

## Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust

### Minutes of Meeting of Trustees held on Tuesday 3 April 2007 at Cluain, Tomnacroich, Fortingall

**Present:** Rob Coope, Gordon Evans, Tim Fison, Bill Hoare (Chairman), Robin Hull, Paul Jarvis, Margaret Jarvis, Ann Partridge.

**1. Apologies:** Julie Gardiner, Clare Thomas.

**2. Welcome to New Trustee.** The Chairman welcomed Rob Coope as a new Trustee.

**3. Minutes of the previous meeting of 13 February 2007.** Approved.

**4. Matters arising:** See below.

**5. AGM:** On the whole, the group felt that the AGM went well. It was good to see some new faces. The numbers were up from last year, but we would like to see more people. There was a clash this year with another meeting. We will try to avoid this happening next year. At the meeting, one Trustee retired (IS), another retired and was re-elected (GE), and two others were elected (RC and AP). Colin Liddell explained to PJ that not enough Trustees had retired this year, according to the constitution. This matter will be rectified next year. Another Trustee, RH, who was co-opted last year, wished to be co-opted for another year, rather than be elected for a full term. PJ proposed that RH be co-opted again until the next AGM. **PJ will send appropriate paper work to RH. PJ will also write a thank you letter to Martin Price, the speaker. And, PJ will write a thank you to Innes Smith for his good work as a Trustee.** A report on the AGM, prepared by BH, has been sent to *Comment*, and *News Round North*. A copy of this report is attached to these minutes.

**6. Arising from AGM: Family and Corporate subscriptions. Ron Youngman's letter.**

The question of having a family membership rate was raised at the AGM. At present the subscription rate is £10 per person for adults and £1 per child up to 18. It was agreed that a family membership of £25 should be offered as a subscription rate. Corporate membership is also £25, and we would like to increase the numbers of corporate members. RH has some suggestions for new corporate members. **RH will send his suggestions to MJ. MJ and GE will work on new corporate memberships.** The question of instituting direct debits or standing orders for the payment of memberships was discussed and it was decided that a standing order should be set up. **MJ and GE will organise this. BH will send them a draft form that he already has for standing orders.**

Ron Youngman sent an email to RH with some concerns about DC. A copy of his letter is attached to these minutes. RY's first concern was that "alien species" should not be introduced "into upland environments" to create a sacrificial crop. P J said that this sacrificial crop had been grown on a registered agriculture field that could be used to grow anything. Also, this crop had been suggested by SEERAD. In addition, the species were not considered invasive and had been chosen carefully, after much consideration. The crop had attracted a lot of birds and butterflies and will be planted again this year in the same place. There was no evidence that last year's planting had been on an "upland environment". RY's second concern was that trees had been mounded and planted and grazers had been used. The Trustees had discussed at length, on several occasions, the question of whether to intervene with planting and grazing or to let nature take its course. After careful consideration, a decision had been made to plant and graze. RY's third concern was that access paths were to be introduced at DC. BH explained that there had never been any intention to create hard surface access paths on DC. Perhaps some small posts might be introduced to point out tracks that visitors might use and which might keep visitors from where they should not go. The only hard paths that will be created will be from the car park to the OEF, and possibly one to the footbridge from the car park. **RH will respond to RY's letter.**

With regard to next year's AGM, RH suggested that the procedure for setting a date and engaging a speaker should begin much earlier than had been done this year. PJ said that he already has a provisional agreement with Aubrey Manning to speak next year, if all agreed to have him. After

discussion, it was decided that **MJ would talk to the other organization that clashed with us this year and find out what their date for next year is.** Once we have a clear date, then **PJ will confirm a date with Aubrey Manning.** When that is done, then **PJ and MJ will reserve a space for the meeting, either in the Tryst Hall in Pitlochry or the Kynachan Hall in Tummel.** It was also suggested that we have some sort of meeting in Pitlochry in the autumn to raise awareness about DC.

## 7. Reports from Groups and matters arising:

**a) Woodlands** PJ reported that planting has been going on for the past two weeks on the east side and is now almost finished. Some of the area that was to have been left until the autumn has also been planted. Willie Shorthouse has done the planting and will be finished in a few days. He has done well. There is still an area left to plant, which will be done in 10 to 12 months. About 12 hectares that are already mounded will now not be planted, however, because CT has produced a map which enlarges the area that should not be planted. In CT's absence, further discussion about this area was deferred until later. In response to a question about the possible survival of the planting on the heather mounds now instead of later, PJ said the plants would probably be all right. There was some discussion about the west side and heeling in that is needed there. This work needs to be done as soon as possible.

**b) Visitor Access** The wall by the car park was not taken down on schedule because of the bad weather. A future date will be set. Once the wall is down, BH will put the signs up. The stile on the bridle path has been erected.

**c) Wildlife Observation Facility (OEF)** Planning permission has not yet been granted. The architect will soon make a site visit so that the planning permission can be submitted. Once submitted, planning permission should take about six weeks. Once it has been obtained, the site has to be prepared and then the building can be erected fairly quickly. RH is planning some sort of event for the opening of the OEF. He wants to have information about DC on posters in the OEF, so that all visitors can learn what there is at DC. **RH will write to all Trustees to request information about the various activities at DC.**

**d) Maintenance, Fencing and RSS** The grazing was successful. It has now ceased and the area is growing again. Bracken and heather control will probably take place later in the year. This year we will not take silage. It is too difficult and the quality is poor. Donnie Campbell did the cutting this year. There have been no major problems with fencing, but continual monitoring is important.

There was a lengthy discussion about deer control. IS was involved in the deer control last year and is still willing to help. Last year we used two deer stalkers: Sandy McAdam and Sandy Reid. In effect, SA did most of the deer stalking because he has ready access to the bridlepath and most of the invading deer belong to him. But stalking is now more difficult because of the mounding, which makes retrieving the deer difficult. Should the stalkers bury the deer instead? If so, we should pay them for the deer. Could the deer be driven off DC? This is possible if the deer are not well established, but almost impossible after more than a few weeks' residence. There is to be a meeting of the Deer Management Group next week and it was decided that **TF would attend the meeting.** TF will tell the group that we want to keep all deer off DC, if possible, or at least keep the numbers very low. Since deer can be shot at any time of the year, it was decided that **BH ask SM to shoot now any deer that he sees. If SM is unable to do this, then he will ask IS to get SR to shoot the deer.**

**e) Natural and Cultural Heritage** There is nothing new to report. In time, CT wants the area to be properly mapped.

**f) Keltneyburn Hydroscheme** There is nothing new to report.

**g) Educational Activities** TF reported that the principal of Calvine Primary School is very interested in getting her school involved in outdoor activities.

**h) Public Relations and Website** Several Trustees voiced concern about the state of public relations since Philip Campbell, who had responsibility for this area, has taken a temporary leave of absence to live abroad. Until he returns, all Trustees should give some help with public relations. BH said that he is willing to put information in *Comment* and *News Round North*, but he needs ideas. He has already submitted information about forthcoming walks on DC.

A new member, Richard Wickenden, remarked at the AGM that our website is out of date. Once he moves to Perthshire permanently, he might be interested in working on the website. He is a computer expert. **BH will check with AP, to see if he is agreeable to this arrangement.** If so, then **RH will invite RW for an informal discussion about this possibility.**

We did not produce a newsletter in 2006. The last one was in 2005. It was decided that we should definitely have a newsletter this year. **BH will get in touch with JG to see if she can produce it. If she can't, then RH will collate all the information. Everyone needs to contribute. RH will bring plans for a newsletter to the next meeting.**

## 8. Treasurer's Report

Current account: £ 6,657.03  
 OEF 8,049.30  
 Reserve account 47,268.63

**9. Any Other Business** PJ has been contacted by John Savory of Carrifran, which is a project very similar to DC. His group of about six to 12 people would like to look around DC. It was decided that they should be invited to come on July 8 for a walk at 2 p.m. led by BH. **PJ will invite them.**

PJ asked for approval for an Honours student from Edinburgh University to do a project about DC and Schiehallion. Everyone agreed that would be very good.

**10. Future Meetings** The next meeting will be at Duireaskin, the home of PJ and MJ, on Tuesday 5 June 2007.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.