

## **Networking between Voluntary Arts Scotland (VAS) and Community Woodlands Association (CWA)**

### **CWA –supporting communities in forestry and woodland management**

Arts, Culture Heritage is an area developed as part of H2007 and a steering group was set up at that time. This group has progressed initial ideas to the stage of feasibility. There is a desire but lack of capacity to do more at this stage.

Aims for community woodland sector with regard to developing ACH events

- Capacity Building for communities
- Networking
- Lobbying

### **VAS –supporting artists**

Claire is actively working with intermediaries to develop networks.

She is working with Artists and Communities (Liz Gardiner, Theresa Lynn and others) whose aim is to encourage robust professional practice and skills sharing in the area of cultural and community development, and link experiences practitioners with community groups. This group has been quiet since their success in the 90's with raising awareness and is now looking to revitalise with a new generation of practitioners in place to take the remit forward.

Aims for Artists and Communities

- Capacity building
- Networking
- Lobbying

### **CollARBORation Project Proposal**

Claire English (VAS) and Diane Campbell (CWA) met to discuss the future with regard to the Coll**ar**bor**o**ration project proposed by Eoin Cox and Louise Butler in the work they carried out through Arts, Culture and Heritage (ACH) in Community Woodlands Feasibility Study.

The aims and objectives of the project proposal are;

- To develop a collective and collaborative approach to the promotion of cultural heritage that reflects the ambitions and expressive talent of CWA members and other potential community partners;
- To highlight the contribution that the knowledge, skills, practices, representations and expressions of the individuals, groups and communities make to Scotland's cultural heritage;
- To demonstrate the benefits of cooperation of group practice and transfer this to other contemporary community activity.
- To offer support, advice and information to over 150 member woodland organizations on how to develop art and cultural activities in their woodlands;
- To increase the number and diversity of people interacting with their local woodlands;
- To help promote generic arts, heritage and culture at a local level throughout Scotland;
- To engage in high profile events and woodland based activity;
- To enable and provide continuity of membership and community projects.

There are three elements to the proposal

- Planning
- Delivery
- Evaluation

It was felt that the best way to progress and work together on taking forward the ideas presented in **Collaboration** would be a networking event as outlined below.

### **Networking Event**

An initial networking event will be held as part of Milton Community Woodland Festival on **Friday 21 May 2010**. Funding will come from the Skills Development Scheme that CWA are currently running.

Roslyn Mills (CWA Woodland Advisor) is already involved in arranging a tour of Highland Community Woodland groups for several community woodland representatives from the central belt. Milton Festival will form part of this visit. Claire will speak to artists and invite them to come along to meet the group representatives and discuss the following;

- Training and capacity building requirements for CWs and Artists
- How the **Collaboration** Proposal would work for communities and artists
- Next steps

Draft Structure of the Networking Event (details to be confirmed);

### **Training and Capacity Building – Consultation on Collaboration Outcomes**

- Risk Assessment - VAS are currently developing a game focussing on risk assessment. This could be trialled through the Collaboration project.
- Manual or Booklet bringing together all the information already out there
- Training on how to make money or break even from running events
- Marketing to artists and how to charge
- Discuss other ideas for training and capacity building that people may want

### **How Collaboration will work**

- Outline the proposal to groups
- Allow time for questions of clarity and ideas to be put forward
- Get group and individual feedback on the proposal

### **Next Steps**

- Is this proposal suitable
- If so who does what with regard to next steps
- Delegate tasks between CWA/VAS/Groups/Artists
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### **Phase 1**

Using information gathered at this event, next steps will include sourcing funding for the detailed planning of each pilot project. CWA and VAS will work together to secure this funding. Budget for developing the detail of each pilot is £12,000 (£6000 for each)

### **Phase 2**

When detailed plans for each pilot are determined then funding will be sourced for delivery of pilot projects and evaluation.

## Community Woodland and Artists Networking Event – Milton: 21<sup>st</sup> May

### Proposed Agenda

**Aim of the Session:** To enable CWs and practitioners to provide feedback of the support and training needs of the two groups in order to develop cross-sectoral projects and then to provide input to and shape the delivery of the proposed **Collaboration** project ensuring that it meets the needs of all participants.

12.45pm Depart Milton Log Building for Milton Bowling Club

1pm Introduction to the Afternoon – Structure and Logistics Amanda Bryan

1.05pm Introduction to the Afternoon – Aims Clare English

1.15pm Workshop Sessions 1

A. **Training Needs** for both CWs and practitioners in order to effectively deliver collaborative arts and culture projects.

B. **Support Needs** for both CWs and practitioners in order to effectively deliver collaborative arts and culture projects.

1.45pm Session Feedback

2.00pm **Collaboration** proposal - Eoin Cox

2.10pm Q&A Session -

2.15pm Workshop Sessions 2

These sessions are about examining which of the training and support needs identified in the first workshop session can be taken forward both through the potential Collaboration Project or separate to this.

1. **Collaboration Benefits** – Need to define what both CWs and Practitioners want to get out of the project - focus on the actual project experience and also the long term lasting benefits both on the ground and wider in terms of raising awareness, sharing experience etc.

2. **Collaboration Participation** – How will real community engagement and participation be achieved, how can other CW groups be involved, opportunities for engaging with other agendas/organisations to raise profile and secure ongoing support.

3. **Beyond Collaboration** – This group will consider what action could and should be undertaken outwith the Collaboration project. Prioritise those training and support needs discussed earlier and suggest ways in which the top 5 priority actions can be taken forward.

2.45pm Session Feedback

3.00pm Round Up and Next Steps

3.30pm Finish

## Community Woodlands and Voluntary Artists Scotland Networking Event

### Milton Community Woodland Festival – 21<sup>st</sup> May 2010

#### Attendees

Claire English	Voluntary Arts Scotland
Daniel Bellak	Voluntary Arts Scotland
Rosslyn Mills	Community Woodland Association
Lara McDonald	Aigas Community Woodland/ PAN
Sian Jamieson	HI~Arts
Suzann Barr	Abriachan Forest Trust
Jenny Neesham	Voluntary Arts Scotland Committee/ Adventure Unlimited
Henry Fosbrooke	Milton Community Woodland/ Woodland Orchestra
Fiona Saywell	Culag Community Woodland Trust
Hilary MacDonald	Culag Community Woodland Trust
Eoin Cox	Buy Design Gallery
Chris King	Zenwig Puppets
Theresa Lynn	Dundee City Council/ Artists and Communities Association Scotland
Tara Beall	Artist – Glasgow School of Art
Bryce Reynard	Craftmaker
Jackie Goode	Performer, Stilt Walker and Humanist Celebrant
Amanda Bryan	Facilitator

#### Introduction

The networking event was focused around 2 workshop sessions – the first allowed participants to discuss the respective training and support needs of both practitioners and community woodlands. The second focused on the proposed Collaboration project and different groups discussed the potential benefits that could be achieved, how to secure the widest participation and in the absence of funding for the project what other activities could be achieved. The feedback from these groups which was recorded on flip charts is provided at the end of this report.

In discussion it was agreed that the overarching objective of supporting Arts, Culture and Heritage (ACH) activity in Community Woodlands is that this type of activity helps engage a wider audience and helps engender respect for nature while enabling people to understand how they are part of the living world. It was also noted that with a reduction in arts related funding there is a need for grass roots action to help communities to engage with their culture and heritage which for centuries have been very closely linked to woodlands.

## Summary of Key Issues

This section is a summary and explanation of some of the points captured in the workshop sessions. A full transcription of the flipchart notes is provided in the Annex.

### **WORKSHOP 1: Support and Training Needs**

This workshop session covered a large variety of areas and topics but the resulting needs can be brought under four main headings:

**What's Possible – Tapping in to Ideas/Creativity:** It was identified that at present a barrier to more ACH activity in woodlands is that there is a lack of awareness of what is possible. Community woodlands have a limited understanding of what might be available and how to both identify and access practitioners who might be able to work with them. Similarly many practitioners have never worked with a community woodland and often their ideas of what might be possible cannot be realised until they actually visit a site to consider both the environmental and cultural opportunities and also the physical practicalities of the site. There is clearly a need to raise awareness of the possibilities of what might be possible through ACH activity in woodlands. In addition the matching of community woodlands to practitioners needs to be facilitated in some way.

**Project Development/ Management –turning ideas into reality:** Once an idea has been shaped then there is a need to develop the proposal into a workable project and secure the necessary funding for this. This will involve more practical advice on what might actually be involved in different types of project – for example what needs to be considered for a public event will be very different for what might be involved for the commissioning of a piece of public art. Groups also felt the need to have guidance provided on the challenging and changing funding environment with advice provided on how to make the best funding case. In particular groups wanted help with how they can provide information on outputs and outcomes that funders need in relation to social, economic and environmental benefits.

**Event Management/ Logistics – tick-lists, signposting, existing expertise:** The next level of support required is very practical in nature and focuses on standard practice for event management considering everything from risk assessment, health and safety, parking, waste management, ticketing, insurance etc. There is considerable expertise in this type of activity from other areas which perhaps needs to be translated into a CW environment.

**Capacity Building/ Skills:** Running throughout all of the discussion was the need to build skills within both CWs and practitioners. There is a recognition that there are skills within some CWs and practitioners but often this might be limited to individuals within a group or perhaps might be limited to one aspect of ACH work e.g. music events. There needs to be a way of tapping into skills from across the sector and sharing these. There is a need however to recognise the level of voluntary input and lack of funding and that this will take some time. Perhaps some form of mentoring or apprenticeship type system should be developed involving a whole group rather than centrally held training which will have limited access.

## **Possible Outputs/Activities**

The following is a list of suggested outputs or activities arising from the discussions that would be useful in supporting the development of collaborative working between practitioners and community woodlands. Some will be very simple to take forward others will take more time and resources.

1. Identification of Existing Publications and Guides relating to event management etc. that would be useful for both Practitioners and CWs and making these available.
2. Development of standard tick-lists for CWs for what to consider when developing an ACH project, selecting and contracting with a practitioner, event management etc.
3. Production of templates for aspects like Risk Assessment etc.
4. Guidance for both practitioners and CWs on freelance practitioner rates/ professional management rates etc.
5. Production of a simple guide to arts related and woodland related jargon.
6. Development of a list of useful 'contacts' for CWs and practitioners – this could include local arts promoters.
7. Development of simple database to community woodlands for practitioners – site description including ecological descriptions, local heritage, history of ACH engagement, and facilities e.g. electricity, water etc.
8. Development of database of 'creative CVs' for practitioners – skills, examples of previous engagement with community groups, examples of creative projects.
9. Development of 'go see' funds to enable CWs to look at other examples of ACH work in woodlands and also to enable early planning meetings between CWs and practitioners.
10. Networking or skills sharing days involving both practitioners and CWs to enable matching and awareness-raising.
11. Development of a mentoring scheme linking CWs with both practitioners and others who have developed similar activities.
12. Production of guidance of social, environmental and economic outcomes and benefits of ACH projects in Community Woodlands.
13. Advice on audience identification and marketing.

## **WORKSHOP 2: Collaboration**

The second workshop session looked at the **Collaboration** project in more detail and the findings are described below:

The long term benefits of the project were envisaged as being:

- To raise the profile of this type of activity and to be able to provide evidence of it's environmental, social and economic benefits.
- To raise engagement with community woodlands and increase membership and therefore sustainability.
- To build lasting and evolving relationships and to build capacity to work with wider groups in the future.

The immediate or direct benefits were envisaged as being:

- Possibility of developing a range of skills: project management/business, public engagement, environmental audit, event management, arts/crafts, compliance awareness, basic woodland awareness, communicating with other communities/audiences etc.
- Meeting and working with other communities.
- Raising awareness about culture/ woodland.

The discussion on participation centred around the following:

**Start Where People Are:** There is a need at an early stage to think about who in the community you are trying to reach and then build the project around that. You need to engage with these people on their terms i.e. go to them don't expect them to come to you. You need to treat them as equals and to start within people's comfort zone and take them with you. The community as a whole should be actively involved in the whole process including development.

**Involve a Wide Range of Groups in Different Aspects of the Project:** The project could have multiple objectives, many different outputs and involve various different groups and should also consider hard to reach groups.

**Tricks for Engaging:** Know what has been accomplished before in an area – what has worked and what has failed. Know as much about your audience/ community before you start. Know as much as possible about your artists before you start. Be able to communicate the benefit of participation clearly and on the right terms.

### **What Next**

It is proposed that a follow up meeting be held involving the participants from the umbrella membership and support organisations present. These individuals should be able to take some immediate action on some of the outputs and activities identified (e.g. identification of existing support guides and their circulation, production of useful contacts lists etc.) and may be able to prioritise action on those remaining.

The feedback on Collaboration will be used by CWA and VAS in their development of the project.

**Annex: Notes from Workshop Sessions**

**Workshop 1 – What are Your Training and Support Needs?**

Group 1

- All those involved need to know what's possible?
- More opportunity with various groups
- Interpretation of existing skills for specific group needs.
- Ability for artists to return to work with groups – funds!
- What are the local skills available? Including professional skills.
- Need to tap into advice from those directly involved.
- Perhaps a need to look at developing apprenticeships and networks – to build trust and understanding.
- Logistics are a key issue – e.g. when staging outdoor events – much advice already exists so need to signpost to relevant agencies/networks (refer to PAN guide called 'Don't Panic')
- Better links to national networks.
- Checklist of 'what comes first'
- Who's is available for community woods
- Need to remember to keep it simple – not every group will want large events.
- Identify the various events/topics that might be of interest to groups and artists/performers, link to relevant contacts.
- Stronger links through CWA.
- Potential training of community groups – need for a legacy.

Group 2

- Time to get to know the place/people
- The right contacts in that community – people/context
- Link/connector
- Database/ list of appropriate people
- Way of identifying ideas and people.
- Ways to follow up initial meetings
- Good basic communication links
- Skills sharing days
- Regular opportunities to meet people.
- Funding issues – clarity of lead and time to do it.
- Clarity of freelance rates/ professional management advice.
- Creative CVs
- Specialist professional advice on completing funding.
- Opportunities to do site visits.
- Database of site/CWA info
- Opportunity to work through practical risks with partners
- Access needs for artists/ craft makers
- Templates – Risk Assessment/ Questions to Ask

- Events management support
- Someone to translate the different language used by artists/CWs – jargon interpreter
- Briefs? What's possible – perhaps pilots or examples that are well documented.

## **Workshop 2 - Collaboration**

### Group 1 – Collaboration Benefits

- Immediate project
- Enthusiastic participants who want to do more
- Direct Benefits
  - Personal development for the participants
  - Arts/crafts skills
  - Project management/business skills
  - Public engagement
  - Environmental audit skills
  - Event management
  - Compliance awareness
  - Intellectual stimulus
  - Sense of purpose – 'giving heart'
  - Positive ecological role.
  - Meeting and working with another community
  - Team working
  - Learning to communicate with other groups and using creativity/woodland as a bridge
  - Enthusing groups about culture/ woodland
  - Increased awareness of woodlands/ multiple benefits
  - Basic woodland awareness training
- Long Term Benefits
  - A new audience
  - Build capacity to work with wider groups in the future
  - Environmental sustainability
  - Economic sustainability
  - Alternative vehicle for artistic/ environmental development and well being.
  - Raise profile of this type of activity – politically, socially, economically
  - Reconnect people with land.
  - Self reliance – increase members?
  - Provide evidence of value for communities, members and funders/partners.
  - Increased activity and participation.
  - Better perception of worth
  - Knowing how to market your community to the wider community.
  - Opens up thinking and changes ideas.
  - Lasting and evolving relationships

## Group 2 – Collaboration Participation

- Start where people are – perception of community
- Who? Locals, Youths, Tourists – everyone engages
- Bring creativity to group but inspire creativity out of group too.
- Where are people? – embedded in their culture, need to make first contact with wider groups.
- Treat everyone the same – level playing field – no ‘experts’
- Need to think outside the box – who, where, when.
- Communicate the benefit of participation clearly.
- Actively involve people in the whole process – development, implementation and follow-up/progression.
- Keep within people’s comfort zone – take baby steps.
- Barrier – not knowing your audience – not knowing your artist.
- Methods for overcoming – knowing your product, knowing your people and engaging on their terms
- Links to various groups within a community. Make the project multi-use, multi-functional and multi-objective. In order to empower as many individuals as possible.
- What has been accomplished before?
- Who has the greatest benefit?
- Need to think about progress from starting project – allow for development for artists not unemployment.
- Momentum – allow for return to improve skills of group.
- Agenda – yours and theirs
- The community are the artwork.

## Group 3 – Beyond Collaboration

- Links to examples of kinds of activity that has already taken place.
- Know why you want to do event.
- Know how to market and target.
- How to identify your audience.
- Legacy – signposted to good and easily understood information
- Practitioners
  - Give skills and knowledge to CW
  - Can contribute to income generation
  - Needs to be matched to right CW and have people skills
- CWs
  - Opportunities to enhance practitioner’s skills
  - Need to be aware that it takes time.

## **Wrap Up Session**

- What is the overarching objective of ACH activity in woodlands?
- Connecting wider community with their environment.

- Engendering respect for the living world and helping people understand how they are part of the living world – help to instil a sense of caring for our woodlands and associated habitats.
- Using woodlands as a learning environment.
- Woodlands are one of the few landscapes that are both urban and rural – they are universal.
- This type of work is one of the few ways in which communities can engage with their culture and heritage. With reductions in funding and of others leading there is a need for grass roots action.
- This type of project can contribute to the sustainability of both sectors.