

Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust  
**Scottish Charity Number: SC032801**

**Minutes of Trustees' Meeting held at Rhino Cafe, Aberfeldy  
Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June at 7.00 pm.**

Present: Andy Walker (chairman), Margaret Jarvis (minutes), Tim Fison, Heather Hamilton, Bill Hoare, Ann Macintosh, John Marshall, Andy Pointer, Richard Rees, Trish Waite, Bobby Wardle, Kelsey Wilson Ian Wilkinson.

1: Apologies: Rob Coope, Jeannie Grant, Willie McGhee, Emma O'Shea, Richard Paul, Julie Gardiner

2: Welcome to new Trustees present: KW, BW, and JM were welcomed and provided with guidance on the roles and responsibilities of Trustees.

3: Minutes of previous meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017: approved

4: Matters arising

The cooption of JM was formally approved.

The RSPB will be tagging hen harriers nationwide this year. HH has approved the tagging of the DC chicks

AW and AM attended the seminar by Colin Liddell on Trustees' responsibilities. CL suggested that Trustees' meetings should not exceed two hours in length!

AW has thanked Ruth Atkinson in person for the gift of her Forestry Commission booklet on native woodlands. A copy is in the hut.

BH said that barbecue invitations for 24<sup>th</sup> June had been sent to all members; they have been asked to reply.

5: Matters arising from minutes of AGM held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2017: A guided walk will be held at 12 noon before the barbecue on 24<sup>th</sup> June. A longer walk will be organised later from Braes of Foss carpark to the east side of DC where the trees are especially successful.

6: Financial Report: the financial report was circulated by IW. The balance in the business account is £15,878 and in the project account £9,824. There is no news on wayleave capitalisation. The NFU Mutual insurance company want to charge extra for cover of volunteer activities and say that fire damage to trees is not covered. This is not satisfactory. IW will shop around; membership of BTCV may cover volunteer insurance.

**ACTION IW**

BH reported that OSCR had accepted the annual report. He showed a histogram diagram of our income and expenditure provided by OSCR.

Mike Nixon has volunteered to succeed IW as treasurer. He is an experienced treasurer, well-known to BH.

**ACTION BH**

7: Forestry and deer culling: WMcG had given a verbal report to AW: no news about funds due from FCS following the WGS inspection, but he had been told by Neil McFarlane (FCS) to be optimistic. Neil McFarlane would be visiting Dun Coillich on 5<sup>th</sup> July. RC reported that last year's deer management effort was a success and that a similar approach could be taken

for this year (continued frequent monitoring of deer, approximate numbers and species, coupled with volunteer culling until the opening of the doe season in November when a contract approach is re-adopted. 19 deer culled so far this year. The meeting agreed. HH has seen a couple of roe from time to time.

8: Heart of Scotland project: WMcG has sent a report outlining projected expenditure and potential sources of funding. He is optimistic that funding can be obtained for 3 km of new fencing between DC and Schiehallion, necessary if DC's objectives are to be achieved.

HH left the meeting at this point. WMcG reported a future shortfall in funding for the project officer such that an interim period would need to be funded. Trustees considered it is important to ensure that HH continues in post. IW and WMcG will meet to discuss. BH will investigate a fund for young people in Highland Perthshire.

**ACTION BH, IW, WMcG**

9: Project Officer's report: HH tabled her report. Over 120 people have been hosted in the previous two months. Now the deciduous trees are in leaf they can be seen to be doing well, especially on the Schiehallion side. The youth trainees are doing well and have secured jobs. They will graduate on 6<sup>th</sup> July and trustees are encouraged to come.

Fencing, watergate repairs, path brush-cutting and various biological surveys have taken place on volunteer days.

Events have included two black grouse watches, both over-subscribed; a visit by NTS staff from Ben Lawers; visits by Aberfeldy Beavers; Kenmore Primary; and George Watsons college.

Grandtully Primary were one of the winners of a camera in an SNH video competition for their exploration of wildlife in their school grounds. They will use it at DC next term.

The recent Yorkhill Hospital visit, their third, was enjoyed despite poor weather

Vegetation surveys have been organised; a butterfly transect is being surveyed weekly; bird surveys are being done by Eilidh from Stirling University and camera traps have shown badger, hare, otter, field vole, buzzard, pine marten and roe deer.

Pitlochry High School will visit on 12<sup>th</sup> June, and European Youth Volunteers in July for several days.

10: Aberfeldy land update: BH asked for any information about 'green gym' equipment. AP suggested the name 'the wee birks field' which is in use locally. Although not suggested earlier this name seems popular among Trustees. BH reported that Ernest and Isobel Ballantyne, who sold the land to HPCLT, will be visiting Aberfeldy on 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> June and hope to meet up.

11: Hydroscheme update: (BH) The owners propose to raise the height of the weir by 1.15m. JMT have agreed to the large upstream pond this will cause. They also need HPCLT, SEPA and PKC approval and BH has asked that they get in touch when ready. Work will be in 2018. They will need to avoid disturbance to any hen harrier nest. They will need permission of relevant landowners for a new section of pipe. These measures should increase the theoretical output from 1.6 to 2.0 MW. HPCLT might then request an increase in the percentage we are paid per MWh. TF would like a walkway over the new weir but BH explained that the design did not allow this; he will raise the question. HH suggested asking them for a new watergate below the weir. BH proposed that additional stiles near to the weir should also be erected.

**ACTION BH**

12: Website; facebook: BH is very pleased with the site's appearance and all agreed.

Alice has produced an instruction manual so that Trustees can add items to the web site. RR can do so already: HH requested help: RR, AM and JM will help her and others to get to grips with the procedure.

AM emphasised that the site needs to be kept up-to-date, with events etc.

AW suggested establishing a working protocol.

**ACTION RR, AM, JM**

13: Orkney International Science Festival

RR will attend this in September. It is 27 years old and is the 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest such festival. It attracts 13,000 attendees. Trustees agreed that we might participate and that RR should request a slot next year. He is a friend of the director, Howie Firth.

**ACTION RR**

14: AOCB:

MJ said that Alice would like to meet Trustees when in Aberfeldy in early July. She can be contacted via MJ at that time to arrange this.

We now have a copy of Clare Thomas's report on the archaeology of the 'wee birks field'

BH asked if changes in the data protection act would impact on HPCLT. RR will investigate.

**ACTION RR**

BH will try to get a thrift shop week next year for HPCLT.

**ACTION BH**

BH pointed out that our constitution is about 15 years old. And that OSCR asks when a constitution has been updated. Trustees agreed that he should go ahead. Approval at the AGM will be needed.

BH mentioned a survey of ancient crab apple trees. (by Rick Worrell). The tree by the burn near the footbridge rarely fruits but had masses of fruit about five years ago (does anyone have photos?).

BH mentioned that the hen harrier tagged as a chick last year was still by Loch Awe.

IW enquired about the cost of Rhino cafe as a venue. BH will pay and tell IW.

The meeting closed at 9 pm

Next Meeting:

Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July at 7.30. Venue RP's, *to be confirmed*.

The meeting was preceded by a walk to view 'the wee birks field' at 6.00pm, led by BH.

Various ideas were put forward. The lime trees are in leaf so that the ugly 'tree surgery' is hidden. The nutrient-rich nature of the soil is apparent; nettles, hogweed, raspberries, and, on the slope towards the south, masses of butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*), are abundant. It would be necessary to skim off the topsoil to establish a wildflower meadow. A pond could be made in the low-lying area to the west. Several seats would be welcomed. BH is investigating those made of recycled plastic. A mountain bike course was discussed. BW was in favour. Dog-walking is an activity which has considerable support. A 'green gym' is another suggestion; an orchard is another. There could be trees on the steep butterbur slope area. Above this slope is a mown grass area, approximately half of which is ours. BH proposes to find out who mows this and to pay for this in order to establish our ownership of this part.

We thought we should be seen to be taking some action fairly soon.