

Agenda Item	
Report No	

The Pictish Trail and Hilton of Cadboll Cross-Slab

Report by Area Development Manager

SUMMARY

This report and attached Framework for Action document (Action Plan) briefs Members on plans for the Pictish Trail and the Hilton of Cadboll Stone (Cross-Slab). Members are asked to consider the Action Plan and endorse it as a way forward for discussion. Members are also asked to support the project in principle and to consider allocating £1,500 of the Area Discretionary Budget towards it.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report and attached Action Plan stems from a request by Historic Scotland for the Council to part fund an archaeological excavation and study at the Hilton of Cadboll chapel site. As Members will note from the Action Plan, this archaeological dig is necessary if the front face of the Cadboll Stone (Cross-Slab) reconstruction is to be based on the original design. The Council is being asked to contribute £18,750 or 25% of the estimated cost of £75,000 over 2 years. Other funding confirmed/confirmed in principle is Historic Scotland 25%, National Museums of Scotland 25% and RACE 25%.
- 1.2 Funding at this level for such a specific purpose is difficult to identify let alone secure. For example, there is no Highland Council Archaeological Service funding in existence and hence available. Introduce the fact that funding is also needed to complete the carving of the Stone, the Pictish Trail leaflet needs printing and wider development, management and promotional work of Ross and Cromarty's Pictish remains is required and clearly the funding required by all is in excess of the £75,000 currently costed. **However, the importance of the Cadboll Pictish Stone and the potential it offers to deliver associated cultural and economic benefits beyond Hilton, justifies efforts to overcome such a funding barrier.**
- 1.3 The Action Plan prepared presents a vision for the way ahead for the Cadboll Stone and Ross and Cromarty's wider Pictish heritage. The vision outlined and action points detailed are, at this time, for discussion only. They seek to bring all together to work together in partnership. The Action Plan therefore sets in context the importance of the archaeological dig but clearly states that the dig is not an end in itself, i.e. all funding efforts at this time should not solely be directed towards the archaeological dig.
- 1.4 Ross and Cromarty Area support for this project should not necessarily be simply measured in financial terms alone. It is important therefore that Members consider the Action Plan,

endorse it as a way forward for discussion and support the project in principle. Hence, and notwithstanding its financial contribution, it will therefore be clear to all that the Ross and Cromarty Area Committee supports the wider objectives of the Pictish Trail and Hilton of Cadboll Cross-Slab project.

- 1.5 Funding for the wider project will need to be identified and secured from a variety of local and national sources including the Council. Currently Council funding has been secured from Councillor Durham (£1,500 discretionary budget) and my own discretionary budget (£1,500) and it is anticipated that some elements of the wider project will merit Culture and Leisure Services heritage funding. Although recognising that the Area Discretionary Budget is almost fully committed, and assuming that Area Committee support for the project exists, Members are asked to consider contributing £1,500 to the wider project.
- 1.6 It is anticipated that 50% of all Council funding secured at this time will be used as a contribution to the archaeological dig. The remaining 50% will be used as match funding for other project actions. Members should be aware that as the Council is unable to contribute the requested 25%, there is the very real threat that unless additional resources can be identified and secured by Historic Scotland then the archaeological dig may not proceed with obvious implications for the wider project. However, whilst this situation is regrettable it is unavoidable and a reality of local government funding. Historic Scotland, National Museums of Scotland and RACE are asked to recognise the financial situation faced by the Council and to work together to bridge the resultant funding shortfall.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Members are asked to:

- (i) consider and endorse the Action Plan as the way forward for discussion and to support the Cadboll Pictish Stone and the Pictish Trail project in principle.
- (ii) consider allocating £1,500 of the Area Discretionary budget to this project.

Signature:

Designation: Area Development Manager.

Date: 22 May 2001

Ref:

Background Papers

**The Pictish Trail
and
Hilton of Cadboll Cross-Slab**

A Framework for Action

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

**Produced for Discussion
by
The Highland Council
May 2001**

Background: The Cadboll Stone

The Hilton of Cadboll Pictish Stone (Cross-slab) is one of the most important archaeological monuments in Scotland and is of international interest. The upper portion of the sculpted stone today is a prime display in the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Proud of their Pictish heritage the local community of Easter Ross in the mid 1990's requested that the Cadboll Stone be returned to its original home at the Hilton of Cadboll. The sculpted stone with its elaborate, intricate designs, would then have focussed attention on Ross and Cromarty's other Pictish remains and have brought with it associated cultural and economic benefits.

This desire for the return of the stone was not supported by the National Museums of Scotland but assistance was offered to create a reconstruction at the site. After many years of fund raising the Tain and Easter Ross Civic Trust erected a reconstruction of the Hilton of Cadboll stone in 2000. The carving and erection of this stone and the associated car parking and access facilities, has engendered pride and appreciation of their Pictish heritage by the people of the Seaboard villages, has brought confidence to these disadvantaged communities and has proven itself to be a tourist attraction.

Today the front face of the reconstructed stone remains uncarved. As the stone is curing this must soon take place. No record of the original design exists as the original stone had its cross-face removed in 1676 and an inscription added. Limited archaeological excavation earlier this year has established that carved stone fragments do exist on site. Even more importantly, this excavation located the lower portion (stump) of the original stone.

These archaeological finds together with the local community's desire to complete the carving of the reconstructed stone and to further promote their Pictish heritage, for example, Nigg Old Trust's plans to care and display the Nigg Pictish stone, present a unique opportunity which must be grasped.

Purpose: A Framework for Action

This brief Framework for Action paper seeks simply to capitalise on the opportunity now afforded by the Cadboll Stone, to present a vision for the way ahead for the Stone and Ross and Cromarty's wider Pictish heritage and to detail those actions needed to deliver this vision.

No single organisation has the sole remit to deliver the range of local and national benefits the Cadboll Stone project potentially offers. The Highland Council has produced this Framework for Action paper as a discussion document and hence as an aid for all involved to agree a way forward and to appreciate how their respective contributions can deliver the wider vision.

The Pictish Trail and Hilton of Cadboll Cross-Slab Vision

At the heart of this vision is the recognition of the desire by the people of Ross and Cromarty to promote their Pictish heritage in Ross and Cromarty. It is unfortunate that the original Cadboll Pictish Stone is not in Ross and Cromarty but it is welcomed that it occupies a prime location within the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. This location should be capitalised upon and used as a gateway to Ross and Cromarty, to the Cadboll Stone reconstruction, to the wider Pictish Trail and to a locally approved museum which houses the lower portion of the original stone. Complementing these initiatives will be the development of a school of stone carving in Easter Ross.

This Vision can only be realised if the following objectives are delivered:

- **Stone Reconstruction**
To complete the carving of the front face of the reconstructed stone based on its original design.
- **Care and Display of Cadboll Stone Stump**
To recover the lower portion of the original stone and identify and secure an appropriate and registered local museum for its long-term care and display.
- **Development and Management of The Pictish Trail**
To develop and manage the Pictish Trail to ensure that all Pictish remains are cared for and displayed in an appropriate and co-ordinated manner.
- **Promotion of Pictish Heritage**
To promote Ross and Cromarty's Pictish heritage, in particular the Cadboll Stone, to the people of Ross and Cromarty, to its visitors and to the national and international archaeological fraternity.
- **Stone Carving School**
To develop in parallel with the carving of the reconstructed stone, a training facility and courses for stone carving in Easter Ross.

Priorities for Action

Priorities for Action have been drawn up for each of the five objectives listed.

Stone Reconstruction

If the Cadboll Stone reconstruction is to have its front face carved to the design of the original stone rather than a modern day interpretation, as currently prepared, requires three separate but related elements of work to be completed:

- Archaeological Dig
An archaeological dig is required to recover and record all surviving material relating to the Hilton of Cadboll stone.
- Original Design of the Stone
All fragments recovered from the archaeological dig, including those recovered during the January 2001 dig, require an art-historical analysis and illustration of original design to be completed.
- Carving of the Front Face of the Stone
The stone will need to be carved on site. The sculptor, Mr Barry Grove, who carved the back face, is currently available and willing to undertake the work.

Care and Display of the Cadboll Stone Stump

The stump is currently in the ground and in theory in a stable conservation environment and protected by scheduling and state guardianship. However, as the existence of the stump is now well known, fears exist locally for its continued safety.

- Archaeological Dig
An archaeological dig is required, as part of the dig to recover and record the surviving fragments, to determine whether the stump of the original stone can or shall be removed and, if necessary, to record its carved face.
- Care and Display
If moved the stump will require to be cared for indoors as it is likely that any exposure to the elements would erode it rapidly. Efforts are required to identify and secure a long-term home for the stump in either a new Museum in Hilton or in one of the existing local Museums.

Development and Management of Pictish Trail

The Cadboll Stone, whilst arguably the most famous of Pictish archaeological remains in Scotland, is not the only Pictish remain of interest in Ross and Cromarty. Other cross-slabs of equal archaeological importance exist, for example at Nigg and Shandwick, while a number of local museums, for example, the Tarbat Discovery Centre, have important collections of stones and fragments.

- Care and Display
Efforts are required to quantify, cost and deliver as necessary the works required to ensure that all of Ross and Cromarty's Pictish remains are cared for and displayed in an appropriate and co-ordinated manner.

Promotion of Pictish Heritage

Experience has shown that archaeological digs in themselves and the carving of the stone reconstruction are attractions to residents and visitors alike. The opportunity exists with such attractions or events to promote Ross and Cromarty's wider Pictish heritage and in particular the Pictish Trail.

* Carving - links to Early Christian heritage & to Kingdom / Lordship of Isles.

- Website, Leaflet and Press Promotion
Complementary efforts are required at both the national and local levels to promote the archaeological dig and stone carving. Existing websites, for example, visitscotland/HOST, Historic Scotland, to carry up-to-date information and discoveries, whilst leaflets need to be prepared and circulated through the TIC Network and press releases prepared and co-ordinated between agencies.
- The Pictish Trail Leaflet
To be completed and circulated to TIC's and other locations and available on websites before the commencement of the archaeological dig.
- Academic World
An archaeological dig at Hilton of Cadboll will generate considerable interest from archaeologists and historians alike. The opportunity should be taken to present local and national lectures and to present a paper at the 2003 Edinburgh Conference.

Stone Carving School

(Due to the timescales available when preparing this paper it was not possible to secure the necessary information to complete this section).

Delivery.

Successful delivery of this Framework for Action and with it the realisation of the cultural and economic opportunity Ross and Cromarty's Pictish heritage offers, depends on:

- Effective leadership and management of the project
- Commitment and joint working by national and local organisations alike
- The identification of the necessary resources

Leadership and Management

The Tain and Easter Ross Civic Trust have successfully provided the community focus to the stone reconstruction and at this time are the natural project leaders. However, as the Trust fosters partnerships with other community interests, for example, Tarbat Discovery Centre, Groam House Museum and Nigg Old Trust, it will be necessary to review this leadership role.

The Seaboard Initiative, a community development initiative, has a proven track record in project delivery and hence offers the project the human resource and the financial mechanism needed to progress the project.

Commitment and Joint Working

No single organisation can successfully deliver the Cadboll Stone and the wider development, management and promotion of Ross and Cromarty's Pictish heritage. The various projects that are listed in this Framework for Action document will require decisions and actions to be made by a large number of individuals and organisations. It is in everyone's best interests to work together. A Project Steering Group, or equivalent, led by the Trust will be formed at an early date with all interested local and national organisations invited to participate.

Identification of Resources

Additional financial resources require to be identified and secured if the Vision promoted and the opportunities afforded by the Pictish Trail and the Hilton of Cadboll Stone are to be realised. When considering project funding all decision-makers are asked to consider the wider project. It is anticipated that project funding will be requested and secured from a wide range of partners and come in many different forms, be that in-kind contributions from local community groups or grants from external organisations.

Timescale

To deliver these objectives and capitalise on the opportunity afforded by the Pictish Trail and the Hilton of Cadboll Stone is a complex and significant task involving many local and national organisations and local community groups. While there is a critical need for early action to undertake and promote the archaeological dig and complete the carving this must be complemented by action in the medium term to identify resources to develop and manage Ross and Cromarty's other Pictish remains.