

Highland Clan Partnership Meeting Friday 22nd March 2013

1. Welcome and Introductions

Malcolm and John welcomed the group and invited introductions from the group.

Those in attendance from Inverness;
John Mackenzie, Hector Munro, Norman McPherson, Stephen McKeown, Rossie Macrae, John Graham, Scott Armstrong, Stuart Black and Gerry Reynolds.

Those in attendance from Glasgow;
Malcolm Roughead, Caroline Packman, Karen Mackinnon, Ian Sirrell, Jamie Steed and Fergus Ewing, Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism.

Apologies were given from;
Lachlan Stewart.

2. Draft Membership

The draft membership was signed off following agreement that there will be 5 clan representatives and 4 officials representatives at each meeting. However depending on the topic there might be a requirement for additional representatives to attend.

3. Draft Remit

The draft remit was signed off by the group.

4. The '11 Asks' – Update from VisitScotland (VS)

An update paper was circulated in advance of the meeting. There was recognition from the Clans that a lot of the asks are already in place and/or being developed.

It was felt that the tours format is good. Further engagement between VS and the Clans would enhance the product overall and it was crucial that the content is accurate and informed from a Clans perspective.

Action – VS to pick up with John Graham.

1) A seat at the table as a stakeholder in Tourism in Scotland.

Action – 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.

2) A full acceptance within VisitScotland of the place of Ancestral and Heritage Tourism.

It was highlighted that some of the information on www.ancestralscotland.com is out of date.

Action – Set up a separate meeting with VS website content manager to ensure that the content is up to date.

Action – Clan Associations to supply text that can be uploaded onto the website.

3) A calendar of Clan Events, links to Clan Websites, Blogs and Social Media as well as a listing of all Clan Societies and Associations based in Scotland with contact details available through the VisitScotland Web Portal.

It was raised that there is a lack of awareness about the VS events calendar amongst Clan Associations.

Action – Categories related to gatherings to be reviewed by VS and Clans to upload event information into the calendar.

4) Displays and associated leaflets dedicated to the Clans in each region should be featured in each TIO.

The Clans highlighted the need for a more standardised approach to Clan print collateral available through VICs and other outlets. Aberdeenshire Council's Kirkyards Leaflet was cited as an example of good practice

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

5) The creation of a national Clan Trail in the same way as the Whisky Trail.

The Clans would like a geographically accurate map of Scotland with Clan territories identified. There was discussion about having physical signs to identify territories. It was also suggested that the trail could be uploaded into Sat Nav's GPS system.

Action – VS to circulate the map that is currently used and comments on how this could be enhanced would be welcomed

Action – Discuss this point further at the meeting with VS content manager (see point 2).

6) Support the creation of local Tourist Guides based on Clan History.

The Clans would like a standardised guide format setting out the history of each Clan and the local area. Feedback has been received that it can be difficult to get accurate Clan related information when visiting the Highlands and it is clear that Highland Clan Tourists have an appetite for this sort of information.

There is a tripartite group between HIE, SE & VS and training requirements for guides are being reviewed to look for enhancement opportunities. There was also a suggestion that an "app" could be developed to support guide activity.

7) A realisation that for many visitors to Scotland there is a desire for access to Genealogy for their family history.

This is felt to be one of the most important aspects. The Highland Archive Centre in Inverness was highlighted as having a key role. Opportunities include hosting Clans related exhibitions at the Centre. It also has the facilities to house exhibitions which opens up additional opportunities. This ask links to point 1 and when a member of the Highland Clans Partnership Group joins the Ancestral Steering Group they will have access to key recent research activity and be able to help share future work.

8) An acceptance that much Clan History is Highland based and a greater support for Highland Tourism and Culture.

The SG/VS support for the Highland Clans Partnership Group is further evidence of the importance place of Highland Clan tourism within the wider tourism economy.

9) A Pilot Study defining the importance of Clan Tourism in the North Highlands.

The mapping exercise is an excellent start and can be built on to include Clan territories.

There was discussion around getting the economic impact into Highland Games as the Clans don't have the stats. It was suggested that research could be carried out by event organisers (possibly by electronic questionnaire) to capture this information.

Action – Highland Council could help design the questionnaire and provide a formula they use to work out the economic impact.

Action- 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.

10) Financial assistance in the marketing, planning and delivery of Gatherings and other Clan Events in the Highlands and Islands. £400 million in Scotland pa of ancestral tourism with potential growth justifies that.

The Clans felt that the criteria for the HS14 funded programme did not provide a good fit with their requirements smaller amounts of recoverable funding to underwrite the event or to support promotion/marketing.

It was stressed that VS & SG are keen to work together with the Clans to support them. The mechanics however need to be robust for example around accountability and return on investment. It was agreed that there are a number of possible options and these would be explored by a short life sub-group which would report back by the next meeting.

It was highlighted that the Clan associations are legally constituted bodies.

Concerns were raised that Clan volunteers had to pay to attend “The Gathering” during Homecoming 2009. It was confirmed that the National Trust of Scotland would not be charging volunteers to attend the Bannockburn Re-enactment. The

NTS are also currently looking at the pricing cost of tents. Further information will be announced shortly.

Action – for Secretariat- short life sub group to be set up to look to explore this ask in more detail. Sub-group to report back to the next meeting.

11) Dedicated staff in VisitScotland to support marketing and delivery of Clan Tourism.

VS already have a dedicated Ancestral Marketing Manager. There can also be up to 6 staff in the UK teams supporting Clan tourism. The Clans suggested that key VS undertake field visits to help build their knowledge and it was agreed this would be arranged. A main VS contact point was requested and it was agreed that this would be Scott Armstrong.

Action – VS to arrange for relevant staff to go on field visits with Clans to increase knowledge base.

5. Highland Homecoming 2014 – Inverness Highland Meeting

Gerry Reynolds from Highlands Council gave a presentation about their plans. The presentation is attached to this minute for details.

6. AOB

VS are currently pulling together a Highland Games Strategy and asked the Group to identify the top 5 worldwide Games where VS should have a presence.

Action – John Graham to send the HCPG's top 5 to the Secretariat.

7. Date of next meeting

Suggested the next meeting takes place towards the end of May. This will allow time to pick up on the action points and update on progress made on them.

Action – Malcolm to agree with John who will attend.

Action- Secretariat to arrange the meeting.