

Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust

Minutes of Meeting of Trustees held on Wednesday, 13th July 2004, at Duireaskin, Aberfeldy at 7.15 p.m.

Present: Gordon Evans, Marjorie Finlayson, Julie Gardiner, Bill Hoare, Robin Hull, Paul Jarvis (Chairman), Hamish Nicholson, Andy Pointer, Innes Smith.

1. **Apologies:** Ruth Atkinson, Lynette Borradaile, Marjorie Keddie, Margaret Jarvis (Minutes Secretary).
2. **Minutes of previous meeting 9th June:** approved and signed.

3. Matters arising

Re item 4: Newsletters had been distributed to paid-up Members and, together with reminders, to former Members who had not yet renewed their subscriptions. JG intimated that a refund of £13 had been received in compensation for the number of poor copies.

Re item 5: JG reported that Hamish Murray was short-staffed and quite busy but will install the 'kissing gates' later this month. BH commented that he was following up suitable designs for the replacement stile. BH inquired about the whereabouts of the materials previously supplied by Sandy McAdam and noted that we had never received an invoice for them. PJ replied that they are in his garage.

Re item 6: JG reported that Russell Coope was still keen on a social get-together and was now targeting a bonfire at Halloween. This suggestion was received with enthusiasm and JG was asked to encourage RC to carry on with making arrangements.

Re item 10: RH noted that the 'scrapes' should really be done this autumn and wondered if this was practical. It was concluded that this should wait on development of the RSS designation and its subsequent application. RH suggested that the path to the hide should be screened and that excavation for this would best be done at the time of the car park excavations. The sites should be marked on the ground.

RH asked for any reports of trout in the Goulandie Burn.

RH reported that analysis had shown that the buzzard head recovered on Dun Coillich during the earlier poisoning events did indeed contain traces of the poison carbofuron.

JG reported that RC was willing to do another beetle survey and that she would collect the samples for him. **ACTION JG**

4. Woodland Project

PJ tabled three papers: 1) Minutes of a meeting between PJ and GE with the Business Manager, Derek Russell, at RBS Aberfeldy on 16th June to discuss the possibility of a bridging overdraft; 2) Minutes of a meeting of the WGS sub-group on 18th June to discuss the operations budget and alternative management strategies and associated cash-flows; and 3) a paper prepared by PJ outlining the resulting position and the decisions required.

The following three cash-flow projections were considered.

1. Income is delayed until the mounds have been planted in autumn 2005.
2. With some screening and planting during the first half year so that some income can be obtained early in 2005.

3. Employment of a person for four days per month at £200 per day to manage the project from September 2004 to June 2005, and from September 2005 to April 2006.

After considerable wide ranging discussion of these and other alternatives, it was agreed that the third alternative would be too expensive; it would increase the overdraft requirement considerably and result in a large reduction in the operations margin. The second option was agreed to be the most economic and to be practical, but the financially more pessimistic first option would be presented in seeking the overdraft facility.

After further discussion of management options and their resulting impacts on the size of the overdraft, it was agreed that the project should be largely managed "in house" by JG and PJ, making full use of the advice and assistance of Hamish Murray, but with the provision to recruit additional active assistance and supervision, if and when needed.

To facilitate future progress, Trustees agreed the following:

The existing WGS sub-group would be disbanded.

A smaller Native Woodland Project Group consisting of JG, PJ and GE would manage the project over its period, whether Trustees or not.

This project group would pursue obtaining a bridging overdraft facility with the RBS as a matter of urgency. **ACTION PJ, GE**

The project group will draw up a definitive management plan for the Project and circulate it to the Trustees. **ACTION PJ, JG**

The project group will report back regularly at Trustee meetings on progress of the Project.

Other points raised:

We should take out insurance against the risk of fire. **ACTION PJ**

IS advised that if bracken spraying by helicopter is intended, bookings should be made now for spraying in August (£260/ha). There are ca 50 ha of bracken in the WGS and RSS areas that will need to be treated. **?ACTION JG**

5. Archaeological Survey

PJ had been sent an interim report from Clare Thomas on the Archaeological Survey. HN and RH received the report to consider the findings and their implications for the woodland project and other likely land management operations. It was agreed to pay CT's invoice. **ACTION HN, RH; PJ**

6. Keltneyburn Hydro Scheme

AP and PJ attended a meeting arranged by Colin Liddell on Monday 12th July for the landlords of the proposed scheme (BH was unable to go), and reported as follows. The purpose of the meeting was to go through the most recent communication from the Scheme's lawyers, Bell & Scott, in reply to comments on the draft offer and lease, after previous consideration by the group of landlords, that CL had returned to Bell & Scott. Bell & Scott had agreed to the majority of points put to them by CL. The main issue for HPCLT centred on the requirement of the proponents of the scheme for an 'exclusive right' to the "Water Rights". There were no other issues of great moment for HPCLT in their letter. CL will now reply on behalf of the group of landlords and will request a new draft offer and lease. On receipt, CL will hold individual discussions with the landlords, if required. Because we are "representatives" rather than owners, unlike the other landlords, we proposed that CL should meet with all the trustees to discuss the revised offer and lease when it becomes available, to which he agreed. The trustees present accepted this report with little discussion.

The point was raised again, however, that we should get an 'independent specialist' to advise us on an appropriate rental. A number of business and individuals that might be able either to advise us directly or to inform us of an appropriate consultant were mentioned. PJ will follow up some of these, but all should feel free to make enquiries that could lead to an appropriate 'independent specialist'. **ACTION ALL**

7. Any Other Business

Pylons RH reported that his attempt to have a dog-leg inserted in the proposed Beaulieu to Denny mega-cable line to avoid our land had been turned down. Secondly, that both sets of existing power lines that cross our land will remain in addition to the new one. Thirdly, that it is not certain whether or not there will be a new mega-pylon on our ESA/RSS land at Whitebridge. The ESA/RSS designation is not high enough up the spectrum of designations to warrant exclusion should one be intended. If there is to be one, we should obtain advice with respect to a wayleave.

The RSS IS intimated that conversion of the ESA to the RSS was in progress. John Sinclair had been checking the state of the vegetation and had concluded that grazing the Whitebridge area with cattle was now desirable. He would like to know how we were going to do that. It was suggested that six beasts for three months, September to October, would do the job. There was some discussion about from where we might get them. Transport would be a problem if they were not 'local'. BH agreed to speak to Alec Murray to ascertain if he could help. **ACTION WH**

IS intimated that the fee paid in connection with the transfer to the RSS would be refunded.

It now seemed likely that the 'scrapes' and sowing seed for finches etc. should be done next spring. That might be too soon to get help from KBH, but Sandy McAdam might possibly be able to assist.

Archive HN suggested that we should consider how the Trust could archive important and useful documents such as Data, Reports, Minutes etc. Discussion focused on hard drives, discs, solid state external memory, hard copy ... It was agreed that no one medium would be safe and that more than one location was essential. AP agreed to think about it and to come back with a proposal. **ACTION AP**

Walks and Work Parties BH gave details on recent events and described the location of a large 'white bag' near the plantation, where wire could be deposited for later removal. He reminded Trustees that we should keep a record of their time and effort spent on the hill so as to support our case for grants in due course. **ACTION BH**

Date of Next Meeting: 10th August 2004.