

AGM of Tarland Development Group 20th August 2013

Chairperson's report

Introduction

The last year has again been an extremely busy and stimulating one for Tarland Development Group, with the development of new projects and the extension and maintenance of those that are already established. We have welcomed six new members to the group, who are already taking a very active part in leading new and existing projects.

We have held eight group meetings since the last AGM as well as subgroup meetings in relation to various projects. We continue our close working links with The MacRobert Trust, Cromar Community Council, Tarland Welfare Trust, Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust, Aberdeenshire Council and Marr Area Partnership.

New or Expanded Projects

Tarland Community Garden

The development of the Community Garden has been the largest scale project undertaken independently by Tarland Development Group to date, offering local residents the opportunity to grow their own fruit and vegetables. The garden will provide facilities for both indoor and outdoor gardening, horticultural workshops and the chance to share expertise in a friendly social environment.

The MacRobert Trust has leased the land for the garden to TDG, and funding for the project has been received from the Climate Challenge Fund, Aberdeenshire Council's Community Asset Fund, the Co-op Membership Community Fund, Marr Area Partnership, Dobbies and our Procter and Gamble award.

The garden is not yet complete, but the perimeter has been fenced and the large polytunnel containing 32 raised beds is now operational, with all the beds rented out to members whose produce is already growing vigorously. In the outdoor area, the composting toilet and large shed have been constructed, as have the boxes for the raised beds. The fruit cage has yet to be erected, landscape fabric to be laid, raised beds put in place and filled, and trees and bushes planted. We anticipate that the whole garden will be fully operational by the end of the year in readiness for a full growing season in 2014.

The funding has enabled us to employ Kate Redpath part-time as a very able and committed project manager, and a steering group has been meeting on a regular basis to help manage progress. We are very indebted to the participants in the Community Payback Scheme for their stalwart work in building the raised beds

and other tasks on site. Other work on the site has been carried out by working groups drawn from membership of the garden, and from local contractors.

Film Club

In autumn 2102 a film club was set up utilising the projector and screen purchased for the youth cinema. Monthly showings of films have taken place in the MacRobert Hall for members and guests, which have proved very popular. An online voting system has enabled members to choose from a selection of films each month.

Tarland Way

A very attractive children's booklet, funded by Awards for All, has been developed and printed to accompany the larger Tarland Way booklet. It is in a pull-out concertina form, and encourages children to observe points of interest along the route, with links to web-based activities. It is now on sale in local outlets.

A granite seat has now been erected at a viewpoint on the Tarland Way, to commemorate one of our founder members, Albert Calder. The seat and its installation were funded by the Calder family.

A record of usage of the path is made through the use of counters on the bridges. For the year up to May 2013, 10,000 bridge crossings had been recorded, including 3,500 bicycles.

Local sales of the Tarland Way booklet from have been good, providing a useful source of income for TDG.

Ongoing Projects

Community Composting

Membership of the composting scheme has risen to 73, with fortnightly collections from April to November. Using money from the Procter and Gamble award, a new trailer has been purchased which makes loading easier for bag collectors. The compost heaps are being turned on a regular basis, and the internal temperature of the heaps is now sufficiently high to kill weeds. A large amount of compost is now ready for sieving and distribution.

Tarland Market

The bi-annual craft and produce market has resumed, with a very successful event in April, with a range of new stallholders selling locally produced foods. It is hoped in the future to combine the market with a Food Festival event.

Youth Cinema

The youth cinema continues to run on a fortnightly basis. Due to bad weather over the winter, some sessions were poorly attended, but this has since improved. The group of young people who organise the cinema received the "Best of Marr" award as part of the Inspiring Aberdeenshire scheme earlier this year.

Path Network

Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust, who create and help manage path networks within their geographic boundary, are setting up a database for establishing systems for maintenance and organisation. The Tarland path network has been chosen as a pilot area, and two members of Tarland Development Group are involved in liaison with COAT in this project.

Calendars

TDG produced a Tarland Calendar again for 2013, using members' photographs.

Future developments

Mountain bike trails

A proposal has been made to create a low level mountain bike trail on the outskirts of Tarland. Initial consultation with primary school children has been carried out, exploring options for designs, indicated strong interest in such a development. Links have also been made with Aboyne Wheelers, so that we can learn from their experience on a similar project.

Discussions with the MacRobert Trust will take place re. the location of the proposed trail, and local residents will be consulted before funding is sought.

There are also discussions taking place with local landowners about the possibility of establishing mountain bike routes on the hillsides around the village.

Tarland Way extension

Proposals have been made to extend the section of the path from Coull church to Tarland, to enable walkers in particular to enjoy the whole route off-road. Discussions have started between COAT, MacRobert Trust and TDG about this possible development.

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Discussions will take place in the near future about the possible option of Tarland Development Group applying to change its status from a Registered Charity in the form of an Unincorporated Association, to that of a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

I would like to thank everyone in TDG for all the hard work they have put in to ensure the smooth running of our projects in the last year. The range of skills and enthusiasm available in our membership has allowed us to embark on ambitious developments which will benefit people of all ages in our community. It is especially promising to find that new members are keen to join, with a willingness to participate in projects, suggest new initiatives and take responsibility in their development.

Lindsay Stewart

Chairperson
Tarland Development Group