

Carse of Gowrie Group

Paths Project

Report 2 (30 November 2006)

Implementation of the PKCT/Awards for All, Scotland funding allowed the (interim) Project Officer, Eileen Ledingham, to take up her appointment on 1st October 2006. The Project Officer is employed by the Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service (PKAVS) and is responsible to its Chief Executive, Ms Penny Brodie.

The present report summarises what the Project Officer and the Project Co-ordinator, Iain Ledingham, have achieved in the first two months, in conjunction with the Paths Group Chair, George Ward, and the CoGG Secretary/Treasurer, Phyllis Mackay.

Background

Evolution of the Paths Project involves developing answers to three questions:

- What needs doing?
- Who does what?
- When will it get done?

In Project Management terms these translate into tasks, resources and timelines/milestones. Using state-of-the-art technology the project is now being documented and its progress monitored. Regular reports will be made to the Paths Group for information; subsequent action will be discussed and approved prior to implementation.

In practice the initial stages of the project will involve:

- Contacting landowners
- Identifying work to be carried out
- Identifying priorities/agreeing works
- Contacting funding/advisory bodies
- Undertaking practical tasks (e.g. clearance, construction, signage etc.)
- Developing a maintenance plan

(For further details on creating a path network, see <http://www.pathsforall.org.uk/>)

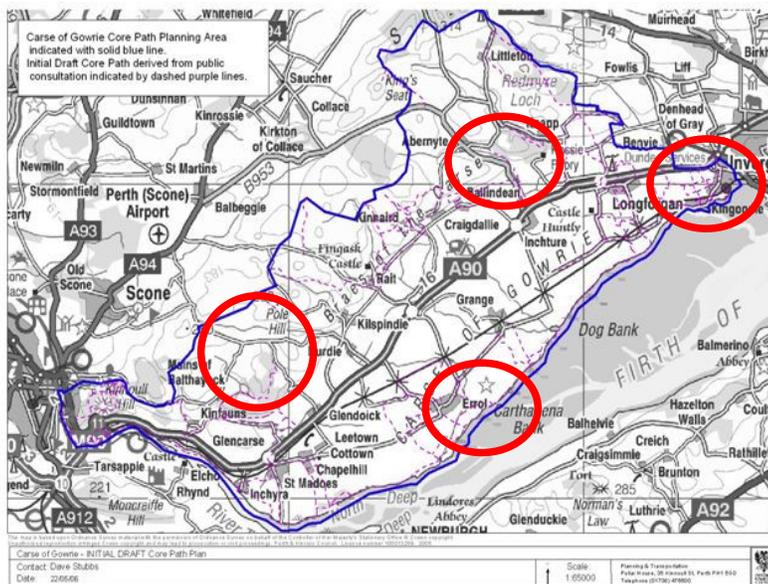
Selected Routes

The strategic, longer-term aim of the Paths Group is to develop a circular route between Perth and Dundee through the upland Braes of the Carse and along the low ground adjacent to the River Tay. The local, more immediate objective of the Paths

Project is to identify and prioritise a small number of routes based on the expressed preferences of the communities within the area.

The routes identified on the accompanying OS map of the Carse are entirely provisional; consultation with relevant landowners is already underway. From east to west these routes are:

- *Invergowrie-Longforan* – a choice of options is being considered,
- *Ballindean* - linking Inchtute/Rossie Priory to the deserted Pitmiddle Village and beyond,
- *Errol* – an extensive network of paths, principally between the village and the Tay,
- *Balthayock* – an interesting route between Glencarse and the hills behind.



Provisionally selected areas of interest for routes development

It is emphasized that the foregoing choice of routes is a first step towards a much wider linking of local settlements and existing routes with potentially far-reaching enhancement of the quality of life for residents and visitors. Sites of historic, wildlife and cultural interest will become integrated into the system and should prove popular ‘honeypots’ for a broad range of users.

Consultation Meetings

Structured meetings have been held with the following local landowners and business people:

- Lewis/Jamie Heriot Maitland (Errol)
- Phillip/Diana Rettie (Ballindean)
- Peter/Patricia Cox (Glendoick)

David Clarke/David Gardiner (Tay Salmon Fisheries)
Andrew Threipland (Fingask)
Dave Gray (St Madoes, woodturner)
David Imlay (Inchyra, farmer/signmaker)

Appointments have been made with others, including Major David Walter (Balthayock). Preliminary discussions are underway with Hugh and Hazel Barker in connection with Invergowrie-Longforan options.

In the case of the landowner consultations the Project Officer/Co-ordinator mailed prior explanatory letters, completed preliminary walks/conducted tours, discussed possible routes using enhanced maps/ works to be carried out/ legal liabilities and provided feedback summary notes. No final decisions have yet been made although the visits to date have been largely positive. The next stage involves obtaining the views of the Paths Group and of the Project Officer of PKCT, Robbie Gordon, and the relevant Access Officer of PKC, Dave Stubbs. Thereafter, return visits will be made to the landowners with a view to advancing/implementing recommendations.

Possible further funding from PKCT has been identified in relation to undertaking practical tasks (e.g. clearance of existing paths), the details of which are currently under discussion with Robbie Gordon.

CoGG AGM

An explanatory flyer relating to the Paths Project was prepared by the P.O. and widely circulated prior to the AGM (15th November 2006). The Project Co-ordinator/P.O. prepared and presented an illustrated talk on the project at the AGM, which was followed by a lively discussion. Several of the attendees declared an interest in being involved in the work of the Paths Group; some have subsequently been in touch.

Collaboration and Communication

The overall aims of the Paths Group and the specific objectives of the Paths Project can only be achieved by close and friendly collaboration between local communities, landowners, and statutory, advisory and other bodies. Of particular relevance in the present context are PK Council and PK Countryside Trust.

One of the Countryside Trust's recent initiatives has been to bring together community-based groups throughout the Perth and Kinross area with a view to sharing experiences, strengthening links, pooling expertise and enhancing potential fund sourcing. To this end a recent strategy meeting was held at Pitlochry (5th November), involving representatives of several groups including CoGG. PKCT plans to produce a series of recommendations based on the wide-ranging discussions that took place during the meeting. These recommendations will be reported in due course.

Next Stage/further action

- Report to/seek approval of Paths Group

- Arrange initial meeting(s) of interested individuals
- Seek help from volunteers
- Allocate specific responsibilities
- Agree reporting mechanisms
- Arrange regular (monthly) update meetings of volunteers

Other matters

Westown Chapel:

Since the previous report regular contact has been maintained with PK Heritage Trust and Historic Scotland. On 14 November a further update was received from Historic Scotland via Mr Andrew Driver of PKHT. Essentially, this amounted to confirmation that the proposed work on the chapel was 'grant-aidable' and a completed application for Ancient Monuments Grant was requested. Mr Driver has undertaken to proceed along these lines and to keep the Group informed of progress. No action as such is required by CoGG although the Paths Co-ordinator, on behalf of the Group, has offered assistance in principle.

Prepared by Iain Ledingham