

Report 4 (30 June 2007)

The present report covers the three month period from April to June 2007. Earlier information is available in the previously circulated PKCT Summary of Achievements document (31st March 2007) and the three previous CoGG Paths Project (PP) reports (15th February 2007/30th November 2006/5th September, 2006). All previous reports may be viewed on the new CoGG Paths Project website (www.cogg.org.uk).

Management

Lis Yorke took over from Eileen Ledingham as Paths Project Officer on 1st April 2007. Otherwise the central management team remains unchanged. Weekly review and planning meetings continue as before. Careful records are kept of all meetings, consultations, visits, contracts, funding applications etc.

Satellite Groups

All nine satellite groups have now been established and co-ordinators identified:

Invergowrie/Longforan - Hazel and Hugh Barker (Invergowrie)
Abernyte – John Barton
Inchture – Liz Kay
Ballindean – George Ward
Kinnaird/Flawcraigs/Fingask/Rait – Trefor Woodford (Kinnaird)
Westown/Valleyfield – Brian Paterson
Errol – Lis Yorke (Grange)
Glencarse/St Madoes/Inchyra – Christine Cook
West Carse – Roddy Brown (Walnut Grove/The Holdings)

All satellite group co-ordinators have been briefed at face-to-face meetings either alone or with other co-ordinators.

Co-ordinators' tasks were identified and agreed as follows:

- Recruitment of additional members of satellite group.
- Preliminary survey/recording of existing paths, signage etc.
- Identification/selection of one or two paths for early development.
- Sharing /discussion of above with project officer and co-ordinator.
- Co-ordination with the Paths Project officer/co-ordinator re meetings with relevant land managers/owners.
- Submission of material for satellite group page on website.

Further developments included identification/agreement of works needed/fund sourcing/implementation of contracts/promotion of routes etc. Area maps and survey materials would be provided.

Subsequent follow-up has been by email/telephone/face-to-face meetings and walks. All co-ordinators were invited to attend a meeting with PKC and PKCT officers on 11th May to be updated on the Core Path Plan (CPP) developments and share information about local paths networks. Summary notes of this meeting were circulated.

Website Development

A website specifically dedicated to the Carse of Gowrie Group Paths Project has been designed and developed by Hugh Barker in a remarkably short time and went live on 17 April 2007. A formal launch date has yet to be announced.

The website has been set up to:

- record and share the *plans, programmes* and *progress* of the Carse of Gowrie Group Paths Project
- encourage wide *participation* in the project development
- facilitate *exchange of information* and
- promote group and individual *achievements*.

The reaction to the website to date has been universally favourable. All the general pages are now populated and are being kept up-to-date. Maps, photographs and even one or two paintings are featured. The News Items page reflects current relevant activities throughout the Carse.

Many of the satellite group pages remain to be populated and will be a major focus of attention for the group co-ordinators over the next few weeks. The Invergowrie/Longforgan page, prepared by webmaster, Hugh Barker, will serve as a template for the other satellite group pages. Visitors to this page will be impressed by the many high quality photographs and maps on display.

Selected Routes

Invergowrie-Longforgan – Details of the existing Invergowrie paths network are available on the website. Robbie Gordon of PKCT, in the company of Hugh Barker, and the PP project officer and co-ordinator, carried out a feasibility survey of a selected route linking Longforgan and Invergowrie. Landowner visits are to be arranged, followed by preparation of costings of some minor works and exploration of requisite funding sources.

Discussions with Dave Stubbs of PKC are ongoing in relation to other routes in the area, including alternative options to PKC CPP routes. Access to information re identification/contact details of landowners in the area is an unresolved issue.

Ballindean – Agreement was reached with the landowners in relation to a route through farmland at Hilltown of Ballindean linking Inchtute/Rossie Priory ultimately to the deserted Pitmiddle Village and beyond. Based on the costs provided with a CoGG application for funding, PKCT approved an offer of grant up to £7,500 toward

the creation of this access route. The bulk of the contract works was completed by late June. The remaining items will be concluded within the next few weeks including installation of signposts.

Errol – A highlight event was the Errol Placecheck meeting held on 23 June 2007 when local residents had an opportunity to discuss with PKC/PKCT representatives what they would like to see happening in their village. The meeting was well attended and CoGG was represented. A feedback meeting is to be held on 18 August 2007. Details on both of these meetings are available on the PKC website.

Funding for upgrading of paths reflecting local community preferences may be a consequence of these meetings. A relatively short circular route around the village appears to be a priority but further exploration and formal survey of the previously identified extensive network of paths, principally between the village and the Tay, are also planned. The PP officer is to have preliminary meetings with the relevant PKC/PKCT officers to discuss future strategy. The landowners remain very supportive.

Balthayock – A follow-up meeting with the relevant landowner was held jointly with Dave Stubbs during April. The landowner, while not opposed to walkers, is opposed to signs directing the public across his land. He is specifically against the routes indicated in the CPP – curtilage considerations and the wildlife around Balthayock Loch are important issues. The landowner is, however, happy to discuss alternatives with CoGG and PKC. The PP officer, Christine Cook, Dave Stubbs and Robbie Gordon intend to carry out feasibility walk at future date.

While the foregoing selected routes represent those reflecting stated preferences following extensive community consultations in 2004/5, other options are under regular review. Developments in relation to PKC CPP are also being kept under surveillance.

Consultation Meetings

Following circulation of the long-awaited PKC CPP landowners' letter in February, numerous meetings with individual landowners were held throughout April. These involved Dave Stubbs of PKC together with the CoGG PP officer and co-ordinator. The focus was the PKC CPP but the working relationship/collaboration with CoGG was recognised. Discussions took place with reference to the following areas - Sunnyhall (Kinnaird), Upper Mains (Kinnaird), Fingask, Culfargie, Redmyre, Rossie Priory, Balthayock, the Coronation Road, the Shore paths, Errol, Inchcoonans, Grange, Seaside, Templehall, Longforan/Invergowrie.

A verbal update of the Paths Project including the website developments was presented at the CoGG committee meeting held at Glencarse Hotel on 11 April 2007.

Collaboration and Communication

As mentioned in previous reports the overall aims and objectives of the Paths Project continue to be dependent on close and friendly collaboration between local communities, landowners, and statutory, advisory and other bodies. In this

connection Robbie Gordon of PKCT and Dave Stubbs of PKC are particularly supportive.

Sites of Interest

People find access routes attractive for a variety of reasons. Amongst these is the inclusion of related sites of interest.

In this connection previous reports have referred to the work being done to consolidate the medieval Westown Chapel. A description of the extensive trimming of the invading ivy during February, March and April 2007 is available on the website together with pictures of the team effort involving CoGG volunteers and PK Heritage Trust staff. PKHT approved an award of up to £10,000 toward the overall cost of consolidation and additional funding is being sought.

A geophysical survey of the site was subsequently carried out by Dr Peter Morris on behalf of PKHT. A summary of the survey report will shortly be posted on the website. An archeological survey of the building itself has also been carried out in May by Dr Richard Fawcett of Historic Scotland. Again the results of his findings will appear in due course on the website.

Further work to repair the masonry and secure the wall heads is planned and will probably take place in the autumn.

Next Stage/further action

- . Report to satellite co-ordinators group / main Committee
- . Arrange satellite group meeting(s)
- . Recruit additional volunteers
- . Allocate specific responsibilities
- . Optimise reporting mechanisms (email/website etc)
- . Seek additional funding
- . Other matters

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