

Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust

Minutes of Meeting of Trustees Tuesday 13 February 2007 at 7:15 p.m. At West Carnliath

Present: Tim Fison, Bill Hoare, Robin Hull (Chairman), Margaret Jarvis, Paul Jarvis, Ann Partridge, Andrew Pointer,

1. Apologies: Philip Campbell, Gordon Evans, Julie Gardiner, Innes Smith, Clare Thomas

2. Minutes of the previous meeting, 6 November 2006, were approved.

3. Matters arising. See below.

4. Arrangements for AGM

The larger hall at Ballinluig has been booked for the AGM on Saturday 24 March 2007, from 2:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. The speaker will be Professor Martin Price from UHI. The title of his talk is: "Mountains Matter". Notices about the AGM have been placed in *Comment*, *News Round North*, *Quair* and *The Bridge*. A press release will appear nearer the date.

Business meeting. Members must receive at least 21 days' notice of the meeting (24th March). At the business meeting there needs to be an election of Trustees, as well as a report of the Trustees Activities. The terms of two of the present Trustees, GE and IS, come to an end this year and they are eligible for another term. We hope they might be willing to serve another term. Also, RH and AP, who are at the moment co-opted Trustees, should be elected. Tim Ambrose, HPCLT's auditor, who is no longer working as an accountant, will continue his position as our financial examiner. He has been sent all the relevant documents for his review. **PJ will organise the papers to be sent out to members three weeks before the AGM.**

Publicity. Publicity needs to be extensive. Posters about the AGM will be distributed widely throughout Highland Perthshire, including small villages as well as the Bell Library in Perth, and other organizations such as SWT, WWF, SNH, NTS etc. After a discussion, it was decided that a notice in the *PA* was expensive and not necessary. **BH will make the posters and create a list of places for them. He may also write letters of invitation. All Trustees will be asked to help with the distribution of the posters.**

Programme. The Hall will open at 2 p.m. so that visitors can view exhibits and displays and meet Trustees. The AGM will begin at 3 p.m., and the talk will follow at 3:45. The meeting will end with a glass of wine, kindly donated by BH and RH.

The object of the displays will be to show what HPCLT has accomplished this past year, and to stimulate interest from new members. There will be two sections with power-point presentations, which might show pictures of natural history, the new car park, archaeological sites, etc. at DC. **BH and PJ will put together these presentations**, but they will need help from others for material to show. **Any Trustees who have pictures of DC taken during the past year should give them to BH and PJ for possible inclusion in the power-point presentations.** Other documentation may be used too, but pictures will be the main attraction.

A Membership table, with forms and a cash box, will be set up. We hope there may also be a raffle of one piece of Malcolm Appleby's work. (Note: MA has since agreed to this.) All people who receive a notice of the AGM and all new members who join on the day will be eligible to take part in the raffle. For future reference, **GE will be asked to decide when the membership year begins and ends and to consider different ways of collecting membership dues.** (Note added by the Treasurer: the Membership Year currently runs from the 1st April)

5. Reports from Groups and Matters Arising:

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

On the west side, much of the planting is growing quite well. However, there were some reports of missed areas that need filling in, as well as a number of unhealthy looking plants, but on the whole, the planting looks all right. Everyone should be involved in filling in the gaps by replacing dead or missing plants whenever they can.

On the east side, there have been a few problems with the mounding. About 60 hectares have been done. A more accurate measurement of the area mounded will be made shortly. Most of the bracken area is finished, but the heather area above Whitebridge remains to be measured. Although CT had marked all the archaeological areas that were to be protected, Kevin, who did the mounding, did not follow all the markings exactly (see CT's report below under (e)). The archaeology has to be protected. On the whole, the mounding itself is acceptable.

Alan Ross, who was to plant again in the spring, has taken a full-time job and is therefore not available. A discussion ensued as to whether to leave all the planting till the autumn, when he may become available (but this is by no means certain), or whether to find another planter and start with some areas in the spring. Willie Shorthouse, who did the bracken spraying quite successfully, may be available to plant in the spring. JG, however, will be away from the area for much of the spring. It was felt that it would be good not to lose a whole growing season since the deadline for planting for the WGS is March 2009. In the end, it was decided that the bracken areas would be planted this spring, if a planter can be found, and the other areas left until the autumn. Action **JG, PJ**

BH suggested that the issue of beating up needs to be clarified. Where are most plants heeled in? Not very many are presently visible. And which areas are most in need of filling in? Action **JG**.

b) Visitor Access, including Car Park. There is nothing new to report about the car park at present. PJ reported that the wall has not yet been remodelled because the contractor who came to give an estimate never responded. This work will now be done soon as an add-on to the car park. The sign will be re-erected at the car park after the wall is finished.

c) Wildlife Observation Facility and Information Centre. BH, RH and Russell Coope went to Livingston to look at a prefabricated hut called "Ruska" to see if it would work as the observation centre. They were impressed with the structure and intend to order it. First, however, we have to find out if planning permission is required to erect this hut on the site opposite the scrapes. BH is preparing a pre-application for planning. If no planning permission is required, which is thought likely, then RH can get advice about excavating the site for the hut. The hillside will need to be excavated. The cost of the hut is £4,899, minus 10% discount. The hope is that the hut will be up and running by the end of the summer.

With regard to the possibility that SNH might be interested in funding an information board for DC, PJ said that he would look into this again later on. The situation was not encouraging at the moment.

d) Maintenance, Fencing and RSS. BH and TF have walked the Allt Mhor and northern boundary. There is nothing significant there with the fencing, and they found no evidence of deer. (They did see badgers' tracks, however, just outside the boundary!)

Work on the stile on the Schiehallion – DC march will be done as soon as Andrew Campbell can provide a labour force to transport the materials. The signs for the stile are ready and will be put up as soon as the stile is erected.

Sandy McAdam has shot five red and three roe deer. He knows there are still two more stags and two roes. He will try again.

The RSS grazing is continuing. The cattle are doing a good job on the grassy area between the ponds and the head-dyke. Grazing time is running out, however, since spring growth will soon start.

With regard to the fence we share with Sandy, Colin Liddell has said that we share a 50 per cent responsibility to keep it deer proof. (We also have responsibility for one-half share of cost of maintenance with all other adjoining landowners, but these fences only need to be kept at stock-proof standard.) We need to decide now whether we think this fence should be replaced or not. And, if so, how should we proceed? The Trustees agreed that it is important to keep good fencing and that we should proceed with replacing it. In a discussion about where the replacement fence should be, it was decided that the uphill side would be best, where it is higher and less likely to be jumped over. Also, since the wall is already there, it would make the fence more secure. It was agreed that BH should go back to Sandy and say that we will share costs up to a maximum of £1,500 for replacing this fence, including the gate from deer park to bridle path. We do not yet know what Sandy will offer to pay, either in kind or cash. **BH to talk to Sandy re fencing.**

In a discussion about how this fencing should be funded, it was agreed that there are sufficient funds in the regular HPCLT fund. It might also be possible to draw on some RSS funds, since keeping deer out will help to protect the RSS. RH pointed out that there is some overlap between the aims of OEF and RSS.

e) Natural and Cultural Heritage. In her absence, CT submitted a written report. Kevin, the machine operator, went into an area that was not designated for planting and two field boundaries were destroyed, thus any stratigraphy there might have been between boundaries will no longer exist. Fortunately, any further damage was prevented by CT's arrival on the scene.

If the Keltneyburn hydro scheme goes ahead, shieling sites should be clearly marked to protect them from harm. The hydro scheme should pay for this to be done. Also, we will need to know in advance if they are to bring machines in over our ground, so that we can mark the sites.

In order to prevent loss of knowledge should any damage occur in the future to archaeological sites, CT recommends that measured plans of these sites should be made, as outlined in her report on DC. This should begin in February 2008. She is unable to undertake this work on a voluntary basis. She estimates it would cost, at her rates, between £680 and £850.

No progress has been made with setting up a monitoring scheme, or establishing a data base, due both to the amount of time devoted to marking the archaeological sites in advance of tree planting, and to CT's shoulder injury.

f) Keltneyburn Hydro Scheme. There has been no progress. SNH and now SEPA are delaying the matter.

g) Education Activities. Little progress has been made. TF asked P & K Council for their advice on how to get students involved, and they said to get in touch with the local school, which we had already done some time ago. Stuart Downie has students at Perth College who want fieldwork to do, so they might be a possibility; he also does some teaching now at Breadalbane Academy. Kenmore primary school may come later.

h) Public Relations and Website. The Trustees thought that articles in Comment about DC were a good form of public relations and should be more regular.

The membership form on the website has been updated. A question was raised as to whether we should send new members an acknowledgement for their membership dues. After discussion, it was agreed that there should be a place on the form for members to say whether they would like an acknowledgement. **MJ will amend the form appropriately**

6. Treasurer's Report

As of 9.02.07:

Bank balance is:	£61,586.94
Of which, OEF fund is	8,029.30 (now in a separate account)
Available	53,557.64 (WGS £45,192.20; RSS £3,853.27)
Loan outstanding	£57,000.

7. Other Business

None

8. Arrangements for Future Meetings

April 3, 2007

June 5, 2007

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.