

Highland Clan Partnership Group
Wednesday 29th May 2013

1. Welcome and introductions

John Mackenzie welcomed the group and invited introductions from around the table.

Those in attendance were:-

Malcolm Roughead (MR), Rossie Macrae (RM), Kevin Hanlon (KH), Colin Simpson (CS), Lachlan Stewart (LS), Jamie Steed (JS), Scott Armstrong (SA), Norman McPherson (NMcPh), Hector Munro (HM), John Graham (JG) & John Mackenzie (JMack).

2. Notes from the last meeting

The minute of the 22 March 2013 meeting was agreed to be an accurate record.

3. Matters arising

A tracker capturing actions from the previous meeting along with progress updates on each was tabled. John Mackenzie invited each of the leads to speak to their relevant item and to provide any additional updates.

1) VS to engage with John Graham to explore how the 'Clan Tour' format might be improved

SA had liaised with JG on creating a questionnaire that will be issued to each Clan to gather relevant information. This detail will be used for a number of purposes including updating www.ancestralscotland.com.

There was discussion on who should act as the main contact point. It was agreed this role should be performed by SA but the option extended for Clan members to liaise directly with their HCPG representatives.

Action - Draft questionnaire to be signed off by NMcPH/JG; and JG to email all Clans alerting them that a questionnaire is to issue. SA to issue questionnaires once content signed off.

2) VS to circulate the membership of the Ancestral Steering Group and invite a Highland Clan representative to join the group alongside the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs

JG confirmed that proposed HCPG representative would be confirmed shortly.

Action – JG to confirm detail to SA

3) Separate meeting between Highland Clan representatives and VS website content manager to be arranged to ensure the content on www.ancestralscotland.com is up to date

SA met with the VisitScotland content manager and updated the group that work is currently underway to integrate the regional and national websites. Lots of new content is scheduled to go live at the end of June.

Action – VS to send out a template to Clans to quality assure the new content, provide updates and gather any additional information. Detail to be returned to SA by end August.

There was discussion around linking the Clan websites to www.ancestralscotland.com for signposting to minimise the volume of content needing to be uploaded to the VS website. Further discussion focused on possibility of including an interactive clan map and the inclusion of sites of historical interest. It was noted that Clans would need to provide GPS references if this was going to go ahead.

Action – SA to agree with VS content manager options for how these asks might be accommodated.

4) Clan Associations to supply revised text that can be uploaded onto www.ancestralscotland.com

Covered under 3 above.

5) Categories related to gatherings to be reviewed by the content manager and Clans to upload event information into the events calendar

MR made point that raw data was needed before consideration could be given to how best this can be presented. Clan representatives to take forward. SA also agreed to share consumer search information with HCPG members that captures key words used by consumers undertaking web searches on Clan activities.

Action – Clan members to provide event information and SA to share information on consumer key word searches for clan activity.

6) Clans to look at options to produce their own leaflets in a standardised format for VS to promote

There was discussion around the pros and cons of producing leaflets given greater use of digital and social media. MR suggested two options – content from the questionnaires (point 1 above) to be used in half page adverts in the VS What to See & Do guides; or an app be created for each Clan that contains all of their information.

Action – SA to speak to VS content team about the inclusion of Clan information in the regional What to See & Do guides.

7) VS to circulate the Clan territories map that is currently used and Highland Clan representatives to provide comments on how this could be enhanced

Given limited numbers of the leaflet it was agreed that VS would make a PDF copy available. CS suggested consideration to approaching the commercial sector with a proposition about publishing Clan territory maps. It was agreed this would be revisited once the information from the questionnaires (point 1) had been gathered.

Action – HCPG to revisit options around commercial sponsorship once content copy completed.

8) Clan territories map to be discussed further at meeting with VS content manager.

Covered under 7 above.

9) Highland Council to help design a questionnaire and formula to establish the economic impact of Highland Games

CS presented a paper on possible considerations for measuring the overall impact of events. General discussion followed on the level and range of information that should be gathered as well as methodology on data capture. The meeting agreed this should be considered a part of broader discussions on a funding framework in support of local clan events (point 11 below).

10) Via the Highland Clans Partnership Group, Highland Games organisers to consider options to undertake “in house” research to show the importance of Clan Tourism in the North Highlands

Covered under 9 above.

11) Short life sub group to be set up to explore financial assistance in the marketing, planning and delivery of Gatherings and other Clan Events in the Highlands and Islands in more detail. Sub-group to report back to the next meeting

Separate agenda item.

12) VS to arrange for relevant staff to go on field visits with Clans to increase knowledge base

SA talked through how ASVA cards were being used by VS staff to visit attractions and to increase their knowledge base. Suggestion made that invitation extended to VS staff to access Clan sites free of charge. To be taken forward on an appointment rather than open invitation basis. There was discussion around how best to arrange this logistically and it was suggested that visits would be best scheduled between October – March.

Action – Clans to write/email SA with invitation for VS staff to visit clan sites

13) John Graham to forward to the Group Secretariat detail of HCPG’s top 5 Highland Games that VS should have presence at

MR thanked the group for forwarding their suggestions

4. Finance for Clan Events

A paper titled the Scottish Clan Gathering Fund – Application Guidelines was tabled by SA for discussion, who confirmed the content was a distilled version of the EventScotland National Programme Application Guidelines.

KH confirmed that Ministers were keen to explore all avenues for supporting local Clan events and that given this could involve the use of public money, it was essential that any funding mechanism put in place was sufficiently transparent, accountable and able to demonstrate a return on investment. These requirements needed to be balanced against a relatively light touch application process. SA confirmed the aim of any fund would be to generate economic impact, attract visitors to specific regions of Scotland from other parts of the country and beyond, inspire and involve local communities and have measurable outcomes. The aim would be to secure additionality for events and help them to become self-sustaining. Any fund would be open to Clans across Scotland for a maximum of 3 rounds due to conditions including EU State Aid; and that it was unlikely any funding framework would be suitable for supporting all events.

Other points raised included how VS resources might be used to market Clan events; and whether a collective approach might be taken to the purchasing/hiring of event infrastructure resources.

It was agreed that a subgroup consisting of JG, HM, VS/ES, SG & Highland Council (HC) be established to develop a framework proposal

Action – HCPG secretariat to forward an electronic copy of the draft “Scottish Clan Gathering Fund – Application Guidelines” to all HCPG members

Action – VS/ES & HC to confirm named representatives.

Action – HCPG secretariat to arrange meeting for early July.

5. Clan links with Highland Games

Two papers were tabled setting out the detail of an agreed process for a two way sharing of information.

Actions – HCPG to provide Scott with any comments

6. AOB

- **Advertising Support for Clans**

JG highlighted difficulties in securing advertising support from VS due to the way advertising spend was managed.

Action – SA to discuss options with the VS Ancestral Tourism Manager and feedback to JG

- **Homecoming 2014**

JMack confirmed he is due to visit Clan Gatherings in USA & Canada and asked for a one 1 page synopsis of activities happening in 2014. It was also felt this would also be useful for posting on Clan Websites.

Action – VS to supply a one page synopsis of 2014 activities

7. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 4th September at 1 pm was provisionally agreed.

Action – Once this has been confirmed HCPG Secretariat to book meeting room at Cowan House.