

Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust

Minutes of Meeting of Trustees held on Tuesday, 10th August 2004, at Duireaskin, Aberfeldy at 7.15 p.m.

Present: Lynnette Borradaile, Marjorie Finlayson, Julie Gardiner, Bill Hoare, Robin Hull, Paul Jarvis (Chairman), Hamish Nicholson, Andy Pointer, Margaret Jarvis (Minutes Secretary).

1. **Apologies:** Gordon Evans, Marjorie Keddie, Innes Smith.
2. **Minutes of previous meeting 13th July:** approved and signed after slight amendments. Copies of the amended version will be sent to all. **ACTION MJ**
3. **Matters arising:** Some Trustees were uncertain whether they had paid their subs. MJ will check with the Treasurer. **ACTION MJ**
4. **Woodland Project:** PJ reported a frustrating month dealing with the bank. On 15th July he had given Derek Russell, business manager at the Royal Bank in Aberfeldy, a detailed dossier of required information, including details on Trustees, project budget and cash-flow, together with our application for a bridging overdraft. DR was then on holiday for two weeks and passed the application to a colleague, Alison Tosh, who had provided no response until pressed. She passed the application to Ian Martin, Agricultural Adviser. PJ had spoken to him several times but had made little progress. GE, IS and PJ then saw DR on Wednesday 4th August and emphasised the need for a written response. They were promised a letter by Monday 9th and this eventually was available for collection from the bank today, 10th.
Copies of this letter were circulated for discussion, together with GE's comments on it. The letter offered "approval in principle", subject to nine conditions, some of which were difficult to understand. The letter offered a straight-forward commercial arrangement without any community considerations. Comments varied between 'outrageous' and 'disappointing'.
The meaning of 'Bond and Floating charge' and 'Lending rate' was not clear. In an early discussion DR had suggested that a rate of 2.5 to 3.0% above 'bank rate' would be charged.
Personal securities amounting to £25,000 were asked for. There was agreement with GE that personal guarantees were unacceptable and also unnecessary since the value of the land is three times the maximum loan sought. PJ pointed out that there is a substantial positive margin between the budgeted cost and the potential income from the Woodland Grant Scheme; also that Colin Liddell had previously recommended the avoidance of personal guarantees.
RH wondered about raising the money locally; 50 people contributing £1000 would be sufficient to cover the temporary overdraft. MF pointed out that this would take a lot of work and time, involve a lot of administration and further delay the project. Other ideas were mooted: trying other Banks, although it was thought that they, too, would no longer be permitted to make decisions based on local knowledge; trying Building Societies, since the necessary loan is less than that needed for a moderate-sized house; and re-phasing the work programme. MF wondered about getting advice from the Forestry Commission. PJ noted that we were already doing so and added that Ian Martin had been encouraged to contact Syd House (FC Perth). LB suggested

contacting other NGOs such as the Borders Forest Trust to see if we could benefit from their experience.

RH wondered if we could reduce costs by reducing planting and increasing the area for natural regeneration, which was going on very well, but it was pointed out that it was quite local and restricted in species.

It was agreed that the first move would be for PJ, GE and IS to meet again with DR to discuss the conditions in his letter. **ACTION PJ, GE, IS** (meeting fixed for Tuesday 17th August)

- 5. Interim Archaeological report:** HN and RH had looked over the Interim Archaeological Report and assessed it as a very good job. A cheque for £825 had been sent to Clare Thomas. She will have examined aerial photos before producing the final report: further work is awaiting completion after the bracken has died down. The interim report was circulated. It included photos and maps of field systems, shielings and hut circles, with a recommendation to refrain from any planting for 10 m on either side of all these. No planting is planned in almost all of the areas concerned. Where it is, markers would be put out at the time.

LB and RH pointed out other squares where planting should be avoided: a gully where ring ouzels had been nesting; areas where there are willows recovering from earlier browsing; and an interesting circular area, most visible in spring, near a former lekking site. PJ emphasised that all areas would be carefully marked out on the ground prior to mounding.

AP warned that there could be a 20 m discrepancy between grid references on the OS map and GPS readings.
- 6. Keltneyburn Hydro Scheme:** PJ reported that he had contacted Tim Kirkwood, of GKD-Galbraith in Inverness, recommended by William Jackson (as suggested by MF). TK had also been contacted by John Fry on behalf of the pipe-line landlords and will be advising on financial negotiations between the potential landlords and the lessees. PJ had sent TK a dossier of information, including copies of relevant correspondence and the Scoping Study. The current situation is that Colin Liddell has sent more information to TK on behalf of the pipe-line landlords, now acting as a group. TK will act for all the landlords and suggest suitable rentals to them, individually. His fee, and CL's, is expected to be paid by KHS. AP asked if he had been briefed on our conservation priorities and was assured by PJ that he had.

PJ also reported that he and AP (BH was unable to be present) had met with CL and two of the pipe line landlords to look at the response from Bell and Scott to CL's last set of comments on their previous response. CL had now written to Bell and Scott re-emphasising a few outstanding issues and asking for revised "Offer" and "Contract" documents. PJ had made the point at the meeting that, unlike the other landlords, representatives of HPCLT were not empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Trust. BH pointed out that they may need authority to do so at a later date.
- 7. Work parties:** The next work party has been advertised for 20th August. There are no other advertised dates. BH said that the fencing around the NE corner needs repair, especially if cattle are to be grazing there this autumn. It is not stock-proof at present. BH was given authority to purchase any materials required. PJ offered to provide some Rylock fencing.

Other work includes

 - i. The stile at the end of the bridle path
 - ii. The footbridge

iii. Canes to mark the identified archaeological sites

iv. Removal of loose wire

LB suggested that we could ask the PSNS archaeological section to assist with iii. BH is waiting for SNH to advise on the design of a stile. AP emphasised his preference for a gate, on the grounds of safety; he would also find acceptable a large stile of the type at the Crieff road car park entrance to Griffin Forest. BH also favoured this, as being bicycle-friendly. PJ noted that NTS is replacing stiles with gates on Ben Lawers. It was agreed that there are not enough access points through the deer fence and the site meeting with JMT had highlighted this. It had been agreed that additional crossing points would be considered in the future. The previous Minutes were consulted to confirm the decision to replace the stile by a gate (BH had not been present at this meeting). LB pointed out that JMT had offered to help and had a work party coming up on 15th to 17th October. She will ask Andrew Campbell, JMT, to contact BH. **ACTION LB**

8. **Any other business:** BH mentioned the letter by John Allen in the JMT Journal soliciting opinion about a meter in the Forestry Commission Brae of Foss car park. He feels that JMT might ask for the views of HPCLT on this. Views were mixed: AP though Munro-baggers should contribute financially to car park upkeep; RH wouldn't want a charge in any HPCLT car park, and did not think FC charges were our concern; PJ thought it was a concern of ours because we should aim for wider cooperation over the whole area in the long term. LB thought we should encourage FC to organise a meeting of all interested parties to discuss the issue. AP took a longer term view and wondered if FC should be thinking of a new location for the car park. BH suggested phoning Hamish Murray to ask how the gates on the HPCLT/FC boundary are progressing and then raising the question of car park location **ACTION BH**

**Date of Next Meetings: 13th September (provisional depending on progress of discussions with the bank)
12th October 2005.**