

Tarland Development Group.
Annual General Meeting – 23rd August 2016

Chairperson's Annual Report

Trustees

Lindsay Stewart (chairperson)
Kathy Dale (secretary)
Dave Hirst (treasurer)
Lizzy Shepherd
Jan Healey
Chris Redmond
Kate Redpath
Yvonne Davidson
Peter Craig
Denise Hansford
Annie McKee

Introduction

Tarland Development Group (TDG) has again had a very busy year, with ongoing work in existing projects, some planned extensions of projects and various new projects being initiated. Increasing numbers of non-TDG members have given generously of their time and expertise to support projects, indicating an encouraging level of involvement by local people in projects which interest them.

We continue to work closely with, and acknowledge the support of the MacRobert Trust, Cromar Community Council, Tarland Welfare Trust, Aberdeenshire Council, Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust and Marr Area Partnership.

Steering groups are set up for each project, with a Trustee as nominated project leader. Projects which are supported but not initiated by TDG, have at least one Trustee on the steering group.

New Projects

Tarland Open day

TDG organized an event in the MacRobert Hall on 14th May 2106, inviting community groups and clubs in the area to showcase their activities and to encourage new membership and involvement in their work. TDG used the event to increase awareness of the range of projects, past and present, undertaken by the group. Teas and homebakes were provided by Cromar Senior Citizens. 18

groups participated and a very positive response was received from both participants and visitors.

Project leader – Lindsay Stewart

Tarland Website

A complete re-design of the Tarland Website ([www. Tarland.org.uk](http://www.Tarland.org.uk)) was undertaken in collaboration with user groups, and launched at the Tarland Open Day. The new website is more visually attractive and user-friendly, publicising local groups, events and amenities in the Tarland area, and has links to Facebook. Ongoing management of the website has now been taken over by Sandy Cooper after the resignation of the designer Ian Mackintosh.

Project Leader- Jan Healey

Apple Press

TDG has purchased an apple press, and in the autumn this was put to good use pressing apples from the community orchard and from individual donations. £320 worth of apple juice was sold at the Tarland Market and to local people, demonstrating a demand for this delicious pure unsweetened product. More local people will be encouraged to use the press next season to produce more juice for private use or for TDG funds.

Project Leader- Dave Hirst

Seed Swap

A new initiative was started this year to encourage people to save and exchange locally grown flower and vegetable seeds. A very informative introductory session entitled “Gone to Seed” was held on 18th June, with talks from Gill Butler-Orli and John Fraser.

A steering group has been set up in conjunction with Aboyne Gardening Club and the Cromar and District Horticultural Society, and demonstration plots have been planted at the Community Garden. In the autumn, a speaker from Kew Gardens will give a talk on the Millennium Seed Bank, and the first seed and potato swap day is planned for February 2017.

Project Leader – Lizzy Shepherd

Future Group

This new venture is a project introduced to Tarland by local resident Lesley Ellis, which has received the backing of TDG for its first 2 years. The project is designed to stimulate interest in Science and Technology, and is aimed at both adults and children. A series of talks over the winter months, in collaboration with Aberdeen University and other organizations, attracted audiences of between 15 – 60 people. Links have been established with the Aberdeen Science Centre to identify activities suitable for children, and several workshops have taken place. There are plans to set up science clubs at Tarland School and Aboyne Academy.

The project has a steering group established with a representative from TDG, and a Facebook page has been set up.

Project Leader - Lesley Ellis (TDG representative – Dave Hirst)

Information Board

Funding is now in place for the refurbishment of the information board in Tarland Square, and new maps and information panels are currently in preparation.

Project Leader – Peter Craig

Ongoing projects

Tarland Bee Group

The Bee Group now has 40 members in the local area, with 100 people on the mailing list for talks and events. A very successful honey stall at the September Tarland market, following a good harvest of heather honey helped raise funds for the project. Another series of talks over the winter months was well attended, and several new beekeepers joined the group. It has been a busy summer with mentoring groups held at members' apiaries, as well as at the Community Apiary, with a great deal of new knowledge and experience gained. We were joined on one of the mentoring sessions by our MP Stuart Donaldson who had expressed an interest in the project.

In June, a small group of members visited the apiary of Murray McGregor, commercial beekeeper, in Blairgowrie to learn about his queen-rearing programme with a view to using this knowledge to extend the scope of our project next year. Links have been established with Aberdeen University, which may result in the group participating in a varroa control project in the future.

Project Leader – Yvonne Davidson

Tarland Trails

The mountain bike trails in Drummy wood, which opened in June 2015, have been a great success, both with local users and bikers from further afield.

Between August 2015 and June 2016 there were 19,000 uses registered on the track counters, which equates to between 3,000 – 5,000 visits to the trails. £700 was raised from the donations post at the site. There is evidence that there has been increased spending by Trails users in local shops and pubs.

Unfortunately, the tracks suffered considerable damage due to the severe floods in Tarland in January, and had to be closed for 2 months to allow for recovery and repairs. However, a willing band of volunteers assisted by Community payback workers, succeeded in restoring the tracks in time for the Easter holiday period. The trails received £7,173 from Foundation Scotland, funded by the Flood recovery Fund, and £1000 was donated by Finzean Community Association, to assist with repairs. This funding will also enable TDG, in

partnership with the MacRobert Trust, to repair and tarmac the track to the carpark.

Approval has been granted for the erection of brown tourist information signs to be erected at the entrance to the village. Trees have been planted around the pump track, and benches installed courtesy of Jamie and Patrick Price. Cycle Highlands have funded the printing of 5000 more leaflets, and a Facebook page has been set up for the Trails.

Following on from the success of the trails, and feedback from users suggesting a more extensive network of more trails in the area, a proposal to create more ambitious trails on the surrounding hillside was put forward. After discussion with local landowners, who were receptive to the idea, a draft business plan was developed, and presented at a well-attended public consultation meeting in June. Voting at the meeting indicated a very high level of support for the project, with 75 in favour, 1 undecided and 2 against the proposed development. A feasibility study is being planned, funded by TDG, the MacRobert Trust, Marr Area Committee and Aberdeenshire Business Support. The closing date for tenders for the study is 18th August 2016.

Project Leader – Chris Redmond

Tarland Market

The twice-yearly local producers' market, held in the MacRobert Hall in April and September, is proving increasingly popular with around 20 stallholders participating, and a roaring trade done in refreshments provided by Cromar Senior Citizens.

Project Leader - Annie McKee

Food and Music Event

The second Food and Music event was held on 25th/26th September 2015, organized by members of TDG in conjunction with several other community groups.

The weekend programme included concerts featuring Paul Anderson, Patsy Reid and Friends and the Old Blind Dogs, with music workshops on the Saturday morning. Following the Local Producers' Market in the morning, a talk on nutrition was given by Dr. Chris Fenn, and a game cooking demonstration provided by Ballater-based 'India on the Green'. The Tarland community garden was open and received over 100 visitors, who also enjoyed talks from Tap O'Noth Permaculture and Tarland Bee Group, as well as music from Megan Albon and members of the New Distillery Ceilidh Band. Tarland Playgroup hosted children's activities at the primary school, in conjunction with a barbeque from H.M. Sheridan butchers.

The Food and Music event was supported by the MacRobert Trust and Scotland's Natural Larder, in addition to sponsorship from local businesses.

Project Leader – Annie McKee, Kathy Dale, Dave Hirst

Bulb Planting

In the autumn, we planted thousands of crocus bulbs in the Market Stance in Tarland and daffodils on the verges at the entrance to the village, resulting in a colourful display in spring. The bulbs were supplied by Aberdeenshire council.

Project Leader – Chris Redmond

Tarland Tapestry

Work on the design of the Tarland tapestry is slowly progressing. Two of the steering group members visited Andrew Crummy, designer of the Great Tapestry of Scotland, who was very helpful. The steering group also visited an exhibition of that tapestry in Dundee to take a closer look at the designs and stitching, and to provide further inspiration. Several local people have expressed an interest in becoming involved in the stitching of the panels.

Project Leader – Jan Healey

Community Garden

There are currently 40 members and associate members in the Community Garden project. Bumper crops of fruit and vegetables have been produced this year, perhaps in part due to the presence of two Bee Group beehives to assist pollination.

In September 2015 the garden participated in Scotland's Open Gardens scheme, which was very well attended, raising £900. Stuart Donaldson, our local M.P., visited the garden earlier this year. The Cromar Brownies held a tea party in the garden to celebrate the Queen becoming the longest reigning monarch.

Project Leader – Kate Redpath

Compost Project

65 households are now benefitting from the fortnightly garden waste collection, which is very ably run by 17 volunteer drivers, bag lifters and rota organiser. Finished compost has been in demand both at the community garden and by other local gardeners.

Project Leader – Kate Redpath

Film Club

The film Club had another successful season of monthly screenings over the winter, with the evenings starting with refreshments and time to socialise. Tarland Welfare Trust is now taking over responsibility for the licence.

Project Leader – John Dempster (TDG representative – Denise Hansford)

Path Network and Tarland Way

The waymarked footpath network and Tarland Way walking/cycle route continue to be well used by locals and visitors alike. The Tarland Way now has an attractive off-road option for walkers from Tarland to Coull along the banks of

the Tarland Burn. Mowing of the paths continues to be carried out by the MacRobert Trust.

The possibility of further development of walking routes in the area is under consideration.

Project Leaders – Dave Hirst, Kathy Dale

Future proposed developments

Tarland Trails II

Following the initial public consultation about the development of a more extensive network of trails in the area, the outcome of the feasibility study will indicate the next steps to be taken. This will be an ambitious and expensive project, requiring major funding, close cooperation with landowners and tenant farmers, and further consultation with users and the public. In view of the complexity and scope of the project, it is likely to take several years to complete.

Project Leader – Chris Redmond

Finally, I would like to thank all the Trustees, TDG members, and other members of the local community to have worked so hard to make a success of the ever-expanding range of interesting projects initiated by the group. The energy and enthusiasm demonstrated in the running of projects is a great example of commitment to the local community, offering a wide range of activities of interest to a wide range of ages and abilities. The award of runner up at the 'Inspiring Aberdeenshire' award ceremony in June indicates that we are receiving recognition in the wider Aberdeenshire community.

The response of the local community to damage to the bike trails caused by flooding is but one example of how local residents are now becoming more involved with the work of our group, and valuing what we have achieved. By being responsive to the needs of the community, we hope we will be able to attract even more people to become actively involved in participating in our projects in future.

F. Lindsay Stewart

Chairperson,
Tarland Development Group

