

Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust

Minutes of Meeting of Trustees
Monday 6 November 2006 7:15 p.m.
At Bill Hoare's House

Present: Gordon Evans, Tim Fison, Bill Hoare (Chairman), Robin Hull, Margaret Jarvis, Paul Jarvis, Ann Partridge, Andrew Pointer, Innes Smith, Clare Thomas.

1. Apologies: Julie Gardiner

2. Minutes of the previous meeting, 31 July 2006, were corrected on page 3, **At Whitebridge RSS,** paragraph 2 to read: "Sandy **does not** believe he could get a grant, but thinks that we, as a charity, could, to repair/replace ...". Minutes were then approved.

3. Matters arising: The AGM in 2007, not on the Agenda, will be discussed under item 7.

4. Reports from Groups and Matters Arising:

a) Woodlands and WGS. In the absence of JG, PJ reported as follows:

Phase 1: The planting seems to ~~be have gone~~ well. There are some dead pines that will – need to be replaced, but other ~~wise the~~ trees are doing well. The ~~Forestry A~~ authority has paid up to the present, ~~including £5,582 for bracken spraying, which is to be included in Phase 2.~~ WGS ~~but~~ withholds 30 per cent of ~~grant~~ funds till the end of the 10-year period of the grant to ensure that ~~all plantings~~ stocking is satisfactory and that necessary replacements have been made. Thus, we will receive approximately ~~an additional~~ £25,000 in ~~nine eight~~ years' time, if all is satisfactory. ~~Including £5,582 for bracken spraying, which is really to be included in the Phase 2 budget, a~~At the moment, we have a slight margin ~~of approximately £3000.-~~

Phase 2: The area extends from ~~near to~~ the Allt Mhor, ~~and runs then goes along~~ parallel to the head-dyke ~~and then follows the road~~ up to Whitebridge. Approximately 75 hectares will be planted, but with ~~empty open~~ spaces the area ~~will may~~ be about 100 hectares ~~in all~~. It is difficult to give an exact size. A large part of the bracken has already been sprayed.

Six tenders were put out for mounding, of which four replied. ~~Willie WB~~ Grieve came in with the lowest proposal of £371 ~~(?)~~, ~~per hectare, including VAT,~~ which PJ accepted and ~~has~~ signed a contract. In response to a query as to why WG seemed to win most ~~of the local~~ contracts, PJ said that WG was not only the lowest bid, but he is local and a member of HPCLT. ~~He will start~~ Work ~~will start~~ in two to three weeks' time. Before then, PJ and JG will flag the area to be mounded, and CT will flag the archaeological sites. Ten metres must be left free around all archaeological sites. Work will start with the bracken area ~~by near~~ the Allt Mhor, ~~and then~~ proceed to ~~the grassy area on~~ the west ~~(?)~~ side of the plantation, then ~~tenorthwards -from~~ the east side of the plantation and on to the large heather area above Whitebridge. There will be some constraints because of ~~a number of archaeological sites and particularly~~ the pylons on the east side ~~of the plantation~~. Also none of the very steep ~~areas-ground~~ can be mounded. It will probably take till ~~the autumn~~ after Christmas before the heather area above Whitebridge is ~~reached~~ completed. The WGS contract was signed in ~~March~~ 2004 and ~~all~~ the work ~~must-should~~ be completed within five years. We are well on target as far as time goes.

b) Visitor Access, including Car Park. The car park is now finished for the time being, and everyone agreed that it is a success. The roadside wall to the west of the entrance at the entrance to the car park, however, still needs to be reset/lowered. The problem is that, when leaving the car park, it is not possible to see oncoming traffic from the right because the wall is too high. The first 20 to 30 metres of the wall are already reduced, but further down the hill, for about 100 metres, the height of the wall blocks a driver's view. Since reducing the height of the wall was a condition of the grant/planning consent, and because the wall is a hazard to safety at its present height, it is essential that this work be done as soon as possible. PJ has been in touch with a contractor, Willie-Jamie Stewart, who will do this work within three weeks' time in the next three weeks. A question was raised as to what would happen to the extra stone when it was removed. One suggestion was that it could possibly be used as a base for the new OEF (see below). It was also noted that the fence along the road between the car park and the lower gate needs renewing. Tom Smeaton will be asked to work on this. There is approximately £1,000 left over from the car park money.

Once the car park wall is finished, then a sign needs to be erected at the entrance. After discussion, it was decided that the car park should have two signs, one pointing in each direction, so that traffic on both sides of the road would see them. The sign already in place further down the road will therefore be moved to the car park to join a second sign, which is already available for use. It was suggested that a plate could also be placed on the gate opposite Glengoulandie Cottage to say that there is a car park is 100 yards down-up the road. **Action: BH will make the final decision about signs and arrange for their erection after the wall is finished.**

The Trustees applauded PJ for his hard work and the success of the car park.

c) Observation and Education Facility (OEF). OEF has £7,262 in funds. With the PK Quality of Life Fund, which lasts until 2007, the OEF has about £10,000. RH reported that a new claim form for funds has been developed and is being circulated. A few positive replies have been received so far. The Subcommittee group is also working on new funding applications. The last SNH grant application was declined, though in an encouraging manner. SNH suggested that they might be interested in funding an information board. **Action: PJ will look further into this possibility.**

The Subcommittee has been discussing plans for an OEF building, which would be situated at the bottom of the hill below the car park above-facing the scrapes (?). This building should be an attractive observation and education facility, which would contain materials about the archaeology, geology, natural history, etc. of the area, as well as providing views of wildlife on the scrapes. A meeting with BH, Russell Coape (?) and RH will discuss possibilities for a building, which could be like a superior shed. There were several suggestions and queries from Trustees about the size and extent of this building; whether there should be plumbing and electricity, for example. There are many options to consider. **Action: The Subcommittee will consider possibilities and come back to the Trustees with recommendations.**

d) Maintenance, Fencing and RSS. Fence Maintenance: Some work was-has been done to tighten and lift some of the fencing along the Allt Mhor between the deer park/neighbouring estate and the main Watergate. The Watergate remains in pieces but there is currently no evidence of deer access. The gate through the head-dyke from our RSS area onto the hill has been made higher, but still requires a bit of work on the hinge end.

We have done no full-length walk-fence survey for some time now. Sandy McAdam is keen for the fence between his deer park and the hill to be renewed and has indicated a willingness to meet half the cost, probably in kind rather than cash. A rough cost of this bit-length of fence has been given as £7,000. Some Trustees said-thought that we should not negotiate with Sandy. His deer

are his responsibility. On the other hand, ~~as if~~ the fence marches with both ~~our~~ properties, there is a dual responsibility. ~~However,~~ ~~there~~ are other neighbours to consider and we do not want to set a precedent. We want to be a good neighbour, however, and perhaps could offer to repair ~~(or replace)~~ Sandy's gate ~~at~~ ~~near~~ the Allt Mhor. **Action: BH will talk to Colin Liddell for guidance on the legal position and then talk again to Sandy.**

RSS: In the Glengoulandie area the scrapes seem to be OK. There is still a bit of work to do on the bank level ~~on~~ ~~of~~ one pond, and a link channel adjustment between ponds one and two. A silage cut was taken in early September. Sandy will not know its quality until he comes to use it as feed ~~sometime~~ this winter ~~sometime~~. If he is happy with it, we will probably be able to repeat the exercise. It would be nice to extend ~~the~~ silage cut to the knoll ~~just west of~~ ~~above~~ the scrapes and BH will talk with ~~Donnie~~ Campbell before next autumn. We now have a few of Sandy's ~~H~~highland cattle in and grazing. There are only four or five and they probably will not do much where the silage was not cut. However, they are not doing any damage and can stay there for a ~~bit~~ ~~while~~ yet. Elder is regenerating well in the ~~heavily dense~~ bracken area ~~above the Goulandie burn,~~ with some shrubs up to eight feet high.

Whitebridge area: Nothing proactive has been done in this area this year. We ~~still~~ hope that ~~we can get there will be~~ some activity against the ~~heather and~~ bracken next year.

The Schiehallion march: PJ said that he had the wood for the ~~style~~ ~~on~~ to the John Muir Trust property and that work would begin soon on prefabricating ~~the style~~ ~~the stile~~. **Action: PJ.**

e) Natural and Cultural Heritage. Archives: CT reported that she has received copies of the "Report on Avian Ecology of Dun Coillich" and RH's detailed records. Hamish Nicholson is checking to see whether he holds any records. PJ said that he has material, which he will pass on to CT. Any other contributions will be most welcome. Monitoring is being pursued. **Action: PJ**
CT will protect archaeology during mounding by helping PJ to mark the sites.

f) Keltneyburn Hydro Scheme: Nothing more has happened ~~recently~~. ~~Final legal documents were~~ ~~were~~ produced from ~~the company's lawyers in~~ Edinburgh ~~which and~~ ~~circulated to all landlords by~~ Colin Liddell. ~~circulated and~~ PJ responded to them. SNH, however, is ~~still~~ concerned about the effect ~~of the outflow on fish and lampreys~~ in the River Tay, ~~and t-~~ This is holding up the proceedings. ~~Consequently, n~~ No action has ~~yet~~ been taken ~~by CL on the~~ ~~documents~~.

g) Education Activities: TF reported that little has happened since the last meeting of ~~the T~~ trustees. He has had some contact with Lorna McGregor who is interested in doing some orienteering with Kenmore School. There will be no more tree planting until the spring. Stuart Downie ~~ng~~ is interested in ~~doing~~ ~~arranging~~ some tree planting, ~~possibly with students from Perth~~ ~~College. He is also now taking some classes at Breadalbane Academy.~~

h) Public Relations and Web Site: PC and RH did an article on the scrapes and sent it out to 50 places. There were only two replies. One said not interested and the other referred the article elsewhere. PC did an article for *Comment*. CT also did an article in the September issue of *Comment*. Once the wall is finished on the car park, RH will submit another article to *Comment*, possibly for the December issue.

Website: AP is updating the website. ~~He and~~ would like ~~a current membership form. He also~~ ~~needs copy for the website~~ ~~relevant material~~. **Action: PJ, CT, RH and BH will send him copy.**

5. Treasurer's Report.

MJ reported that the bank balance stands at £73,590.87. (Reserve account £70,737.44; current account £2,853.43). This amount includes £7,262.05 in the OEFC fund (2004 – 2005: £3771.15; 2005 – 2006 £3490.90). Available funds are £66,328.82 (of which £57,000 is ~~at the loan~~ that supports the WGS).

~~MJ handed out several sheets of~~
Detailed accounts ~~for the trustees to review of the WGS and RSS to date, and of the Income and Expenditure for the current financial year, were tabled.~~

After a discussion, it was decided that the OEFC should have its own account. It would then receive its own interest. **Action: MJ to set up new account for the OEFC fund.**

Membership reminders are being sent out now. ~~It has come to light that~~ There are many memberships overdue. A suggestion was made that possibly standing orders might help ~~to overcome some of the overdue membership problem~~ in this respect.

After discussion about the interest rate of 2.756%, which the HPLCT account is receiving at RBS, it was suggested that we compare rates at other banks. **Action: -GE will ~~talk to~~ contact the Bank of Scotland.**

6. Any Other Business.

Pylon Line: Plans still show that there will be a pylon in the Whitebridge area. ~~No other~~ We have been invited twice to sign a wayleave but have taken no action; ~~has taken place w-~~ We have signed nothing. BH will attend a meeting in Perth soon and will voice our unhappiness with the situation, along with other organisations.

Scrapes and planting: RH has already planted Phragmites from Loch an Daimh on the island in the scrape. He has cultures of water lobelia now growing at home and would like to plant that. It is very good for emerging insects such as mayflies, damsel flies, etc. ~~A question was raised as to whether damsel flower is a native species.~~ **Action: MJ will find out.** It was agreed that we should only put in native plants, but no bull-rushes or horsetails, which might spread too aggressively. AP has an alder tree of about nine feet in height, ~~if it is wanted~~ that could be planted in the vicinity. **Action: AP and others with ponds.**

Scrapes and fish: RH visited the scrapes with Richard Shelton from the Pitlochry Fishery Lab to ask his advice on fish for the ponds. Trout will come when the Gouland ~~iey~~ burn floods, as long as there is a gravel bottom to the pond. RS said no perch. Also, stickleback are a problem because in Perthshire they are infested with a trematode. If we can find a clean batch, they might do well. Probably we will only have trout and frogs, toads, newts and dragonflies.

PJ asked whether it was desirable to have trees around the car park area. After discussion, it was suggested that one or two groups of birch would be desirable, for example to provide some shade on the road side of the car park ~~would be good~~. We should be careful not to spoil the view. **Action: PJ, MJ**

7. Arrangements for Future Meetings: AGM. The AGM will be held on Saturday 24 March 2007 in the afternoon. The place, speaker and exact time to be decided. Two suggestions came from Trustees for a possible speaker at the AGM: RH suggested Kathleen Jamie, a poet and author of a successful book about the Scottish landscape called *Findings*. She is said to be a good speaker. TF suggested Martin Price from Perth College, Professor of Mountain Studies.

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The Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.