

Minutes of Tarland Development Group Meeting

at

Cromar Court 3rd March 2009 7pm.

Present: Lindsay Stewart, Simon Power, Peter Craig, Jan Healey, Fiona Brown, Gillian Masson, Kate Redpath, Bill Harvie, Albert Calder, Lizzie Bacon, Mark Hagger.

Apologies: Mark Colley-Davies, John Dempster.

Membership Welcome to Mark Hagger, paths & cycling consultant. Possible new recruits suggested – Denise Hansford and Mark Colley-Davies (both have expressed interest). Ian McIntosh - moving back to the area in May. Graham Gibb?

Cycling routes proposal – to include History trail to Ballater plus other local routes - COAT not able to take on this previously minuted project currently. Mark Hagger proposing to take on the project as an independent adviser to act on the TDG's behalf. A cycle trail booklet similar to current walking booklet is proposed – to be targeted at family and leisure cyclists (not for serious mountain biking). Main route is Drummy to Ballater – historical sites along the way to be featured –also encouraging people to enjoy the environment. Negotiations will be needed with some of the local landowners and estates before any firm proposals possible. The sensitive nature of some of the historical sites would also be an issue.

Mark also suggested that the **Primary School** should be involved in an event to advertise and launch the proposed new routes e.g. a possible nature/history trail with points of interest along the way. Anything encouraging the youngsters to be active and have fun outdoors should be promoted. Volunteers to be sought to liaise with the Primary school. It would make it more attractive for possible funding should the youngsters be involved.

Mark laid out his plan - he would make funding applications on our behalf. Timescale – lottery funding could take up to 6 months – MacRobert Trust application would take long time to work through too. 2010 at the earliest before funding could be in place. Charitable status would be necessary for some of the funding applications.

Cromar History Group to be consulted on the Historical/Technical detailing of the points of interest along the routes. CHG to be asked to prepare information of historical interest and pass to Mark should the project get the go-ahead.

One concern for TDG was our financial liability to Mark should nothing come of his time and effort to gain funding. Mark agreed that there would be no TDG liability in this case. Mark said that he would try to resolve all access matters with landowners etc before proceeding with any funding applications. It was brought up that Tillypronie and Dinnet estates may have a problem with people cycling across their land. Lazywell has already proved to be a sensitive area for promoted access. Simon was concerned that a lot of the proposed routes were estate tracks without current agreement for promoted public access. Also raised was the issue of upkeep. At present we are highly dependent on Albert for all the voluntary grass cutting etc of the paths network we already maintain. Who would be responsible for the proposed additional routes? Mark said that most proposed routes use existing hard surface roads and paths and that upkeep would not be necessary. Some of the proposed cross-country routes seemed unrealistic in terms of access and suitability for cycling and some questioning of this ensued. Realistic costings for upkeep, surfacing, drainage, and installing gates etc needs to be looked at very carefully and a proper price for all of this must be included in the proposal. A sensible approach might be to focus initially on routes that need little, if any, work or costs to establish, and then see how they are received before starting on more costly routes. The Cairngorm National Park Authority might include the trail to Ballater in their core path network.

Lots of enthusiasm for the project and everyone thought Mark should go ahead in principle and start the process. He was thanked for his efforts so far and left the meeting.

The 'Have your say' event in the Hall No formal feedback yet. General acceptance by most folk of the Alastrean woods retirement village and other developments. Most of the responses were about how much housing development there should be and where it should go. The Community Council has submitted the required feedback to Aberdeenshire Council and was thought to be planning public feedback at the 4th April Fair. Possibility of publication in a new Newsletter. And on the Tarland website? Jan to distribute posters advertising the new **blog** on the website to encourage chat and ideas and opinions. Jan moderates the site. USE IT!

ROC bunker The History Group are planning to prepare an information board. Guardianship of the site is possibly under Historic Scotland – they will have ideas on what type or size/style of sign should go up. Simon to check.

Deeside Access Group meeting didn't happen due to the snow. John D. had been going to attend to represent TDG.

Treasurer's report – Ian has been paid annual fee for the website. Gillian to chase the bill for Cromar Court.

Do we use a chainsaw? No. That's fine - saves us on insurance!

Farmers Market 4th April – 9 stalls booked; posters and banner to go up.

Paths network Maintenance work to be done – new roundels, waymarker posts etc. The stiles on the Drummy and Tomnaverie route have been repaired by COAT. Some broom cutting needed to be done and extra posts put in to clarify routes. Simon to look at stiles and fences to discourage horse access to sensitive footpaths.

Alastrean – All abilities paths is under construction.

Mountain bike trail in Alastrean Woods is also planned by MRT – funding for construction might come from the Village Farm development.

Tarland – Aboyne Cycle Route – a bid by COAT has been included in an application to the Climate Challenge fund and there is optimism about its chance of success. One aim is cutting down the carbon footprint of all the cars running back and forth to Aboyne with children etc. A secure and safe route for people to cycle to Aboyne is the main goal. Negotiations have been opened with some of the relevant landowners. The route would end up in the new Kemsley Green development.

Peter still to step down as Chair in May or whenever we can find a replacement. Is there anybody out there willing to take on this role?

Next meeting 21st April 2009 7.30pm Cromar Court.