

APPLECROSS LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

1.0 OBJECTIVES, THEMES, PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

Objectives

1.1 The four objectives of the Applecross Landscape Partnership Scheme are to:

1. Conserve or restore the built and natural heritage features of the area;
2. Conserve and celebrate the cultural history, events and other activities of the area;
3. Encourage more people to access, learn about and become involved in the landscape heritage of the area;
4. Support the continuation of local craft and other skills linked to the Scheme by providing training opportunities.

Themes

1.2 A number of themes have helped to shape the Programmes and Projects developed to address the above objectives, notably:

- Access and interpretation – physical and virtual;
- Biodiversity;
- The links between people, their culture and the landscape;
- The fragility of the built heritage and the need to act now to save it;
- The links between research, interpretation and education;
- The importance of training to increase community capacity and improve the sustainability of projects.

Programmes and Projects

1.3 Five Programmes have been created to deliver the Scheme's objectives:

1. Worship and Burial
2. People and Places
3. Trails and Thoroughfares
4. Woodland, Grassland and Wildlife
5. Drystane Dykes and Historic Buildings

1.4 Each of the Programmes address a number of Scheme objectives.

Worship and Burial

1.5 This Programme's key objectives are:

- To restore and conserve a number of key religious buildings in Applecross;
- To promote understanding and appreciation of Applecross's religious heritage;
- To improve access to and the quality of interpretation relating to religion in the peninsula.

1.6 The projects to be undertaken within this Programme are:

- ***Applecross Burial Ground Mapping Project:***
To map and interpret monuments, memorial markers and other architectural features in the ancient Applecross Burial Ground. This would include accessing aerial surveys of the site. The Burial Ground is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and provides evidence of St. Maelrubha's monastic settlement.
- ***Clachan Church Restoration:***
The present Clachan Church was built in 1817 and belongs to the Applecross Trust, whose priority is to conserve and repair the church for the benefit of the local community and as a key site in Applecross's history. The church is "B-listed" by Historic Scotland as a building of regional importance, and lies within the Scheduled Area of Applecross's monastic settlement which is classified as being of national or international significance. The church is now in a fragile condition and requires considerable work to ensure the building is wind- and weather-tight and to prevent further damage. The purpose of this project is to reinstate the church fabric and interior, and to improve the landscape and access to the area surrounding the church. The result of this work will be to offer visitors opportunities for greater understanding and appreciation of this remarkable church and its context.
- ***Chapel Restoration:***
The restoration and interpretation of the grade B listed chapel building which lies within the Old Burial Ground, which as noted above is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The project will be carried out in partnership with the Highland Buildings Preservation Trust "Kirkyards Project", who have identified the site as a priority for consolidation and interpretation.
- ***Holy Well:***
Restoration and interpretation of a well (with stone steps and drinking ladle) located adjacent to the road around Applecross Bay. It has been known as the 'Spout Well' or in Gaelic 'Stroupan a bhile'. Folklore and oral history identify it as a Holy Well associated with the times of Maelrubha and the monastic settlement.

People and Places

1.7 This Programme's objectives are:

- To ensure that local archaeology, history and culture are recorded and made available to the public;
- To improve the understanding and interpretation of local places and history;
- To promote and encourage the celebration of local heritage;
- To promote and encourage understanding of the area's Gaelic language heritage and of the language today.

1.8 The projects to be carried out in this Programme are:

- ***Digitisation of Archives***
The Applecross Historical Society has extensive document and photographic archives housed at the Applecross Heritage Centre. This project relates to the purchase of

equipment to allow the efficient digitisation of the archives, and the effective display of material to the public (including creation of an online resource accessible worldwide).

- ***Heritage Manager***

This post would provide the essential input needed to carry out a range of critical heritage tasks, including the design and creation of a digital archive at the Heritage Centre, the design and management of the Place Names Project and other projects, and the development of improved interpretation material and mechanisms. The appointed person would also play a central role in co-ordinating volunteer inputs to heritage projects carried out as part of the Landscape Partnership Scheme.

- ***Place Names Project (including Schools Project):***

A project to be led by the Applecross Historical Society to research local place names (mostly Gaelic, but also some Norse), map and interpret the names. The resulting material would be displayed at the Heritage Centre and disseminated through websites and other media. The schools project would be centred on Applecross Primary School – the only school in the Scheme area. The project would be part of the community-wide place names project with the children learning about place-names, visiting and recording sites, interviewing older members of the community and finding out about the history of Applecross through place names. It will include the sound and visual recording of the work experiences, and stories and tales of local people.

- ***Festivals and Other Events:***

The creation of festivals (eg. an annual Tree festival) and other events such as workshops and seminars that celebrate the various aspects of the Applecross landscape. This could include building on the experience of existing successful festivals in the area such as the Seafood Festival.

- ***Applecross Guided Walks Programme:***

The development of a programme of guided walks for residents and visitors alike which provide people with an insight into the various aspects of the Applecross landscape, including archaeological walks, wild food walks and wildlife walks. The walks in the programme, led by trained guides, would be spread across Applecross, and the programme would be designed to cater for a range of physical abilities.

- ***Bealach-na-Ba Interpretation:***

Interpretation of the area's geology and the history of the Bealach-na-Ba mountain pass will be sited at the car-park at the top of the mountain. The Bealach na Ba (Pass of the Cattle), the UK's highest mountain pass and the main gateway to the Applecross Peninsula. The dramatic, twisting single track road to Applecross over the Bealach na Ba climbs to a height of 626 metres (2,054 feet). The mountain top views from the summit of the pass are available to everyone travelling on the road – views normally the sole preserve of hill walkers and climbers.

- ***Website Development and Other Information Resources:***

This project relates to the creation, ongoing development and maintenance of an Applecross Landscape website (probably hosted by the existing Applecross Trust website – see www.applecrosstrust.org.uk); and associated print material (leaflets, etc).

- ***Sgoil Bardachd na Comraich (Applecross Bardic School):***
 This Gaelic language project has a number of strands with the focal point being the establishment of an annual summer school on Gaelic poetry, which would include, for example, classes on the history of Bardic culture, key themes and stories in traditional Bardic verse, contemporary Gaelic poetry (eg. the work of the late Sorley Maclean, a native of the island of Raasay which Applecross overlooks, who is regarded by many people as the finest Gaelic poet of modern times), and poetry composition. This project will contribute to a Gaelic renaissance in the Highlands and Islands.
- ***Applecross Broch Project:***
 This project makes provision for further archaeological research of Applecross Broch, followed by a conference bringing together experts and interested local people to discuss the site, and then consolidation and interpretation of the Broch as a tourist facility.
- ***Community Interpretive Planning Project***
 The project centres on developing an interpretive plan for the Applecross Peninsula, created with the participation of the local community and aimed at making the natural and cultural heritage of Applecross more accessible to local people and visitors; setting Applecross in context, to show how its history, archaeology and geology has influenced the way it looks today; interpreting modern-day Applecross (and, perhaps, the Applecross of the future), and improving the overall experience of visitors to Applecross.
- ***Interpretation: Trails and Thoroughfares:***
 This project makes provision for interpretation along the new and upgraded paths and thoroughfares throughout the Applecross Peninsula, for the enjoyment and benefit of visitors and local people. The network of paths with interpretation will provide enhanced physical and intellectual access to the landscape heritage of Applecross on a free-of-charge, year-round basis; improve understanding of the historic roles of old paths in the area; link heritage sites and help to build a broader picture of the landscape heritage of Applecross. The creation of waymarked, interpreted trails should also create health benefits for local people and visitors by encouraging people to take more walks, and should also bring economic benefits by attracting visitors to the area to enjoy its walks and by extending dwell time and spend.
- ***Hazel Woods Interpretation and Roundhouse Project:***
 Applecross Hazel Woods are an Area of Semi-Ancient Woodland. This project makes provision for implementing a management plan to conserve, protect and promote the Hazel Woods, its biodiversity and flora. As part of this project, it is also proposed to create a replica Iron Age roundhouse (on the edge of the Hazel Woods – created by local children working with the local archaeology society as a summer activity project) that can then be used as a venue for woodland-themed events and training relating to the Hazel Woods (including the woodlands-themed festival). The idea for the roundhouse project as a venue for woodland events came from members of the local community who are keen to be actively involved in delivering the project. Events in the roundhouse would include storytelling, crafts and woodland skills training. These events would allow the Hazel Woods to be interpreted for local people and visitors without the need for fixed interpretation panels.

Trails and Thoroughfares

1.9 The objectives of this Programme are:

- To develop paths that provide access to the landscape heritage of Applecross, including paths to meet the needs of people with different physical abilities;
- To develop access that opens up areas for the enhanced enjoyment of residents and visitors;
- To improve through interpretation understanding of the historic roles of old paths;
- To provide paths which link heritage sites and help to build a broader picture of the heritage of Applecross.

1.10 The projects to be implemented in this Programme are as follows:

- ***Applecross Bay Coastal Trail:***

This project makes provision for new and upgraded paths and thoroughfares around the Applecross Bay area of the Applecross Peninsula, for the enjoyment and benefit of visitors and local people. The network of paths with interpretation will provide enhanced physical and intellectual access to the landscape heritage of Applecross; improve understanding of the historic roles of old paths in the area; link heritage sites and help to build a broader picture of the heritage of Applecross. This will be a resource for tourism, and also provide health and access benefits to local people.

- ***Beechwood(all-abilities):***

This path will consist of the first section of the network and will form a new link, running from the shop (the central section of Applecross village area) to the White Gate (the entrance to the Policies). It will pass the Holy Well and Four Trees of Applecross. It will offer walkers an all-abilities alternative to the current practice of walking along the main single track road and will offer open views of Applecross Bay.

- ***Arboretum (all-abilities):***

This is a path upgrade project which will tie in to the end of the Beechwood path. Links to a range of other paths are available from this route, with many interesting features (Walled Garden, native and exotic trees and the former Ice House) evident along its length.

- ***Clachan Heritage Trail (all-abilities):***

This route aims will provide a secluded and peaceful approach to Clachan Churchyard and the monastic base of St Maelrubha and lead to the Heritage Centre, positioned next to the church yard.

- ***Sea Path Link:***

The Sea Path link will be created running from the Heritage Centre to meet the Sand Path at Cruary. This section will be along an exposed westerly facing slope. On reaching Cruary, walkers will have access along the Sea Path, one of the old access routes used by north Applecross residents before the arrival of the main road.

- ***Archaeology Trail:***
This project will create a network of footpaths through the restructured Smiddy Wood, which will access sites of archaeological interest within the Wood, and link with other existing paths which will showcase Applecross’s archaeological heritage.
- ***Old North Coast Routes:***
The existing path from *Ardheslaig - Kenmore* has been largely unused since it was severed by the public road. Reinstatement of 372 metres of path would allow this link to be used again and so provide pedestrian access to the villages of Kenmore and Ardheslaig. Prior to the introduction of the north Applecross road, the *Kenmore – Applecross* path was the main access route into Applecross House and Bay area from the north. The main church and church yard were at Clachan and this route was used as a “*coffin road*” for transferring remains from the villages along the north coast for burial. There are interesting historic features along the route in need of preservation, including stone way markers and wrought iron kissing gates.
- ***Collegille and Ard Ban:***
Collegille and Ard Ban are two crofting townships which, even today, do not have vehicular access. Other than by sea, the only access to these villages is by stone path. This project involves repair and maintenance of the existing path ways. These townships were abandoned over a century ago when TB spread wildly. They remained empty for many years, and although some people have returned to live in the villages, the area’s character remains largely unchanged. The path upgrade would be coupled with interpretation about the history of the townships (*part of the Interpretation of Trails and Thoroughfares project*).
- ***Arrina Wood Link Path:***
This new path is intended to link the car park area in Arrina wood to the existing path from Cuig which is a traditional non-constructed hill path way-marked with stone cairns. This will reinstate the Cuig path for the use of walkers across the peninsula.

Woodland, Grassland and Wildlife

- 1.11 The objectives of this Programme are:
- To restructure areas of woodland to create native species woodland, which will improve both their biodiversity and enhance their visual relationship with the area’s topography;
 - To improve the diversity and quality of woodlands that are part of the planned landscape of central Applecross;
 - To re-invigorate and reintroduce traditional land management practices to improve the biodiversity of local grassland habitats;
 - To undertake projects which improve loch and river habitats; and improve understanding of the relationship between people and the sea, rivers and lochs.
- 1.12 This Programme’s projects are as follows:
- ***Smiddy Wood Regeneration:***
The regeneration of a felled coniferous plantation with native tree species and an area of “food forest”. This will involve removing old tree stumps and creating areas of native

woodland, grassland and areas of native food trees such as Hazel and Cherry. The felling of the coniferous plantation revealed the stone dykes which marked the pre-existing field pattern. They will be retained. This project is linked to the Archaeology Trail project described above.

- ***Regeneration by Adventure:***

This project is based on the clearance of 5 ha of woodland in a forestry compartment at the head of the central glen. This will improve biodiversity and provide space for the construction of simple lean-to shelters for use by Venture Trust trainees as part of their wilderness experience (and by other walkers). The construction of the shelters will be undertaken by local people as part of a training programme of forestry skills such as chain saw skills and building log structures. See www.venture-trust.org.uk for more details of the Trust's activities, including photographs and blogs.

- ***Gateway Woodland Project:***

This project will involve the restructuring and regeneration with native species of the area that is the first woodland that people entering Applecross over the Bealach na Ba meet. It will provide an improved gateway to Applecross.

- ***Hazel Wood Project:***

The Hazel Wood (above Applecross Village) is an area of ancient hazels in much need of natural regeneration. This project will focus on regeneration and the interpretation of the hazel wood's place in the historic landscape of Applecross, through the creation of path ways in the woods with interpretative way-marking.

- ***Four Trees of Applecross (part of the Interpretation of Trail and Thoroughfares Project):***

The re-planting of a distinctive formation of four great chestnut trees, one at each corner of a square about one hundred yards south of the Holy Well. The trees existed up till the late 1940s. The trees were originally planted to commemorate the folk tales of a bloody race to claim Applecross during the Mackenzie era.

- ***Policies Woodland Restoration:***

The restoration of woodland in the designed parkland and other areas of the Applecross House policies; and the improved interpretation of this designed landscape. This woodland has been the subject of extensive damage in the gales of recent years.

- ***South Coast Deer Fence and Habitat Improvements:***

Consultation with Crofters during the ALPS development process, revealed that implementation of traditional land management, grassland and habitat improvement projects would not be possible without provision of deer proof fencing aimed at creating a barrier between the hill land and the South Coast crofts where much of the proposed works would take place. Degradation of land has been evident within these crofting townships as the presence of deer has reduced the incentive for active land management. As a result of this neglect, land improvement measures are required before appropriate habitat management can take place. This project makes provision for a three stage process: stage one - Provision of deer fence to eliminate deer from croft land; stage two - re-conditioning of specific land parcels i.e. liming, draining, ditching, reseeding; stage three - habitat creation and/or management.

- ***Milton Loch Project:***
The project will carry out an ecological survey of Milton loch and the surrounding area and prepare and implement a management plan for maintaining and enhancing its ecological value. It will encourage its use for recreational purposes and interpret its geology, flora and fauna to local people and visitors. The loch lies adjacent to a footpath and there is also an existing bird hide. Applecross Angling Association are keen to be partners in this project. In improving the loch for wild brown trout for existing anglers, the Associations think that the loch, once managed better and with the installation of fishing stances would be an ideal place for passing on angling skills to younger people in the community. They will use the loch as an easily accessible base for training young people in the art of angling.

Drystane Dykes and Historic Buildings

- 1.13 The objectives of this Programme are:
- To restore drystane dykes that form part of the traditional landscape (and provide fruitful micro habitats for flora and fauna);
 - To restore historic buildings that are part of Applecross's economic and social history;
 - To improve access to and the interpretation of the area's built heritage.
- 1.14 The projects to be undertaken in the Programme are as follows:
- ***Bealach Dykes:***
Restoration of key sections of the stone revetment walls on the Bealach na Ba. This work will be undertaken in two phases. Traditionally the Bealach na Ba road was lined by drystane walls to act as a safety barrier and to hold back the hillside into which the road was carved. Unfortunately many of the walls have been removed or damaged by road widening, installation on metal barriers and traffic. A range of features which control the water flow from the hillside, including culverts and lined water-courses are also still in use today although many now require repair. This project allows for the repair and consolidation of stretches of the dykes.
 - ***Smiddy Dykes:***
The restoration of dry stane field dykes in and around the Smiddy Wood, which is located on the edge of Applecross Village (this work is linked to the woodland project described above).
 - ***Applecross Bay Coastal Trail – provision of drystone dyke feature:***
This project makes provision for interpretative dyke features located in the area of the new Coastal Trail paths for the enjoyment and benefit of visitors and local people. Key points for interpretative features will be identified in the Interpretative plan and resting places for the all-abilities sections are identified in the Paths schedules. The path will provide enhanced physical access to the landscape heritage of Applecross on a free-of-charge, year-round basis. The features will enhance the walks and provide facilities such as seating/resting places at key viewpoints across the bay. These seating/resting facilities (along with the path design and construction) make provision for the paths to be all-abilities.

- ***Crofting Dykes (Culduie):***
This is a demonstration project to restore the dry stane dykes in and around one crofting township (Culduie). This will be used to show other townships the techniques and benefits of dyke restoration (eg. the habitats dykes provide for birds and small animals).
- ***Lime Kiln:***
Restoration of a historically important lime kiln near Keppoch House. The kiln was located close to the limestone quarry at Keppoch. It was last used in the 1930s for the production of quick lime. The geology which underpinned the establishment of the kiln would form part of the interpretation about the site.
- ***Lonbain Thatched Cottage Interpretation Project:***
This project makes provision for interpretation at Lonbain township. Lonbain is an old crofting settlement located approx. 7 miles north of Applecross Bay. It was a linear settlement for which old estate maps can provide much information about changes in rural settlement patterns over time. Before the road was completed in the 1960s Lonbain was an isolated area. Lonbain Thatched Cottage is the sole remaining thatched cottage in the township and has recently been purchased by National Trust for Scotland, who have commissioned a Conservation Plan for the cottage as part of their plans to conserve and consolidate the site.
- ***Hebridean Barns Research Project:***
The Hebridean Barns (located next to the Broch and campsite) are a unique resource. Hebridean ventilated barns of this type are to be found only in the Wester Ross parishes of Applecross, Gairloch and Lochbroom and are becoming increasingly rare. The first phase of the project would be to undertake research to create a conservation plan which would set out to establish the degree of rarity of the surviving example at Applecross and put in place conservation policies for its preservation and possible future use. Phase Two of the Project (informed by the Conservation Plan) would allow for consolidation of the structure and its possible use as a covered area for orientation and interpretation of the many sites in the area (Broch, Hazel Woods, Smiddy Trail etc).
- ***Walled Garden Greenhouse/Native Tree Nursery:***
Restoration of the greenhouse within the Applecross House Walled Garden (which is listed grade C[S]). The restored greenhouse will be used as part of a native tree nursery that will be developed to support the native woodland regeneration undertaken as part of the Landscape Partnership Scheme.