

HIGHLAND PERTSHIRE COMMUNITIES LAND TRUST

MINUTES OF MEETING OF TRUSTEES ON SEPT 8TH 2010 AT 1920 HRS AT THE HOME OF RICHARD PAUL

Present: Rob Coope, Tim Fison, Paul and Margaret Jarvis, Richard Paul, Andy Pointer, June Riddell

Apologies: Julie Gardiner, Margaret Gimblett, Ben Henderson and Clare Thomas

Approval of Minutes of meeting on June 9th 2010: proposed by Andy Pointer, seconded by Rob Coope

Minutes Action Points:

Newsletter: no contributions have been submitted yet and we need to have it done in time for the AGM. RP for one will write a report on the involvement of Pitlochry HS. Others are asked to prepare appropriate sections. JG to be consulted about the production.

Trail marking: no action taken yet. AP mentioned the option of using standard P and K Council posts but the consensus was to do our own version, perhaps making use of the old stobs removed with the redundant fencing last year. These could be cut in half and painted on top. The first step will be to decide on the routes to be marked: Robin Hull should be consulted before putting a route anywhere near the ponds.

Picnic table: its recent theft was regretted but it should be replaced since it was largely donated by the Inner Wheel. It was agreed to purchase a new one, which will be immediately anchored. **(PJ, MJ and RC)**. AP suggested that we might make our own and that it might be good project for students. The telegraph poles could be put to use as seats for a lower table. This was put on hold.

Application of Butinox: this has not been done yet but RP will arrange this as a job for PHS students. AP noted H and S implications for this.

Visitor Access: PJ has had site meetings with TF and Bill Hoare. They concluded that a new route up to the head dyke can be easily introduced by making an opening in the existing fence adjacent to the stepping stones. This will take people up on the north side of the fence line and thus away from any cattle. At the top end, the new gate can be re-hung in reverse and a few posts and rails suitably inserted. This work cannot be done by Rab until February but the delay was felt to be acceptable. **PJ to contact Rab Robertson**

Bridge: concerns were expressed that if we go through P and K Council with planning consent and building warrants, there will be impositions of minimum requirements for a more elaborate structure than is compatible with the need and nature of the place: a simple, sensible sleeper design, as suggested by AP, might not be allowed. In any case, would the Trust be able to afford an officially approved one? RC promised to look into the standard bridge design used by the FC. Sections of disused radio masts might be

used. PJ noted that there are good examples in Griffin Forest and TF drew attention to the ones at Meggernie.

Woodlands and WGS

PJ has sprayed Roundup on the exclosure plot and strimmed it but when BH tried to rotivate it last week, the machine clogged up with the plants. PJ said he will rake it up and burn before contacting BH again.

Risk Assessment

CT is believed to have incorporated the sentence from BH into the document.

Beating up

The time is ripe and a proper programme needs to be worked out for the winter (see the agenda item).

Matters Arising

Keltneyburn Hydro Weir and Offtake

Changes here had been noticed by TF on a routine walk over DC at the end of August and as a result PJ had also recently visited the scene; photos were shown to the meeting. AP and PJ have had recent contact with Jimmy Stewart and it appears that the following happened: Tayside Fisheries Board either contacted JS directly or did so via SEPA to say that they were concerned that trout might be being damaged as they attempted to pass down through the notch or over the weir and consequently KBH were required to reduce the drop. KBH had, therefore, the previous week created a pool below the weir on HPCLT ground (outwith the existing rental agreement), without consultation with HPCLT. Prior to the meeting PJ had taken advice from Margaret Gimblett (Trustee and Sheriff, unable to be present) and passed round a draft letter advising KBH that if in future they needed to-do works on HPCLT land they must give notification and request prior consent. The meeting agreed that the letter expressed our position appropriately and should be sent.

TF noted that KBH had also acted contrary to the rules by artificially raising the level of the water above the weir by blocking the v-notch during a dry period, so that they could test the pipe and calibrate their equipment.

Membership Recruitment and Publicity

RP has recently had a problem accessing the website and wondered whether something has gone wrong in it. MJ will contact the website manager.

Reports from Groups

Education

RP informed the meeting that there has been a revolution in Scottish Education and more outside learning is being included in the curriculum. PHS is keen to use HPCLT in its John Muir Trust Award programme (Explore and Discovery section), for its Rural Skills class (Stewart Downie and Linda Watson) and for Intermediate- Biology teaching (head of science Gary Leck).

In brief, 8 biology students (age about 14) would like to come sometime after October 2010 and they will be teacher led.

Between March 14-18th (but not the 16th) 2011, 35 students(age about 12) will come to do whatever tasks we can arrange, such as planting trees or making the marker posts.

Sometime prior to November 2011, another party of 35 students will come to do similar things.

The class of 8 Rural Skills students would like to come periodically under Linda Watson, to do such work as fencing, dyking or applying Butinox.

With these sort of numbers, the need for a toilet becomes more urgent and we should approach Sandy McAdam to see if we could come to some arrangement with him at the Deer Park. **ACTION TF,RP.**

RP requested that we all think of possible tasks for students and email them to him so that a list can be compiled for the teacher and made available in the hut.

The trustees present welcomed this marked expansion of educational involvement from PHS

Maintenance and Fencing

RC suggested that the deer fence along the road from Tom Phubil to Whitebridge, which is becoming dilapidated, be taken down and replaced by a stock fence. Also, the wire remaining along the head dyke, which serves no useful purpose, could be removed. There is also a frail section along the southern march by the watergates. RC intends to summarise the fencing problems and suggest proposals for addressing them. HPCLT does have some funds available for fencing. **ACTION RC**

Visitor Access

There does not seem to have been a problem with motor homes parking overnight this year. BH had volunteered to place a bar at a suitable height to exclude them but this had not been done. The job was put on hold to see if it is really necessary.

Woodlands and WGS

PJ noted with concern the amount of deer browsing damage to the planted trees and that many mounds have no trees. RC felt that many browsed seedlings would recover (and would not be penalised by the FC) but was also worried as to whether the stocking rate of surviving plantings would satisfy the FC criteria for awarding grants (the planted rate was 1600 per hectare). However, he felt that even so, the current crop would produce an attractive forest in the years ahead but worried about whether the FC would be satisfied: Tim Barrett 'failed' some areas last year, especially in some of the wetter places. RC feels we should have a pre-assessment, informal meeting with a relevant FC official to get a 'steer' on the condition of our planting (**ACTION JG and RC to organise this**). PJ felt we should organise our beating up in a targeted fashion in the chronological order of planting i.e. we should focus in the first instance this autumn on the west-facing slopes.

There was a discussion of the consequences of failing the FC inspection e.g. having to repay the grant or not receiving the second instalments. PJ clarified that the planted areas will be individually assessed as each one reaches five years after planting. Thus to

maximise the second phase of grant benefits , we must schedule our beating-up in the order of sequence of the original planting.

RC reported that there has been a moratorium on deer culling during the summer but action will be starting imminently! He has shot nothing since May but couldn't answer for BH.

Natural and Cultural Heritage

CT had intimated by email that there is nothing to report.

Treasurer's Report (see accompanying balance sheets)

In summary, MJ noted that income has been less than expenditure. The separate bank accounts show the following balances: Current £4497, Reserve £5155, OEF £5486.

The Treasurer felt that fencing spending should come from the Reserve account, while such things as the new picnic table, toilet, solar/LED lamps and education materials might draw down from the OEF, subject to RH's approval. No money has been received from KHS during this period; the next payment is due in December.

Any other Business

RC raised the issue of a new display board to advertise what is on offer at DC. BC has generously offered to help with the artwork. He proposed a larger, painted interpretation display such as JMT have at Braes of Foss. It could be vinyl on pressed steel or produced like a kitchen work top. It might show a map of main routes and depiction of wildlife e.g. a raven feature. A proposal for the quantity of interpretation and demonstration needs to be drawn up (AP, JG and RC). There is an opportunity for children to be involved in this.

RC put in a bid for one of the old telegraph poles lying in the car park. This was unanimously accepted and after some hot bargaining, the knock down price of £10 was agreed!

MJ had received a letter from Community Land Scotland inviting HPCLT to join. It was felt that this was probably a political organisation more for larger concerns and that the sub of £50 was a bit steep.

PJ asked us all to think ahead to the AGM and, in particular, to come up with ideas for the speaker. He also suddenly remembered to say that membership of HPCLT was at its lowest ebb and that we need more publicity. JR offered to do this provided she is given material. AP pointed out that it is easier to do publicity around an event such as a BBQ. Various people questioned what we had to offer members: one newsletter was not much of an enticement. Anyone can walk on the land. We need to list the benefits on the notice board e.g. the worthwhileness of being involved and to emphasise the community nature of HPCLT.

Date of next meeting: December 8th and CT will be invited to host us!