

Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust

Scottish Charity Number: SC032801

Minutes of Trustees' Meeting held on Thursday 12 April 2012 at Weem Hotel at 7:15 pm

Present: Richard Paul, Linda Cracknell, Margaret Jarvis (minutes), Andy Pointer, Trish Waite, Nici Ward, Ian Wilkinson, Sandra Winter. **Advisors:** Tim Fison, Paul Jarvis. Willie McGhee.

1. **Apologies:** Ruth Atkinson, Ben Henderson, Richard Legate. **Advisors:** Rob Coope, Bill Hoare, Tim Winter
2. **Welcome to new Trustees:** Nici Ward (present) and Ruth Atkinson (in Oman) were welcomed.
3. **Minutes of previous meeting on 23 February 2012:** Approved (prop TW, sec RP)
4. **Matters Arising:** TW has agreed to be secretary. Nici Ward offered to fill the still vacant position of membership secretary. This will involve communicating with all members electronically.
5. **Election of Chairman:** Richard Paul was proposed by MJ, seconded by TW and elected unanimously.
6. **Funding possibilities:** IW said that volunteer helpers with the Etape cycle event would be unpaid but their organisation would receive payment. AP was totally opposed to any involvement, which would result in his and probably BH's resignation. The idea was therefore not followed up

Willie McGhee, former director of Borders Forest Trust had visited Dun Coillich, invited by Mike Riddell. He is an expert on community woodlands and is happy to give HPCLT advice based on his wide experience. He made the point that if community woodland fails then landowners who are against the whole idea will use the failure as ammunition to support their point of view. He emphasised strongly that it is essential to have a professional employee on site (an employee is probably preferable to a contracted person). Until this had happened at Carrifran Wildwood, in the Borders, woodland establishment had not been successful (there are still two compartments which might fail to meet the Forestry Commission's criteria). Dun Coillich needs someone local, young and strong, good with people and with a rifle. This would cost at least £30K per year to cover a salary of £20K. He thought that having Malcolm Young, of Eamonn Wall, carrying out a survey is a good move. He considers that a paid stalker is also an essential, since someone employed can be instructed when and where to go. However, he was told that we already have an efficient team of volunteer stalkers.

Another point made was that Dun Coillich is too large an area for a single fence to be effective in excluding deer; 'island' fences are needed.

Carrifran Wildwood had used young unemployed people, with funding from the Scottish Government's training scheme.

Ecosystem services: it is necessary to show that woodland establishment is successful before this aspect is relevant; trees must be expected to grow for 50 years before carbon offsets can be sold.

Funding: it is relatively simple to get funding for land purchase; much harder later, especially to rectify mistakes. It will be easier to fund employment of a site manager than to fund fence renewal.

Local sources include the Gannochy Trust and the Robertson Trust. SNH and the Forestry Commission Challenge Fund might be possibilities. AP had learned that the Griffin Wind Farm had a large amount of money available. He emphasised that we can aim high. We need to apply for funding for 3 to 5 years; and to apply for more than we think we need. It is helpful to know members of the funding bodies personally. Applications must be focussed, in this case on the need for a salary for a site manager. A long-term strategy and development plan are needed; Malcolm Young's report, due at the end of April should provide this. We may have to employ surveyors if the volunteers are unable to complete their allocated areas in time. TW said that many of the planted trees were still alive but would not grow unless the deer browsing was controlled effectively.

WM left at 20.30, with our thanks. It was then unanimously decided to continue to accept his expert help.

LC emphasised the need for a long term strategy; AP noted that we have the problem that we are all volunteers, choosing what we do; also that it is long term funding, not just remedial funding that is needed.

The next date for Griffin applications to be considered is the end of June. A subgroup was set up to carry this forward, comprising TW, AP, RP and TF. This will meet on 19 April in the Weem hotel **ACTION!**

7. Membership of Groups; reports of current groups

Woodlands and WGS: No change: JG PJ TF

Membership recruitment and Publicity: LC (arts- orientated events), NW (new membership secretary), Robin Hull? (RP to discuss his future role with him) **ACTION RP**

RP had recruited Pitlochry High School as a group member. The subscription will be forthcoming.

Publicity will be through email to members in future.

LC mentioned a future event: Clare Hewitt will use the visitor hut as a stage in her cycle journey, following the route of the Etape over a week, telling stories at each place, mostly schools. She will be at the hut at 2 p.m. on Tuesday 8th May, and would appreciate an audience.

Education: RP, SW, RL

Maintenance and Fencing: TW, James Shorthouse, BH, SW, RL, TF

Visitor Access: AP, RP.

RP reported that he is to meet with Sandy Maxwell (John Muir Trust) and Peter Fullarton (Forestry Commission) to discuss the possible route of a path linking the properties. **ACTION RP**

Natural and Cultural Heritage: Clare Thomas (human history); RP (birds, insects, general natural history records); TW (fungi), RA, MJ (plants). All records should be on the web site. MJ explained that the plant list on the web site is for a vice county which does not correspond exactly with the boundary of Dun Coillich.

8. Treasurer's report: Details of income and expenditure for the current financial year had been circulated by email. At present there is £6173.20 unrestricted funds and £3445.37 restricted (raised for the visitor hut). However, a bill from J and H Mitchell is outstanding.

9. AOB:

RP tabled a map and way leave agreement with SSEB for signature by two trustees. This had been examined carefully and agreed by Bill Hoare and John Taylor, after discussion with Garry Knox of SSEB. The payment will be unchanged but the route will change slightly. The document was accepted by the meeting and signed by NW and ???.

The idea of a ten-year 'birthday party' was raised by SW and all agreed that there should be an event in the summer, to be arranged at the next meeting.

SW also suggested an 'Open Afternoon' for walks, pond-dipping etc. Sunday September 2nd at 2 p.m. was set as the date

TW noticed that the Woodland Trust magazine 'Broadleaf' has a letter page. She will write a letter thanking the Trust for their support. **ACTION TW**

TW mentioned that Atholl Price had offered us some trees.

It was suggested that Linda Dewar of 'Planting for Perthshire' might be a source of unemployed young people to do planting or other tasks.

The meeting closed at 21.30

Date of next meeting: Thursday 7 June at the visitor hut