

AGM of Tarland development Group 21 August 2012

Chairperson's report

Introduction

The last year has been a very busy and exciting one for Tarland Development Group, with major developments taking place on several of our projects. We have had significant success with funding applications and won awards for two of our projects, which has been very encouraging, and is testament to the hard work of our volunteers.

Since the last AGM we have held eight group meetings, as well as numerous subgroup meetings to further the development of several of our projects. Two new members have joined the group. We continue to have close working links with The MacRobert Trust, Cromar Community Council, Tarland Welfare Trust and Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust, Aberdeenshire Council and Marr Area Partnership.

New or expanded projects

The following projects have been established or expanded in the year 2011 – 2012.

Youth Project

Following the initial consultation with young people in the area, which identified the youth cinema as a priority for development, the second stage was to expand the outdoor play facilities in the park to provide additional play equipment suitable for older children and young people.

Tarland Development Group secured funding for the play equipment from the MacRobert Trust and Aberdeenshire Council (planning gain and Fairer Scotland Fund). Aberdeenshire Council has also supported the project throughout with advice and expertise. Adults and young volunteers from Tarland Youth Cinema, Tarland Youth Club and Cromar Community Council formed a steering committee to plan a consultation asking young people in the community what additional play equipment they would like to see installed. Representatives from three different play companies attended the consultation, which was held in April 2012 at Tarland Primary School. They gave really exciting and informative demonstrations to the 20 adults and 36 youngsters who attended.

The steering committee then asked the companies to submit designs based on the feedback received at the consultation. The winning design was selected and the company Scotplay completed the installation by mid August 2012. The new equipment will include a 25m zip wire, a wooden climbing frame, a basket swing and a four seat waltzer. Aberdeenshire Council is also

planning in the near future to install a youth shelter in the park to give teenagers a dry place to sit.

The Tarland Way Cycle/Walking Route

The new cycle/walking route linking Tarland and Aboyne was officially opened, in a ceremony organized by Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust, on 23rd June 2012 by the Countess of Aboyne. Tarland Development Group organized an event for walkers and cyclists, which was a great success, despite changeable weather. Two community minibuses were hired to transport walkers back to their starting points, and refreshments were provided in the MacRobert Hall in Tarland. The route is proving extremely popular with people of all ages, and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

The initial idea for the route was generated by Tarland Development Group, and created as a result of generous support and funding from Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust, Climate Challenge Fund, Aberdeenshire Council and Marr Area Partnership, Bancon Construction, MacRobert Trust, Paths for All, Rural Aberdeenshire Leader and the Scottish Government. Completion of the Tarland Way would not have been possible without the willing cooperation of several local landowners and residents. The route will be managed by Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust.

A very attractive and informative illustrated booklet has been produced by TDG volunteers, which gives information about aspects of local history, geology, archaeology, natural history and agriculture along the route. The booklets are for sale in retail outlets in the local area, and are already selling well. A free leaflet is also in production, and a children's booklet is currently being designed.

Plans are well underway for the building of a granite bench at an attractive viewpoint on the route in memory of Albert Calder, one of our founder members. The seat is being funded by the Calder family, with the access path funded by Tarland Development Group.

Community Garden/Allotments

An award by the Vodafone Foundation enabled Tarland Development Group to fund the part time employment for four months of one of our members in order to carry out much of the background work into the requirements for the community garden set up to be undertaken. The project has a steering group established, and has obtained cooperation from the landowner, the MacRobert Trust. Community consultation has demonstrated substantial support for the project, with around 30 individuals indicating their desire to use the polytunnel facility.

The next steps are to secure a lease from the MacRobert Trust, apply for planning permission, update costings and apply for grants. An application to the Climate Challenge Fund will be made in the September.

The situation with regard to working alongside the developers of the Village Farm site remains “fluid”, but if planning permission can be obtained for the garden, The MacRobert Trust are happy for the project to proceed ahead of the housing development.

Ongoing Projects

Community composting

In its third year of operation, the composting scheme has 70 members, and an income of just over £800. Negotiations earlier in the year to reduce the tractor/trailer hire costs, and income from donations for compost, means that this year the project will make a small profit. Volunteers took part in two sessions of sieving and bagging our first finished compost, which is now producing good results in local gardens.

In November 2011 the project was presented with a Green Butterfly award, and later a grant of £300, both from Greener Aberdeenshire. In June 2012, Tarland Development Group’s composting project won the first prize of £10,000 in the national Future Friendly Awards competition for sustainable community projects, sponsored by Proctor and Gamble. A meeting of composting volunteers to discuss how best to spend this money will be held in the near future.

Youth Cinema

The youth cinema has been operating since June 2011. Films are shown on alternate Fridays during term time at 7 pm, free of charge in the upstairs MacRobert Hall, alternating between teen films and those for younger children. The aim of the project was to provide another opportunity for young people in the village to socialize, particularly teenagers. The audience has been slowly increasing throughout the year, with the last film before the summer holidays attracting 34 people. The cinema is run by young people in the village with the support of adult volunteers, and is complemented by a tuck shop. While the village hall was being renovated, the cinema was held in the Tarland School hall.

The group has an e-mail circulation list and Facebook page where youngsters can find out what is being shown(tarlandyouthproject@hotmail.co.uk or The Square on Facebook).

The young volunteers who run the cinema have contributed a great deal of time to making the project a success. As well as attending the film showings, setting up the equipment, running the tuck shop etc., they also arrange regular meetings to plan the programme. They have also showcased the project at various external meetings (e.g. Community Ward Forum in Aboyne and meeting with Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education) and village consultations, and have carried out fundraising activities. Four of the young volunteers are using this community work to contribute towards a Youth Achievement Award.

Path Network

The Tomnaverie/Drummy wood walk has been improved by fencing off the border of a field to separate walkers from livestock. The MacRobert Trust continues to mow paths, and volunteers are involved in other aspects of path inspection and maintenance,

Cards and calendars

Our cards and calendars were again successful, creating a modest profit. Photographs for these were submitted by Tarland Development Group members.

Local Market

Due to the refurbishment of the MacRobert Hall, only one market was held this year.

Squirrel Bridge

Two rope bridges have been erected to allow squirrels to pass safely over the main road from Alastrean woods.

Future Developments

Cinema Club

A cinema club is being established utilizing the projection equipment purchased with the funding for the Youth Cinema. An annual membership fee will be charged for monthly film showings, and the screenings will be held in the MacRobert Hall.

Archaeology Trail

Due to other commitments of TDG volunteers, there was no progress on this in the last year. Hopefully we will be able to progress a publication in association with Cromar History Group in the next year.

Thanks again to all those who have put in a great deal of time and effort in furthering the aims of Tarland Development Group. The work of project leaders has been particularly appreciated, but all members of the group have participated in some way to the success of all the projects. The success we have achieved in attracting funding for planned projects, and awards for those that have been successfully established, indicate that we are now recognized both locally and nationally as a well organised and innovative community organization.

Chairperson
Tarland Development Group

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