

# **AGM of Tarland Development Group. 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2014**

## **Chairperson's Annual Report**

### **Introduction**

The last year has again been a busy one, with several developments in terms of new, expanded and proposed projects. Tarland Development Group was successful in its application to change its status to that of a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), which took effect from 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014. As part of this change, the group now has a two-tier membership structure, with twelve trustees, and ordinary membership open to any interested member of the local community.

Eight meetings of the trustees have been held since the last AGM, in addition to regular meetings of the subgroups responsible for setting up and management of new and existing projects. We continue our close working links with the MacRobert Trust, Cromar Community Council, Tarland Welfare Trust, Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust, Aberdeenshire Council, Marr Area Partnership and Cromar History Group.

### **New and Expanded Projects**

#### **Tarland Bee Group**

In response to national concern about the decline in bee populations, it was decided to explore the possibility of encouraging beekeeping in the Tarland Area. Three experienced local beekeepers were approached for advice, and as a first step it was decided to run a series of seven talks as an introduction to beekeeping. This provided a forum for assessing interest in establishing a community apiary, and providing a support network for those who wished to keep their own bees.

The response to the talks exceeded our expectations, with between thirty and sixty people attending each talk. There was a great deal of enthusiasm for the development of a community apiary, where novice beekeepers could learn the skills necessary for beekeeping under the guidance of our three experienced beekeepers.

The MacRobert Trust generously allowed us to use a sheltered site on the estate for the apiary, which they leveled out and also created a car parking area. Using existing TDG funds the area was securely fenced, and a shed, six colonies of bees and two hives purchased, with five others being provided on loan from mentors and members. An application for set-up funding made to 'Awards for All' was unfortunately unsuccessful. TDG therefore agreed to fund the minimum of

additional equipment required to set up the bees for winter, and further applications for funding will be pursued. After all the necessary equipment is in place, the project will become self-funding through fees from further talks, and from the sale of honey and bees.

Since the inception of the project we are delighted to report there are now an additional forty-six colonies of bees in the area, which equates to around 2.5 million bees! Thanks to the good weather this year, the bees have prospered and many new colonies have been established from captured or artificial swarms. There are twenty-six people actively involved in the community apiary, and seventeen others now keeping their own bees. Our first honey will be extracted in mid September, with a proportion sold at our bi-annual Tarland Market.

It is hoped that in future the project will expand to support more independent beekeepers, and we plan to explore the possibility of creating products using honey and beeswax. We are entering discussion with Kelvin Valley Honey, a social enterprise near Glasgow, which focuses on the production of honey and associated products, to help inform the future development of our own project.

### **Tarland Trails**

A feasibility study for the creation of a series of three mountain-bike trails and pump track, sited in Drummy woods on the outskirts of Tarland, has been carried out, as have a tree survey and habitat survey. Planning permission has been granted, subject to conditions related to the archaeology in the area, and a lease with MacRobert Trust is being drawn up.

Applications for funding the project are being made to Sport Scotland, the MacRobert Trust and perhaps the Commonwealth Legacy Fund. It is anticipated that ongoing costs for maintenance and insurance will be paid for by fundraising activities and the use of an on-site donation box.

### **Tarland Way**

The MacRobert Trust and Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust have now almost completed the off-road extension to the Tarland Way, by creating a grassed path from Coull to Tarland, allowing walkers to avoid using the road on this section of the route.

An imaginative booklet for children, designed to accompany the existing Tarland Way booklet, has been created and distributed to all primary schoolchildren in Tarland, Aboyne and Logie Coldstone.

## **Ongoing Projects**

### **Community garden**

The garden is now enjoying its first full growing season, and levels of vegetable production have been high (113 kg in May and June). All the outdoor sections of the garden are complete, with the creation of a communal herb bed, an ornamental flower-bed, and a fruit cage. Fruit bushes and trees were planted in the spring and have already been productive. A fine four-section compost heap and large cold frame have been built by a small group of enthusiastic members.

A garden management group has been established, consisting of new members and the pre-existing steering group. Kate Redpath's funded part-time post as project coordinator comes to an end in October 2014, after which all aspects of the running and maintenance of the garden will become the responsibility of the management group.

The project has been a great success, not only in terms of food production, but also in creating a stimulating social hub for members of the community who share a common interest. There have been numerous visitors to the garden, and the comments in the visitors' book demonstrate a high level of admiration for this community asset.

Donations for plants at Tarland Market and the Cushnie games raised over £400 for the garden project.

Marr Area Partnership held a forum on community growing at the community garden in August, the first time a forum has been held on a community project site.

### **Community Composting**

There are now seventy households participating in the scheme. Compost heaps which are ready for use have been moved to the Community Garden, where compost can be sieved and bagged more conveniently.

### **Tarland Market**

A further two markets have been held since the last AGM. The bi-annual market has become increasingly well attended, with a range of new stallholders selling high quality local produce and crafts, and tea and home-bakes provided by the Tarland Senior Citizens Association.

### **Film Club and Youth Cinema**

Both the film club and youth cinema continue in the MacRobert Hall on a regular basis.

### **Path Network**

The path network continues to be well used by local people and visitors to the area. Repair and maintenance of path waymarking was carried out by volunteers during the winter months, and there is regular contact between TDG

representatives and Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust in relation to the network, including work on the COAT database.

## **Calendar**

Our calendars, using members' photographs, were again produced in the autumn and were popular with customers.

## **Future Developments**

### **Food and Music Festival**

In September, TDG is holding a Food and Music Festival to link up with the autumn Tarland market. This ambitious project will consist of music workshops and concerts, cookery demonstrations, talks, films, children's activities and a fungal foray. As well as events taking place in the hall, the community garden and its produce will be used for the cookery demonstration.

### **Archaeology Trail**

A booklet to illustrate the many varied sites of archaeological interest in the area is in the early stages of development.

### **Tarland Tapestry**

As a result of the interest shown in the Great Tapestry of Scotland when it was on display in different venues across Scotland over the last year, it has been proposed that we create a similar set of tapestries to illustrate the history of Tarland and Cromar. The project has already attracted interest from a range of local people who are keen to become involved, and ideas to progress the project will be explored further over the winter months.

I would like to thank all the members of Tarland Development Group who have given so freely of their time to become involved so enthusiastically with the diversity of projects undertaken by the group. The increasing variety of projects has enabled an even wider range of local people to participate, sharing their existing skills and mastering new ones, all helping to build stronger social networks in the community.

Lindsay Stewart  
Chairperson

