

## **Cairnbaan Clustering Event**

On Friday 5<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October, CADISPA held a Clustering event at the Cairnbaan Hotel in Argyll. A number of groups from the Argyll area of the network attended:

- ✚ Lismore
- ✚ Dunbeg
- ✚ Furnace
- ✚ Bridgend, Islay
- ✚ Southend

Jan Brown from Ardfern in Argyll, acted as a CADISPA expert and gave a presentation to the groups based on her experience of bringing the award winning Craignish Hall to completion in November 2005.

The event began on the Friday evening with a dinner and welcome for the delegates. This was followed by the market place – delegates were asked to bring a poster along to the event describing their project and place it on a wall. Each group was then invited to give a description of their project. The delegates were so enthused by the session that it ran on much longer than anticipated. However, the majority of people indicated on the evaluation forms that they had enjoyed this part of the event and found it most valuable.

The Saturday morning session began promptly at 9.15 am with Jan Brown giving a presentation on the Craignish Hall. The delegates were encouraged to ask Jan about queries and concerns relating to the process of a building a new hall. The following are a summary of the main topics from the day: -

### **New Hall**

#### **a. Have a realistic business plan**

Suggestions:

- ✚ Argyll and Bute Council may bankroll the project.
- ✚ If the Council cannot help with funding, look at an taking an overdraft with your bank (bearing in mind your constitution may need changed).
- ✚ Forecast cash flow and interest.

#### **b. Funding**

Suggestions:

- ✚ The Lottery will have an eighty year 'charge' on buildings.
- ✚ Forecast inflation during your fundraising period.
- ✚ All major funders wish to be that last brick in the wall.
- ✚ Claim GIFT AID on everything you do.

- ✚ Funders prefer input on specific parts of projects e.g. Lloyds TSB – disabled access.
- ✚ Keep close track on all donations, keep well organised accounts.

### **c. Renewables**

Suggestions:

- ✚ Under-floor heating is only suitable for regular use.
- ✚ Consider contacting Ali energy for advice.

### **d. Refurbishment vs a new hall**

Suggestions:

- ✚ Refurbishment incurs VAT, a new build does not.
- ✚ Anything attached to the building from the builders to the curtain rails does not incur VAT.
- ✚ VAT should be added included in the budget costs of applications to funders.

### **e. OSCR**

Suggestions:

- ✚ If a project is over £100k you would be advised to use the services of an accountant.

### **f. Legal structure**

Suggestions:

- ✚ Craignish found Stephen Phillips from Burness solicitors to be an expert in issues of legality concerning community groups.
- ✚ Always ask lawyers to act pro-bono.

### **g. Construction period**

Suggestions:

- ✚ Remember that costs are only estimates.
- ✚ Form a sub-committee – they would report back to the main committee, with recourse to other groups.
- ✚ Professional fees are a percentage of the overall costs (fixed fees are a better option for budgeting).
- ✚ Consider preliminaries, e.g. a site hut will be required.

**The participants had similar and over-lapping issues and ideas. These included ideas for community involvement:**

- a. Hosting events including fun days, photo exhibitions, live music, sponsored clean-up, funding 'thermometer,' etc.

Discussions were held on the following:

- ✚ The merits of employing a fundraiser/project officer, self-employed vs employing staff and where to advertise etc.
- ✚ Websites as a vehicle to ensure transparency (advertising Minutes etc).
- ✚ How to create a people friendly website (e.g. by advertising a calendar of events, photos, competitions enables other groups to use it e.g. the local school, hall users' etc).
- ✚ Consider creating a brand for your community organisation through a relevant image/slogan.
- ✚ Tapping into the skills in the community for fundraising events and for committee support (consider carrying out a skills audit of the local community).
- ✚ Loan finance and the resistance from the community.

Discussions centred around the unforeseen value of community development. What do people gain from taking part in such projects? Suggestions included:

- The excitement/buzz
- Community cohesion
- Learning new skills
- Meeting new people
- Makes you feel like a "proper human being"
- Creates a feeling of usefulness
- Creates challenges and goals
- We've created a tourist attraction – aims and objectives

We would like to thank the Awards For All for a grant to enable us to carry out the event.

CADISPA

