

AGM of Tarland Development Group. 15th September 2015

Chairperson's Annual Report

Trustees

Lindsay Stewart (chairperson)
Kate Redpath (secretary)
Dave Hirst (treasurer)
Lizzy Shepherd
Jan Healey
Chris Redmond
Kathy Dale
Yvonne Davidson
Peter Craig
Denise Hansford
Annie McKee

Introduction

The past year has, yet again, been a busy one for Tarland Development Group (TDG). Several new projects have been established, and others expanded or developed. There are also proposals for new projects, and extensions to existing ones.

Eight meetings of the trustees have been held, some with input from other members of the local community who have approached TDG for assistance in exploring the possibility of potential new developments in the area. 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.

As in previous years, each project is managed by a steering group from within TDG, with a nominated project leader who in most cases has been the instigator of the project.

New Projects

Tarland Trails

The most ambitious project undertaken in the last year has been the establishment of a series of mountain bike trails in Drummy Woods, on the outskirts of the village. Tarland Trails comprise three trails of varying degrees of difficulty, and a pump track, with an enlarged parking area for visitors. The trails were opened to the public in June 2015, with an official opening on 12th

September. The trails have attracted a large number of users of all ages, both from the local area and from further afield, whose feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

The site has been leased to TDG by the MacRobert Trust, and funding for the project received from a variety of sources. The main funder was Legacy 2014 Active Places Fund, with other grants and donations received from the MacRobert Trust, Cromar Community Council, Aviva, the Robertson Trust, Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust, Lord Astor of Hever Trust, The W.M. Man Trust, Cycle Highlands, Marr Area Partnership and Aberdeenshire Council, in addition to a legacy donation and one personal donation match funded by Google. The total cost of the project was approximately £100,000.

Tarland Trails now has its own Facebook page.

Project leader – Chris Redmond

Food and Music Event

Planned to coincide with the September Tarland Market, the TDG's first Food and Music event took place on 27th September 2014. In addition to the market selling local produce, food events included a cookery demonstration at the community garden, a fungal foray and talks from Kelvin Valley Honey and Incredible Edible. Music included a Friday night concert by the Wrigley Sisters from Orkney (organised in collaboration with Tarland Folk Club), concerts on Saturday afternoon and evening, and an afternoon drumming workshop.

The event received funding for publicity from Marr Area Partnership. It was a very well attended event, with good weather helping the lively atmosphere in the village. Due to the success of this event, another Food and Music day will be held in September 2015.

Project Leader – Annie Mckee

Tarland Tapestry

A steering group has been set up to plan the creation of the Tarland Tapestry. Contact has been made with a group in Aberdeen who are involved in a similar project for the Gordon Highlanders Museum, and they are very willing to share information with us in relation to the planning and execution of the work. We are therefore still in the early stages of this project.

Project leader – Jan Healey

Tarland Oil Group

Johnston Oils, a domestic oil supplier, operates area-based oil clubs with associated community cash-back schemes. They have agreed to donate 1p per litre of oil purchased by Tarland Oil Club members to Tarland Development

Group to support community projects. This should provide a small but useful regular income for our group.

Ongoing Projects

Bee Group

The first honey from our bees was harvested and sold at the September Tarland market, and proved extremely popular.

A second series for well-attended talks on aspects of beekeeping was held over the winter months including speakers from the Aberdeen and District Beekeeping Association. Workshops to make up new hives and frames were held to set us up in readiness for spring. Some hives from the apiary have been leased out to members, who then take sole responsibility for their management. Graham Torrie from Torphins has been acting as a mentor this year.

As there was oilseed rape in the area, we had a busy time extracting honey in May, followed by an extremely active swarming season. Almost all the swarms were captured successfully and sold on to raise funds for the group. We put hives to the heather this year for the first time, but due to the very poor weather over the summer we are not anticipating a very good honey harvest. Any honey from apiary hives and leased hives will be on sale at the Market in September.

Project leader – Yvonne Davidson

Community Garden

The garden continues to be well used and maintained, with a waiting list of potential new members. The garden was awarded a Green Butterfly award by Aberdeenshire Environmental forum.

The garden has been the focus of media attention this year. In November it featured in BBC 2's Glorious Gardens from Above series, and in June the Beechgrove Garden programme filmed the garden and received much acclaim from Jim McColl. In September the garden will participate in the Scotland's Gardens scheme to coincide with the Food and Music day.

Funds for the garden were boosted by successful plant sales at the April market, and a further plant sale will take place in September.

An information notice board for the garden has been created, acknowledging the support of the main funders.

Project leader – Kate Redpath

Community Composting

Compost collection continues to be used and appreciated by many households in Tarland. The charge for membership has been increased from £10 to £15 to cover the cost of tractor hire and compost turning. It has been agreed with the MacRobert Trust that for the foreseeable future finished compost can be moved from Alastrean woods to a site alongside the Community garden for ease of distribution. Several new volunteers have been recruited to assist with compost collection.

Project leader – Kate Redpath

Tarland Way

The off-road mown grass section from Coull to Tarland has now been completed on the riparian zone on the South side of the Tarland burn, thanks to the generous co-operation and financial support from Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust and the MacRobert Trust. This development has been much appreciated by walkers, as it is an attractive route full of wild flowers, with new trees planted along the route.

Signage for Albert's Seat is now in place, and another commemorative seat, Ian's Seat, has also been installed at Otter Bridge. Signage of the route at Aboyne and Tarland is in place, and grates to drainage channels have been installed.

Tarland Way booklets , with inserts for younger walkers and cyclists, continue to be sold through local retail outlets.

Since the Tarland Way was opened three and a half years ago the counters on the bridges have recorded 25,647 walkers and 6751 cyclists, with overwhelmingly positive responses from the survey forms completed.

Project leader – Peter Craig

Path network

After consultation with COAT, it has been agreed that the paths booklet could go on the website, along with the leaflets for individual walks. A system for reporting any problems or maintenance issues with paths is now in place with COAT.

Project leaders – Dave Hirst, Cathy Dale.

Film Groups

Thanks to the hard work of Alistair Henderson, another successful season of film ended in may 2015. The running of the film club for the 2015 – 2016 season has now been taken over by a small group of TDG members. It is anticipated that the Youth Cinema will in future be run by Tarland Youth Club.

Website

A re-design of the Tarland website is underway. The new design will focus mainly on local events and information and also promote tourism, and will include photos and videos. It will be compatible with smartphone, tablet and laptop technology, and have links to social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Future Developments

Apple press

An apple press has been purchased by TDG, with plans to produce fresh apple juice from fruit from the community orchard, and apples from private gardens. Guidance is being sought on regulations related to safe food production to enable us to sell pasteurized bottled juice at the Tarland Markets.

Project leaders – Dave Hirst, Cathy Dale

Path network extension

Suggestions have been made for extensions to the existing path network around Tarland, and initial discussions have taken place with The MacRobert Trust and Aberdeenshire Council. Unfortunately, council funding for footpaths has been cut back, being restricted to upland and long distance paths only. The proposed Logie Coldstone to Tarland path is under discussion with COAT, and further routes are being explored, although funding will need to be sourced for these.

Mountain bike trails

The possibility of creating mountain bike trails in the surrounding countryside and hills has been raised, and will be explored over the next year in liaison with local landowners.

Bridle Ways

Local horse riders have established contact with TDG to explore the possibility of establishing designated bridle ways in the countryside surrounding the village, and this will be discussed in future meetings.

Finally, I would like to say a very big thank-you to everyone in Tarland Development Group for all the hard work they have done over the last year to make a success of our projects. It has been inspiring to see how a group of enthusiastic volunteers has initiated and developed such a diverse range of initiatives in the Tarland area for the benefit of all ages, abilities and interests. There is no doubt that the activities created by the different projects have helped

participants to make new friendships, and fostered a sense of wellbeing in the community.

F. Lindsay Stewart

Chairperson, Tarland Development Group