed landscapes, for example. It

was agreed that some management tools already existed for the management of such landscapes, for example, the Rural Stewardship Scheme.

SG agreed to draft up a list of MoLRS projects which had received financial support from HS in 2004-5. Additional funding had been made available at the end of this financial year to respond to the storm damage to archaeology on the Uists and Orkney. RTu suggested that details of all grant recipients should be posted on the HS website and will write to HS in this regard. It was acknowledged that some HS commissioned work was not always publicised or made available to third parties, for example, the moated sites project. SG agreed to notify the Group as to the whereabouts of this data.

- RTi reported on 8 radiocarbon dates which had been analysed from the Ben Lawers site. Other projects included a land assessment of the inner Solway Firth and potentially a mop up of the Time Team excavation at Roxburgh. A conference would be held on 12th November 2005 on the Roxburgh proposals in advance of works on site for which funding had still to be secured.
- AM contributed regularly to the bibliography on the website.
- JA reported on the dates received from two test sites at Kiltyrie. The site to the east of the turf mound recorded a date in the 13th Century and the hearth sample was from the 14th Century. It had also transpired disappointingly that the Tombreck homestead was Iron Age. Excavations had just been completed at a late 18/early 19th Century site near Linwood and the results would soon be available. GUARD had also recently tendered for the £500K 3 year field school project at Dun Eistean. The project would be managed by Mary Macleod on behalf of the Ness Community Group and will be part funded by HS and the HLF.
- CD reported through JA that the development phase of the website was currently being tied up and hoped that further funding would be available from HS in the next financial year. The name of the site had not yet been changed. PD suggested that the web group should have another meeting as he had put together some images for the site.

8 AOB

It was suggested that the following people should be approached about possible membership of the HRSG: Olivia Lelong; Heather James; Russell Coleman; and other representatives from outlying units.

SB reported that he had been approached by Mary Marshall from NoSAS to provide a training day for members of NoSAS in the Inverness-shire area. Although he could not organise a training day specifically for NoSAS, he would investigate possible sites in the area, possibly upper Strathnairn, for a future Discussion Group training day.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 24th May at 2pm in the Main Conference Room, Longmore House, Edinburgh.