

MEDIEVAL OR LATER RURAL SETTLEMENT WORKING GROUP

Note of meeting held on Thursday 22nd August 2002 in Glasgow University.

Present: John Atkinson (Glasgow University) (Chair), Chris Dalglish, Sarah Govan, Lesley Macinnes, Rod McCullagh (Historic Scotland), Alex Morrison (Glasgow University), Jack Stevenson (RCAHMS), Richard Tipping (Stirling University), Robin Turner (National Trust for Scotland) and Tim Yarnell (Forestry Commission).

Apologies: Malcolm Bangor-Jones (Historic Scotland), Donald Davidson (Stirling University), Piers Dixon (RCAHMS), Jill Harden (National Trust for Scotland), Ross Noble (Highland Folk Museum), Ian Shepherd (Aberdeenshire Council) and John Wood (Highland Council).

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced Chris Dalglish as a new member of the group. He confirmed that he had also approached Professor William Gillies, but had not yet had a response.

FESP Report

A copy of the recently published report on the FESP Project had been circulated with the agenda, and the Chairman formally passed on the group's congratulations to RCAHMS and Historic Scotland.

Discussion Group

SG reported on the Discussion Group meeting held in Biggar and Glenochar on 22nd June. Thanks were paid to Tam Ward who did a sterling job of leading the field meeting, despite dreadful weather conditions.

This meeting was not so well attended as the previous one in Newtonmore, although it was seen to be very useful by those who attended. There were fewer local group members, despite approaches being made to a number of organisations in the Borders area, but those who did attend seemed to find it useful. A number of possible factors were discussed, and it was agreed that a useful way forward may be to prepare an information pack for any local groups to organise their own meetings where this was seen to be appropriate.

A number of suggestions were made for the next meeting, which was provisionally set for 10th May 2002. The group agreed to explore the possibility of holding a meeting at Auchindrain, Argyll, which would form a centre for attracting a number of active local groups. A number of suggestions were made for the format of the day, and it was thought that the meeting could be based in Inverary in the morning, with a guided tour of the site by Alex Morrison and John MacDonald (Curator) in the afternoon. SG agreed to take this forward before the next meeting. It was also agreed that we should explore wider publicity for this event through the Society of Antiquaries newsletter and the HS Friends Magazine, among others.

Training Day for mapping and recording

SG reported that due to a number of logistical problems, the training day that had been proposed for the end of September was to be postponed until spring 2003. RTu and JS agreed to take this forward.

Conference Publication

SG reported that this publication was now nearing completion, and should be available before the end of October 2002. It would be A4 format, in the HS conference proceedings series, and it was likely that 1000 copies would be printed.

MoLRS Website

SG summarised the current position – a member of the Discussion Group, Katinka Stenthof, has offered to help in the design and maintenance of the website. This would be a paid service, but initial thoughts were that this would be at very reasonable rates. RTu reported that he and PD had discussed the construction of the site, and he emphasised that there ought to be some kind of ideal vision of what we want, even though the work would require to be phased in blocks of work. He felt that we should aim for monthly maintenance, at least in the short term.

SG gave a brief summary of the types of page headings that had been discussed (working group, discussion group (both with relevant papers), events, projects, links, who is involved). There was also some discussion about the appointment being that of a project manager, with responsibility for encouraging groups and individuals to submit information relating to on-going work in a standard format.

The meeting agreed that RTu/PD should meet with KS to move this forward. SG indicated that HS should be able to provide grant aid to the Working Group, although a detailed specification would be required for any grant bid. RTu agreed that a bid on behalf of the Working Group would be submitted by 1st October 2002.

In order for the Group to receive money, it was agreed that a formal treasurer would need to be appointed, and a bank account opened. It was agreed that Derek Alexander of NTS should be approached to join the group.

HS MoLRS theme proposal

SG explained that the HS themes proposal had still not been finalised. There followed some discussion of priorities within the field of MoLRS studies, and RTi pointed out that it was one role of the Working Group to try to clarify priorities in Scottish research. It was agreed that a further brainstorming session, building on the conclusions drawn from the meeting in June 01 should be held to try to identify c.5 'hot topics' as priorities. This would involve all those who are active in this field, and act as a form of catalyst to new projects.

Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the meeting would be held on Monday 2nd December at 10am in the NTS HQ, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh. Lunch would be provided, and the normal WG business meeting would follow at 2pm. SG agreed to circulate the note of the earlier meeting, asking WG members to nominate 3 topics for discussion.

Actions

- Arrangements for 3rd Discussion Group meeting (SG)
- Organisation of training event at Ben Lawers (RTu/JS/SG)
- Submission to HS of funding bid to develop a MoLRS website (RTu/PD)

- Invitation to Derek Alexander to join the group, and to act as Treasurer (JA)
- Circulation of details for next brainstorming session (SG)