

Carron Valley Partnership correspondence

David,

The district manages over 60 woodlands in the central area, we have projects with number of the 19 local authorities in the area, and are involved in many community and partnership projects. Carron Valley is just one of these. We are not able to dedicate anything like the amount of time you or CVDG seem to think is possible. We do however take the work seriously and the team are keen to do a good job in a timely way, but this is bound by our other commitments and the usual delays any business might expect. I will stay involved in the project and Jeremy will remain involved until the sign off of the toilet block. Carron valley falls in to Rena's area and she will deal with all of the work from here on, making use of her team as required. The following is my attempt at addressing the points you raised:

Development Plan

This will consist of the Partnership Agreement, essentially a redraft of the concordat which you have had since January, and this will have in an annex the Development plan and some maps. This does take several days to draft, we are not working on it all of the time, just occasionally in amongst many other tasks. I had wanted 3 months to draft the development plan, not because it takes 3 months but because we have to find time in amongst all of the other work to schedule time on the plan. The first month was lost to illness as discussed at our April meeting and I asked that the 3 months start from 8th April, completion by end June 2008. This would allow the plan to be drafted and circulated during development. At the meeting with the Minister this timetable was shortened to the end of May for a first draft. To meet this commitment has meant reorganising a number of existing commitments for several members of staff to find time to do the work. This does not leave time to send it round to partners in the way I would have liked.

The agreement and development plan once agreed by the partners will need to go to the board. There might be a covering paper (summary PID) and I might go to the board but the agreement and development will go up unchanged from the version we all agree on. I have tried to guide the process to address the issues raised by the previous development proposals. The main ones being limiting the level of risk to the public purse by stating the level of investment FCS and partners are going to contribute annually and second to conceive of a process where others might do developments where FCS would not want to get involved. I have agreed with the board that they will stay involved with the process unlike other projects worked up locally. Once approved by the board this gives the go ahead to start many of the works and projects but not for every project. As some of the development plan is aspirational and funding related, so if any single item of development is significant over £50k total cost then individual projects from the development plan would need to go to the board. Also the agreement and development plan as drafted indicate that income from the recreation developments will be used on the site, so income from the catering lease can be used to support the ongoing costs on the site.

Business Models and Liability

There are some activities that FCS and or Scottish Water do not want to be involved with and rather than preventing these from taking place offering local business opportunities is a solution, the café lease is a good example of this. Other partners or

local business might also want to take on projects. FCS does not need to take the risk but does not prevent the development. The lease will have a number of conditions about liability in it and these liabilities then rest with the business who take on the lease. FCS has the liability for the existing facilities including mountain bike trails, and we limit our liability by managing them in an agreed way. The work we do with CVDG volunteers is part of this process hence the need for a system that is sufficient to demonstrate we are managing this properly. These systems take time and resources to implement and is the reason FCS need to limit the infrastructure it manages.

Toilets

For us the toilets were not a simple project. We had to take over the works that were part completed, find out what stage everything was at, including planning, and then engage with a number of people to help get the project underway. It was run as two projects the toilet block and separately the reed bed. This was in order to utilise the leader money on the reed bed before the December deadline. The meeting was in September but I did not get in post until October and we had started the work by the end of that month. We also needed to arrange to meet with Clanranald to make changes to the lease to allow us to take over the toilet block. Each stage takes four to six weeks to complete to allow adequate time for tendering and the following highlights the process. At the same time we were organising all of the other works on site, landscaping, planning permission and demolition of the fire damaged building, replacement deer larder and new services, car park works, planting, new signage design, applying and utilising leader money, road improvements, the bell mouth, and the installation of the visitor counter, to name but a few.

Reed bed and ancillary drainage started in November and completed by December successfully utilising the Leader money. In January the project manager work for the toilet block works was tendered and Bell Ingram successful. February - Bell Ingram - put detailed tender out for closing and selection in March - successful tender awarded. Build mostly completed in April – and a hand over meeting and 1st snag list agreed then - Building control officer visited site to assess toilets, a drains test was not carried out. There were some issues raised but the main one to resolve was an inspection chamber not on the original plan that needed to be installed and then the drains pressure tested. JIG drainage consultants visited site to inspect reed bed and drainage. We have also had a detailed topographic survey carried out of recreation facilities to allow CAD drawings to be produced for any future work.

Proposed works

May – organise contractor to be on site and install inspection chamber, time subject to contractor availability. Then organise a site visit with building inspector to carry out inspection and Building Warrant approval sought based on approved plans. Toilets opened when this is signed off. Cleaner's appointment process to conclude.

End of June - Bell Ingram to produce design and specification of railings, ramp detail for bike wash access, splashguard and screening. Plans drawn up using the CAD survey including front and side elevations to be presented to CVP as options for input, approval and then tender for subsequent construction.

Later in the year to seek to connect an Electricity supply, to be installed via underground cable from transformer pole at bridge to the toilets. New upgraded cable required for deer larder. Scottish Power are awaiting exact detail of route, route from pole to deer

larder approved. The CVP partners thoughts on whether this is a welcome project or not.

Associated works

We have had machines on site shaping the spoil this week, done some of the grass seeding and continued planting and reeds planted. There is a works day arranged for Friday 30th May where we will get another lot of minor works completed. There is work planned for the concrete apron near the deer larder but we are awaiting the delivery of the storage units ordered but no delivery date given, one for CVDG, before instructing the works. We have looked at the windblow and the trees are reaching a terminal height and might continuously blow over. We have done work on clearance to date but the crop has not stabilised and felling all might be the only option now. There will be a constant need for more local landscaping and this will be in the development plan. These might be useful projects for the WISE group.

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