

DRAFT

Notes from Argyll Islands Steering Group  
Held 20<sup>th</sup> Oct 2005.  
A.I.E. Offices Kilmory

Present :-

James Maclellan Argyll & Bute Council. (JML)  
Deirdre Forsyth Argyll & Bute Council. (DF)  
Andrew Campbell Scottish Natural Heritage. (AC)  
David Dowie Communities Scotland. (DD)  
Rhona Sutherland Argyll & Isles Enterprise. (RS)  
Hughie Donaldson IATE Coordinator. (HD)

Apologies from :-

Jacqui MacLeod Crofters Commission.  
John Dreghorn NHS Scotland.

A general discussion on progress and objectives was had for around 15 minutes prior to the meeting getting under way and this allowed all to highlight personal contacts with the various groups. This gave an atmosphere of continued concern for the progress of the island communities and a note of the achievements which have been secured.

The meeting then focussed on the impending National Steering Group Meeting in Inveraray.

The group felt that items for discussion at the meeting would be

- Royal Mail reorganisation - especially Jura.
- Scottish Water Liaison Officer.

These items were agreed for discussion.

**JML** then tabled a position paper on current understanding of the structure of the Rural Development Regulation (RDR). This is still being worked on for specific measures but the framework appears to have been agreed.

It was agreed that **DF** & **HD** work on papers to inform future work. This would be derived from **DF**'s work with SISU and **HD**'s work with LEADER + in order to build a case for a LEADER type model for future community based initiatives.

In the meantime the A&B European officer would be asked to table a paper as an item for the NSG and based on developing this train of thought.

The group agreed that efforts would be made to try to gain support from the NSG for this approach to future development.

**JML** informed the meeting of the themes for the Convention of The Highlands & Islands (COHI) which for this meeting would be

- Population Growth
- Health Service Issues
- Transport & Infrastructure.

**JML** offered to present these papers to this group when available **DF** to action.

**HD** then asked for local progress reports regarding the groups contacts with the islands.

Particular concerns were

- Position (grading) of LDO on Jura.
- Community confidence regarding forthcoming Crofters Commission Hearing on Coll
- Position of Coll development Group as motivators for change.
- Progress of Coll development plan and approval of same.

**RS** then clarified the situation on Jura where clear boundaries have been drawn between the Jura Development Trust, Feolin Study centre and IATE. A significant public meeting will take place on Jura on 1<sup>st</sup> Dec where the HiTrans paper and feasibility study for the possible Jura direct link will be discussed as well as a full community meeting in the evening.

The CC hearing is causing concern and the local dev group have withdrawn from community contact in order to remain neutral. HD confirmed he would attend the hearing and subsequent community meeting in an effort to offer support where asked and necessary. The opportunity to progress the community plan would also be taken while on Coll.

HD also highlighted the forthcoming Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTA Scot) event which will be held in Oban on 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov. This will be a good networking event for the island LDO`s and they will be encouraged to attend.

In addition the LDO`s will be asked to attend web based training in Inverness on 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> Nov in order for them to become familiar with the IATE web site workings. They will all be able to access the site for admin and be able to post their own pages after this event. Discussion groups will also be set up during the training in Inverness.

AC then gave a feedback summary from the Lybster Conference.

AC`s comments were

- A useful and informative event.
- Excellent network opportunity for community reps.
- Caithness contacts highlighted lack of authority support at the beginning.
- A lot of common problems across areas.
- Youth engagement and work was an issue almost everywhere.
- Access to wider resources was seen as a major problem.

HD then offered the 4 main points which had arisen from the Lybster event

- A common funding application form for IATE capital projects endorsed at CPP level.
- Local groups to develop links to CPP`s
- Develop Training & Skills packs for small communities.
- Develop community networks for LDO`s and community volunteers.

JML was keen to see the CPP endorsement form progressed and all agreed that this could be a positive step.

Further discussion saw agreement that linking to CPP was the best way forward for the local groups. HD was asked to make sure that the local groups could raise their voice in the CPP forum. AC gave the example of the Nadair Trust as a motivator for change in bottom up development.

It was agreed that DF & HD enable the 3 LDO`s to participate in the Spring meeting of the CPP. This would necessarily be a low key introduction by the LDO`s and used as an information gathering event for them.

DD then asked if we could further develop this theme from the spring meeting and look to enabling a long term action plan for the Argyll Islands which will be derived from the local efforts and plans of the communities.

JML asked if it would be possible to insert links to CPP documents and agendas, meeting papers and feasibility studies on the IATE web site and this was agreed. Similarly links from community plans on IATE site back to CPP and again agreed that LDO attendance of spring meeting would be a good start to this process.

DD offered the chance for LDO`s to meet with communities Scotland staff if they were off the island at any time. HD to progress this.

Suggestions to alter dates for IATE conference were not favourable and it was agreed to try to keep dates just prior to Autumn COHI and NSG meeting.

RS made a plea for more targeted support for the IATE islands as she felt that over a short timescale more could be achieved with this type of mentoring and hand holding exercise.

JML asked if more targeted finance was the answer and it was agreed that this was not the basic problem.

The problem was slightly different in each location but boiled down to the capacity of each community to engage with and work effectively with the various agencies and local authority.

Mention was made of recruiting community champions, defining unique identities for communities, finding good selling points for each island but in the end no clear resolution could be found to the problem.

No action was agreed on this point.

However the work of the LDO's in reporting to the CPP could again be the start of targeted support and it was agreed to make sure that they attended the spring meeting. **HD & DF** to ensure.

**DD** asked if it would be possible to centralise a support team within CPP and this team could effectively work with one community at a time to bring forward ideas and build the capacity to deal with the support issue. Further discussion on this is required with partners at CPP level.

Formal part of the meeting ended and further discussions on various points of interest were continued over tea & coffee. The main item of agreement was that if we are successful in enabling the communities to interact with the CPP we would have no need for a local steering group and this group could be stood down. This was seen as an objective for the next 12 months.

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