

## HIGHLAND PERTSHIRE COMMUNITIES LAND TRUST

Minutes of Trustees meeting held at the Visitor Hut on Friday May 13<sup>th</sup> 2011 at 1915 hrs.

Present: Richard Paul, Clare Thomas, Tim Fison, Margaret Jarvis, Richard Legate, Trish Waite, Ben Henderson, Andy Pointer. Bill Hoare and Paul Jarvis attended as welcome contributors.

Apologies: Linda Cracknell

Approval of minutes of previous meeting: proposed by MJ and seconded by RL.

Matters arising: the Risk Assessment document has been finalised and will be sent to all trustees and posted in the VH. **Action CT.**

Welcome to new trustees: in his first trustees meeting in his capacity as chairman, RP extended a warm welcome to TW and LC

Seeking a minute secretary: TF volunteered to do so at this meeting but suggested that this post could be rotated. This was adopted and MJ stepped up to the mark to do it next time.

Assignment to groups:

Woodlands, Planting and WGS: JG, PJ and TF

Membership Recruitment and Publicity: MJ, RH (to be asked) and LC, with her known writing skills, will be earnestly propositioned.

Education: RP, CT and RL

Maintenance and Fencing: BH, TW, JS, RL and TF

Visitor Access: RH, AP

Natural and Cultural Heritage: CT (human history), RP (birds and insects and all natural history records), TW (fungi), MJ (botany).

Co-option/invitation to 12<sup>th</sup> trustee: RP pointed out that under the rules, we should have at least 12 trustees and possibly as many as 15. It was agreed it would be useful to find someone with a new skill/area of knowledge hitherto lacking. RP will approach Ian Wilkinson, who has knowledge of bees. All trustees asked to submit ideas by email to RP. RH will be urged to remain involved in various capacities.

Group Reports and Action Plans

**Woodlands, Planting and WGS:** PJ said that the weeds growing in the nursery following the rotivation are almost ready to be sprayed with Round-Up (glyphosate). JG has offered to do this and MJ will do it if she cannot do so. **Action MJ.** PJ noted that a consignment of tree seedlings were ordered but the delivery had been delayed due to the weather. This order should be reactivated in the autumn. Rob Coope has offered to help us harvest pine cones next year (March or April). JS will also have knowledge about this too. It was noted that the pines in the Blackwood of Rannoch or at Megernie in Glen Lyon would also be excellent

sources of pine seed, in fact even better than the existing stock on DC, which is of unknown provenance! Bill Hoare could help facilitate this with the owner of Megernie. **Action TF and JS.**

**Membership Recruitment and Publicity:** RH has almost completed a flyer about DC for placing in suitable places such as hotels, guest houses and schools. RP suggested that we adopt a pine cone design as the DC logo. RL was invited to produce such a design: **Action RL.** It was agreed that for the stakes marking paths, RP's pilot design using neat cross sections of birch or other wood, screwed vertically on to the top of the stakes, will be fine and suitably discreet. Agreement will be sought with SWT and JMT such that members of DC will obtain reduced membership of those organisations. It was not clear whether this would be reciprocated. **Action MJ.** It was noted that like us, JMT is keen to cull deer so that it should be easy to get permission from them for BH and RC to carry guns across their land to reach that side of DC. RP and TF are billed to give a talk to the Pitlochry SWT members centre, probably in November. TF has enquired about creating a new sign for the Visitor Hut: Signs and Designs in Perth have quoted £14-18 for one in aluminium or plastic. It was agreed that wood would be better and TF will obtain a quote from Burnside Joinery in Aberfeldy. The sign will simply say HPCLT Visitor Hut. **Action TF**

**Education:** RP reported that the visits of Pitlochry High School S1 and S2 students had gone well on April 20 and 27<sup>th</sup>. A total of 72 students had visited both DC and the JMT Schiehallion land: the latter under the guidance of Sandy Maxwell, the former with RP, RL, Bill Hoare, PJ, MJ and TF variously to hand. On DC, their activities had included applying Butinox to the hut, assembling the picnic table, planting trees (including the aspen supplied by Victor Clements of Scottish Native Woods and ash by the Jarvis'), erecting the bee box and wood piles for beetles, removing defunct tree tubes and making trial marker stakes. RH has kindly supplied a cabinet with shelves (his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday present from his father!) for the observation room. BH has acquired and placed new wooden shelves for the main room but more shelving is still needed for the tool area: **Action BH.** For the area immediately adjacent to the hut, signs will be prepared to explain the bee box, beetle pile and various plantings and the nursery. On the hill, two paths will be marked, in the first place with bamboos and then with stakes as per RP's design. The first will follow the grazing or hollow tracks, starting along the route between Dun Coillich and Dun Beag and then turning south across the face of Dun Beag to join the Bridal path above the Allt Mor. This is likely to be started in August. **Action CT.** The second will follow the route above the head dyke and along to Whitebridge and then take the peat track over to Braes of Foss. This was worked out under the P and K core paths scheme and, as AP pointed out, was a condition of the funding for the car park so it behoves us to do this. **Action AP, probably October!** RP introduced the idea, which he had gathered from NTS, of creating a hibernaculum for reptiles using wood but MJ suggested corrugated iron sheets and BH strongly advocated we only need piles of rock! More information will be sought. **Action RP.** RP suggested that we should approach Breadalbane Academy with a view to encouraging the school to use DC for rural skills teaching and DOE and JMT award projects. CT noted that these needs are largely catered for by the school garden at Camserney. **Action RP.**

**Maintenance and Fencing:** Bill Hoare volunteered to remove the small length of electric fencing across the burn. BH enquired about the concrete slabs for the edge of the 'terrace': they are available from Duireaskin any time. BH suggested that he raise the level of the ground under the FC entrance, instead of replacing the extension under the kissing gate, by putting in place a triangular box of gravel. He also offered to carry out any odd jobs, if we inform him of such needs, as he has tools always ready in his vehicle. **Action BH.** RP noted that he has walked the whole FC fence line and it looks fairly good. But, bearing in mind the considered opinion that the rylock mesh size is not designed to be roe proof, we must take the plunge and get on with making it so. BH recommended that we use rabbit wire mesh (as opposed to smaller meshed rylock) to a height of 1m: we would need approximately 20 x 50 m. Rolls and JS will be asked for a quote for the wire only and for putting it in place. **Action RL.** We should also get quotes from Tom Smeaton (**Action MJ**), Rab Robertson (**Action RP**) and confirmation from RC about the right kind of fence (**Action TF**). When doing this, Bill Hoare said we should consider the question of badger access. Possible solutions are tunnels or heavy swinging boards: we need advice on this from RC. **Action TF.** RP announced his intention to walk the whole DC fence line, checking for any chinks. **Action RP** (he might like company!)

**Visitor Access:** there was discussion about the long-proposed new bridge (AP pointed out that it will, in fact, replace a previous one!). As usual, it was agreed vehemently that we need an uncomplicated structure, obviating the need for planning consent. We have large poles available and JS has the gear to move them down to the site. **Action AP, RL assisted by Bill Hoare.** It was noted that JG is lobbying for a device adjacent to the stiles whereby dogs can pass through the fence: we need designs and quotes. **Action JG.** RH is keen for the VH to be manned during the summer and this should be incorporated into the publicity. This (in)activity could be compatible with writing, reading or flower identification. Details were left in the air or have escaped the minuter! TW enquired about our obligation to provide facilities such as loos if we are stepping up on the publicity. RP noted that these are in the longer-term plan but meanwhile visitors can be directed to the Glengoulandie Deer Park, courtesy of Sandy McAdam. PJ told us that the VH is insured against such risks as fire but not, presumably, for table theft!

**Natural and Cultural Heritage:** RP raised the possibility and desirability of making an offer to buy the old lime kiln and surroundings from the McAdam family, in view of its historical interest. CT immediately voiced concern over Risk problems if we were to add this as a visitor attraction. An alternative suggestion was to ask Sandy M. if he would allow us to clean it up of all the old wire and debris and generally spruce it up so that DC could still feature it. **Action CT (Aug/Sept).** RP issued a plea for any and all records of species for entry onto the Wikilink website: PJ and Bill Hoare have already submitted useful contributions. RP would like us to think in terms of data collection in terms of phenology eg carefully noting dates of first and last sightings. **Action All.** RP emphasised the benefits of establishing and furthering strong links with such bodies as JMT (Sandy Maxwell), Butterfly Conservation (Tom Prescott has already offered images of Lepidoptera), SWT, SNW, RSPB, Bumblebee Conservation and others. Andrew Masterman might be able to help with a butterfly survey. Ruary Mackenzie Dodds might visit to look for dragon and damselflies. **(Action MJ).** Useful surveying could be done by establishing regularly-walked transects and we should ask Sandy

Maxwell about this. **Action RP.** Although it is not on DC land, we should add our weight behind the request to Pitlochry Angling Club to allow the re-anchoring of the black-throated diver island. Richard Horrobin of SWT Pitlochry has contact details for following up on this.

**Action TF and RP.**

**AOCB:** RP explained that there has been a delay in the supply of a new gate to replace the rotten one on the road by the tree nursery enclosure and this explains the failure of Tom Smeaton to carry out the rest of his contract. RP has measured up the gate and has the necessary wood so we could perhaps make it ourselves. Tom must be asked about this possibility. **Action RP.**

Date of next meeting: this will be on August 18<sup>th</sup> at 1915 hrs at the VH