

16.10.23 – 20.30 – 22.00 via zoom.

Approximately 25 attendees with some coming and going.

*** these are “raw” notes - word for word where possible, with just a little formatting / structuring / bold added to make it as easy to follow as possible ***

We want to talk pros and cons of a new potential site, Knockengorroch (water of deugh). On this site there is a regular, annual festival by the same name (Knockengorroch).

Idea for this meeting: “live AP” – raise your opinions which will be recorded live and shared in AP as part of the to and fro.

Start: Overview of some of the differences between sites, and then some more detailed impressions from visit.

Knockengorroch SITE OVERVIEW:

Less infrastructure. However, likely lower cost. They have not given us an actual number at this point because they do not generally hold festivals except the Knockengorroch festival which takes place about 3 weeks after we would potentially hold celtic burn there. So, some people from that festival would maybe need to come to that site while we are there. K site has held a rainbow gathering in the past and they like that culture/ concepts around events with similar culture.

Q: is this the last week of April?

A: discussion in the AP about this. April 29th – 7th May was decided in previous AP as dates for even this year but Marthrown was booked 22nd April – 30th due to booking logistics – site only had availability on these dates.

Plan that if we switch site we go with previously agreed date.

Impressions from site visit (Sam, Rachel, Allan)

Screenshare with pictures to follow during meeting itself.

Impressions: wild and windswept. You come in across open moorland and come down into a valley which has a river running through it. It was a fairly still day but could be a bit of a wind tunnel in other weather. Big open area with lots of buildings – a lot of caravans in various states of disrepair. A really nice volunteer showed them around – there are people that live there who would be a part of it, it is their home. In their house – met Liz (site owner), who was very interested. House is a crazy museum with lots of stuff on the walls, hanging from the ceiling. Really interested in what we do but does not want a lot of hassle and doesn't want us to be mixed up with Knockengorroch as that is a family festival that has run for a long time.

Liz's main motivations were not money, they appeared to be 1. giving access to the land for people to appreciate it, not just keep it to herself, she loves this land and has lived there for 50 years. 2. Be sure that visitors were going to be consensual and respectful about the infrastructure. 3. Add to the land, leave it better. 4 Be people with good communication skills who are easy to communicate with.

First area when you come in – entrance, trees, river – “glamping area” during their festival. Houses, kitchen area. Commercial kitchen.

Looking alongside pics now. Pic 1 – river, by where you come in. little island.



The next area is very spread out. Coming down into the site – see the caravans (this is one set but there are numerous others).



Polytunnel is a new polytunnel. Unknown if we could use. Next pic shows coming down towards where the houses were. Portacabin in wood – commercial kitchen.





On the right of it – black building – described as the “sitting room” where the volunteers to so presumably we have no access to it but it would be in the middle of the site. Muddy track there linking up to the caravan zone. Main house – white house – where Lizs’ brother lives. A bit of a community lives there all the time who would be right in the middle. Next you can see an “office” – during the K festival there is an office in there. Full of stuff. We’d be there right at the start of the festival so who knows if we can use.





Caravan in foreground of pic by bridge – far right – a structure for DJ booth which is in the shape of jimmy carr's head lol.



Main stage – house with mossy roof, and white building in background can also be used.



The K festival has 3000 people so it's a rather big site. May want to concentrate In front of main stage. We wouldn't be able to have everyone in the main stage as "not strong enough". It is a scaffolding frame under scaffolding boards. It is usually a stage that holds speakers and performers. Not for people dancing within so wouldn't be able to have a party. Was full of sofas and chairs piled on top of each other. Could be an event space. Bird netting on it – semi open.







More caravans – caravans caravans everywhere. Lovely firepit where we could burn properly.



Then pic looking back wowards houses in middle of area. Looks boggy but was quite pebbly underneath so possible to park vans etc.



Long house – has a chimney but fire blocked off. No electricity there or anywhere – we'd have to run generators. Pic – inside longhouse – long and thin, messy.





Next – beyond long house is a little bridge, more grass by river where camping possible.



Q: ground looks lumpy. Does it look like good camping area

A: numerous areas would be suitable, mostly flat. Not all perfect, you wouldn't want to camp next to river anyway. Lots of flat bits for vans / camping easily enough.

Q: was it windy when you were there and did you feel exposed in the fields

A: it wasn't that windy on that day but did feel exposed

Q: only fire place is pit?

A: they were quite open to us building fire / effigies / things of size and artistry. They do want to preserve ground for livestock etc but a few areas could be ok. One big area out near the main stage, near long house that would be the best place. Various places for firepits ok. We can definitely burn things. They've had effigies before. They are happy as long as we are sufficiently alert to dangers of fire.

One of the issues: we would need a public event licence so the fire brigade would be involved with that so there would be a liaison there.

Q: is it actually a yes from them given slow comms / vibes from them

A: talk with Liz didn't seem negative, seemed positive – she was along the same page with us in a lot of things and was mostly considering how much was appropriate. Slow comms – she was keen on the possibility of some non-financial involvement in terms of work they've got going on – keen on any artists who may have ideas / visions for big panels for them. Keen on that sort of collab. Less financial exchange. Suspects cheaper than marthrown anyway.

Further response – money is not very important to Liz but doesn't want to be inconvenienced. Was tempted to give it to us for free but just really doesn't want inconvenience / us causing headaches

right before their main event. They'd be more up for it other times of the year. Marthrown is 9000-10000. Suggests we would not want to do more than 5000 for this site given how much infrastructure we need.

Q: if we are moving the event to the earlier time – would they be more likely to say yes?

A: impression – daughter actually stepping in to do more festival prep and needs to speak with her daughter. So maybe there that the decision is being made. Tried phoning and left a message. Not met daughter. They have volunteers that arrive beginning of May for the festival. (would be tail end of event). Could be a clear boundary.

Cost addition: **Q:** would we raise ticket prices in order to purchase generators / rain / shade structures

A: we talked about this topic before – we're hoping we'd have more of the budget available for these things with a lower cost of the site. Tom has offered mobile sauna and hot tub (!) and we've talked about other things to potentially purchase and store – this site would permit expansion over the years as large.

- Issue of raising prices / purchasing – keep separate regardless, we can talk later once we've called it. We can hire things ie toilets. Buying things separate.

One thing to keep in mind: less infrastructure – we may want to have more spaces that we hire or buy?

Q: there was some interest, instead of charging: providing other services i.e. artwork. What does that mean?

A: was discussed in terms of whether they need anything more done on site. They have work groups come down for the K festival. She mentioned large panels no further info. Wouldn't be a "do us a bunch of panels and you can come for free", there will be cash, but she was keen on tapping into artistic ideas. Keen on fresh ideas.

Q: any idea when we'll get a definite answer? The point of this meeting was that we need to get back to marthrown either way. Don't want to say no to marthrown and then be stuck! Needed ASAP!

A: sounds like they have been called and haven't responded. In emails in the past they have been somewhat slow. Unclear at this point. We expected to hear back this week so anticipate hearing soon, within this current week, suggests calling it by next Monday if we don't hear.

Some discussion on numbers – clear to hear that it was not a for-profit event. As far as money goes – we have no idea at this point. Liz enjoys people enjoying the land and wants that – but doesn't want place trashed.

Q: Midge factor?

A: she previously said, in August, that there aren't problems with midges at that time of the year.

Q: infrastructure: what can we use in terms of showers?

A: 1 shower, 2 composting toilets but we can't use them so we'd have to get toilets in, river for swimming, will need to hire showers for soap use

Q: can we use all the described areas except the sitting room?

A: no to sitting room but otherwise – there is a lot of site, how much do we want to use? Could spread out and have tents and vans all over the shop but would be peppercorn situation. We may just want to pick an area and camp there.

Long house, main stage are most likely areas we would want to use. Other stuff is probably too close

to their house. Camping elsewhere would be a bit far. Polytunnel is only question, handy space if we can get it but quite far from the long house and stage.

There was nowhere that looked cozy to sit except their living room space where they'd be hanging out. Word would likely get round volunteers. We would need a big marquee or two and cozy spaces – nowhere fulfilling those things.

Q: ok with nudity?

A: likely yes but a guess.

Some of the staff stay in the caravans during the festival itself.

Q: Kitchen space ok to use and location?

A: Commercial proper kitchen, all aluminum and shiny. 2 fridges, gas cooker. There are pics. It is a bit away from the main stage and that sort of area. Would need to walk past other buildings but not super far. Also has flat grass beside it where they put a marquee for K festival.

Chat – lots of shower and structure chat.

Pros and cons comparing site could be good. Make as an open document so people can

Further pictures to be shared all in one place.

Q: can we move the benches in the firepit?

A: fixed in the ground

Q: usually marquee next to kitchen in their event – could they possibly share that?

A: bring your own marquee situation

Request for temperature check!

Summary thought: large, interesting site with a lot of potential. A lot of pros but also several cons. Overall it would be “this is more of an adventure”. More effort. Possible more reward. Potentially amazing adventure. At the same time – no illusions that there will be less cosiness and comfort. There are a lot of resources in the community so maybe we can do it but there is a lot of doing to do. Ease or work/reward adventure.

Some to and fro on dates. This is only a provisional booking so it's only on the telegram – they were the only dates they could do on that site. Those are the only dates available.

Q: how will it work with boundaries between us and volunteers? We are signing a contract with one another that we want to be a certain way – trust. Consent is the thing. Strangers there – probably sound people but we don't want that risk. We already are unhappy with just one person wandering around at marthrown so that would need to be clarified – boundary that they aren't involved.

A: discussions had with Liz – key thing comes down to the scheduling and when people arrive for K. understanding - just weekend before our event finished that people would be arriving. Impression was that it wouldn't be that many at that time. is something that needs more discussion to clarify in advance.

There are also people who live right at the centre of the site – they'd have to leave their homes to not be at the centre of the site. This is what happens when microburn is on – they actually leave / stay away during that time. People live right next to the kitchen / centre of site. No way of excluding those people.

Possible that those in caravans will move.

Possible to include volunteers?

Possible to shift?

Possible that very few humans in "our" part of the field.

Summary thought: this decision needs a lot of information – we're a month away from being able to make decision – infrastructure. Seems like a lot to go through now. Potential problematic situation as there could be hard nos.

Summary thought: strategically re infrastructure. CB is a very decentralised burn, very focussed on radical self-reliance. Are we ready as a community to take on decentralised infrastructure on this level? If we were a little larger and closer, culture-wise, maybe we would be in a better spot to sort this out. Building large collective infrastructure doesn't entirely match what we have right now. Camp infrastructure isn't really what we have at the moment – numbers and energy in this fledgling burn. Sound curfew is also a problem side note. If we had theme camps arranged around it would work better. As we grow and our culture solidifies we have the potential to do this but not totally sure we are ready to take this one now. Reservations that people will do enough to make it work.

Summary thought: this site sounds really exciting for CB future but maybe not just yet. We could draw the line that we don't book marthrown again – this is 100% the last time and we don't book again. We could even sow the seeds at marthrown this year – workshops to get people ready / people stepping up to create infrastructure could take place at that time step up towards it. Site has a lot of potential but not certain we're 100% ready yet.

Thoughts are echoed in chat. Agreement, apprehension about theme camp from no infrastructure in just a few months time. Theme camps take over yurts this year as stepping stones to the following year. Thoughts echoed further – concerns about going to that site at this stage.

Big point – this is something for next year but not this year – quite a lot of echoing.

SCREENSHARE: showing map of areas.

Final Qs – fire situation?

A: fire brigade / events licence chat will have to happen but site hypothetically ok.

SET OF QUESTIONS THAT WE NEED FURTHER INFO ON (irrespective of timing this year / next year)

- cost of site
- boundaries / relationship with volunteers
- actual definite yes from the site?
- possible other?

Note: events licence (plus presumably more complicated insurance than marthrown) – will take some doing. Details on events licence needed (initial contact made – was on holiday that week)

Planning for next year: "burning mandatory" meeting – when you purchase it, you promise to attend the meeting. In that meeting it would be great for everyone who wants to be involved comes with theme camp proposals, temple, effigy, form teams around it. From there – early on – get everyone

involved and forming crews that care for elements of the city. Operating more independently already, from the get-go.

OPTIONS:

- Go with marthrown
- Go with new site
- Go with new site at a later point

ACTIONS GOING FORWARD:

Open for decision until next week

Pros/cons summary sheet

answers to questions

HANDS RAISING

18 present at this point – there has been some fluctuation.

Wait one year: 15

Knock this year: sort of 1

CONSENSUS: 1 week for this information to be gathered / opinions expressed for 1 week then a final decision will be made?

But: no one at this meeting has said they strongly want the site (K) for this year – do we want to have further convo?

However: not everyone could attend, so leaving AP open to hear voices who strongly want K. group attending this meeting is in general consensus but need to give space for others.

Could we go ahead and ask for a date for 2025? Rip off the band-aid and decide this is the final year for Marthrown no matter what – and then we see what site options we have but we start sooner and build towards this in the event itself this year.

However: K is not the only other site in the world – perhaps we will find somewhere else in the meantime and may be needed based on the answers from K site. **Keep your eyes open and add to the spreadsheet if you have a site!**