

Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust

Minutes of Meeting of Trustees held on Tuesday 1 September 2009 at 7:15 p.m. At the home of Gordon Evans

Present: Gordon Evans, chairman, Tim Fison, Margaret Jarvis, Paul Jarvis, Ann Partridge, Richard Paul, Clare Thomas,

1. **Apologies:** Rob Coope, Julie Gardiner, Margaret Gimblett, Ben Henderson, June Riddell
2. **Minutes of previous meeting of 13 June 2009:** Approved with minor corrections.
3. **Matters Arising:** None.

4. Reports from Groups:

a. Woodlands and WGS

A final WGS report for Tim Barrett at the FC Perth Office was completed and handed in by 30 June 2009. The report, which was very detailed and contained maps of the whole area, denotes the end of the initial five-year period of the grant. There has been no feed-back yet about the report.

Since last year's bracken spraying has not been entirely successful, Willie Shorthouse has deployed his team again, at no extra cost to us.

PJ has not yet received an estimate from T. Smeaton for fencing off 20 x 12 metres of the RSS for a possible tree nursery. RP suggested Rab Robertson in Rannoch for this job. **RP to give phone number, address etc of Rab Robertson to PJ.**

b. Visitor Access

There was a discussion about camper vans and preventing their access onto DC for overnight parking. Ben Henderson has a bar that could be installed over the entrance to prevent camper vans, but after discussion, it was decided that a bar might create other problems, like preventing access of machinery etc., on to DC. It was decided that, for now, signs would be placed on the road to say "No camper vans. Please use camping site down the road". **TF will make a sign.**

PJ informed that forestry work is to begin in about two weeks on the north side, and this might make entry by the north gate difficult.

[Note added subsequently by PJ: clear felling began on 6th September and keep-out notices have been put up by FC at both the entry gate off the Schiehallion Road and on our side of our north gate. There will be felling along the access road in the immediate area up to our north gate. Anyone intending to go through that gate in either direction must notify Douglas Halliday at the Tay Forest District Offices at Dunkeld in advance; phone 01350 727284. Felling work is likely in that area for at least a month.]

c. Observation and Education Facility

There is a small leak in the window. **TF will ask Bill Hoare if he can fix it.**

The OEF account still has money in it. After discussion, it was decided that perhaps this money could be used for a composting toilet. **MJ will talk to Robin Hull.**

The area around the OEF is in need of weeding and other maintenance, especially along the path from the car park. It was suggested that perhaps the Rural Skills visitors could do some weeding. A discussion then ensued as to what should be weeded. Some weeds, like thistles, nettles and docks can be important to wildlife. It was decided that along the path between the car park and the OEF, however, we would concentrate on the wild flowers, and the 'weeds' would be discouraged.

d. Maintenance, Fencing, and RSS

RSS: Leanne Walker, from the Department of Agriculture, requested a meeting with PJ after she had visited the RSS, to answer a number of questions on her forms. She said that our RSS project looked fine. Based on an earlier query by TF, PJ asked LW what she thought of the quality of the vegetation at Whitebridge. She responded that it was quite good species-rich heathland vegetation, but that it would now benefit from grazing this autumn to reduce the grasses. In relation to funding, LW explained that after we receive the final payment next month, there will be no more funding from the RSS, since the RSS will cease to exist. All funding for the countryside has now been reorganized into one pot, accessed via one channel. There could be future funding for specific new projects particularly with an agricultural bias, and, on the whole, such projects will be large ones. After hearing this information, we discussed the possibility of our bridge building project over the Goulandie burn as a possible specific funding project. PJ thought that we should discuss this with the administrators of the new funding system, after we have drawings and costings for the bridge.

Maintenance & Fencing: RC has reported that he is not doing deer control at the moment because the deer have young, but that he would probably start again next month. On-going deer control is a necessity so that the planted trees can grow.

PJ reported that the new stiles are now at the parking space within the forest 200 metres from the gate and that **RC** and **PJ** will erect them in the next few days, with help from **TF**, if needed.

[Note added subsequently by PJ. In view of tree-felling by FE contractors to begin on the 7th, PJ and RC moved the un-assembled stiles through the north gate onto DunCoillich on the 6th and took one set down to its erection site by the fence.]

TF reported that he, his sons, and a friend have done quite a lot of work on the head-dyke. He recommended that a new gate be installed on the main access path up the hill. The present gate is in a bad state. All agreed that a new, wicket gate should be erected. TF also reported that to the left of this gate there is a large gap in the wall of several metres, which should be filled in. It was decided that both Sandy McAdam and Rab Robertson would be asked to give quotes for filling in this gap. **RP will measure the gap.**

Sandy McAdam has estimated £250 as the cost for creating stepping stones across the burn. All agreed this should be done. **TF will arrange this with SM.**

e. Natural and Cultural Heritage

CT had nothing to report.

f. Keltneyburn Hydroscheme

The corrected contract documents have now been signed by PJ, witnessed by Bill Hoare, and returned to the solicitors.

g. Education Activities

Thirty-seven John Muir Trust award students from Pitlochry HS will visit DC on Thursday (September 10), as part of a three-day programme. The students will plant about 100 birch trees on the slope facing the Goulandie burn. Bill Hoare will also attend to erect electric fencing with the students. *[Note added subsequently by PJ: After 24 hours of rain the Goulandie burn was in full flood and impassable. The tree planting activity was transferred to the north side of Dun Coillich accessed via the north gate.]*

CT asked everyone to please save the lids of shoeboxes for her to use with cubs' activities. **All**

h. Publicity and Website

Publicity has been lacking of late and, after discussion, it was decided that a sub-committee should be set up to deal with this problem. The committee should write articles on a regular basis for local press, such as *Comment, Quair, News Round North*, as well as co-ordinate

information sent to the website about our activities. JR and MG were proposed as members of the committee. **TF will talk to them about it.**

5. Bonfire

TF proposed that we have a festive bonfire to dispose of a pile of waste wood, old fence posts etc., on site at DC. All agreed this would be a good idea. The date is set for 18 September 2009. All members will be invited. The Trustees and helpers will provide light refreshments and some drinks, but Trustees and other Members might want to bring their own bottle! **TF will write the invitation; MJ will send out. AP and TF will organise refreshments.**

6. Treasurer's Report

Reserve account:	£62, 163.87 (inc. £57,000 loan to be repaid October 2009)
OEF Reserve account:	5,441.05
Current account:	3,741.73

7. Any Other Business

Black Grouse Survey. There has been no report yet of results of the survey. **TF to follow up.**
Newsletters. Newsletters are usually mailed with the AGM material, but this year they were not ready in time to mail, so they were left in various places for people to pick up. All agreed that this had not been satisfactory. In future, Newsletters will always be mailed out to the Membership, preferably with the AGM material. There should also be a link on the website for the Newsletter. **MJ will arrange this.** It was also agreed that new members will be sent a copy of the Newsletter when they join.

Dall Estate at Rannoch. A discussion about the possible multi-million pound development of the Dall estate into a luxury resort revealed that all present were against it and would like HPCLT to lodge an official objection. It was decided that we should ask Colin Liddell to send an objection on behalf of HPCLT to P&K Council and to Forest Enterprise. **TF will talk to CL.** It was also decided that this same letter of objection should be sent to others, such as MSPs, *The Courier*, *Comment*, etc. **TF will ask CL who else might receive a copy of the letter.** A group called *Capability Scotland* is co-ordinating objections to the Dall development. **RP will send its address to TF.**

AGM PJ requested that we start thinking about the next AGM, which is usually held on a Saturday around the end of March. It was decided that the 2010 AGM will be held at Grandtully Hall. We now need to decide on an exact date and a speaker. **Suggestions for a speaker are needed.** RP suggested his friend, George McGavin, who is presently appearing on BBC TV. However, he will be overseas at the end of March in 2010. RP agreed to investigate possible alternative dates with George McGavin that would be acceptable to the Treasurer.

New Email RP announced that his new email address is now Richard@rannoch.biz.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 9 November 2009 at the home of CT.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.