

Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust

Minutes of Meeting of Trustees held on Tuesday 15 January 2008 at 7:15 p.m.
At West Carnliath

Present: Gordon Evans, Julie Gardiner, Bill Hoare, Robin Hull (chairperson), Paul Jarvis, Margaret Jarvis, Ann Partridge, and Clare Thomas

1. Apologies: Rob Coope, Tim Fison and Andrew Pointer

2. Minutes of previous meeting of 27 November 2007: Approved after changes.

3. Matters Arising: TF reported (in writing) that he had had another conversation that supported the notion that bracken removal should render the habitat less favourable to ticks. PJ reported that JMT had paid half the cost of the Schiehallion fencing. He also said that no quotes were yet available for netting the fence.

AP has produced a new map to show the line of the track linking the car parks of HPCLT, Tomphubil and Schiehallion. **Andy P and PJ will now talk to Robbie Gordon of PKCT about a grant application to Future Scotland to support such linking routes.**

BH, who is involved in the planning of the “core path network”, has included this new linking path with the core path information, because there will be good publicity on the core path network.

BH said there is no action yet on the new footbridge. It may be placed a little upstream.

A map is now available at all Trustees meetings.

Subscription reminders have been sent out to 28 outstanding members.

4. AGM: PJ passed round a page summarising the c.v. of Prof. Aubrey Manning, our AGM speaker, including the TV and radio programmes that he has presented (e-mailed to all after the meeting). PJ talked to him for an hour last week about DC and discussed arrangements for his visit. He will come early by train with the intention of walking on DC during the morning, weather permitting. The Tryst Hall in Pitlochry has been booked from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m. for the AGM on 15th March 2008.

The format of the AGM will be as follows:

Open to public at 2:30 p.m.

AGM begins at 3:00 p.m. followed immediately by the speaker

Refreshments.

A *pro forma* will be prepared and circulated by **PJ**.

There will be various exhibits in the Hall for members and visitors to see including:

- copies of the information sheets being prepared for the OEF, including those on wild flowers, fungi, dragonflies, butterflies and trees, will be on display on tables; **RH**.
- an exhibit about the OEF, with both flat and projected photos; **RH and BH**.
- a slide show on the archaeology of DC; **CT**.
 - the newly updated Web Site; **MJ**.

The Articles specify that: **one third of the elected trustees** (currently 11) are required to retire, (i.e., 4 trustees), and they should be drawn from those who have been longest in office since their last election or re-election, that is 4 from the 6: JG, AndyP, PJ, PC, TF & CT, all of whom were elected or re-elected in 2005.

All current elected trustees are eligible for re-election.

‘Notice’ of the AGM’ must go out a clear 21 days before the meeting and therefore **PJ would like to hear from trustees by February 11th** whether they might be retiring and seeking re-election at the AGM.

Nominations for election/re-election must be lodged with J&H Mitchell a clear 7 days before the AGM.

One third of the elected trustees (currently 11) are required to retire, (i.e., 4 trustees) and they should be drawn from those who have been longest in post since their last election, that is: JG, AndyP, & PJ, all of whom were last elected at the 2005 AGM for the second time, plus **one** drawn from PC, TF & CT, all of whom were elected in 2005 for the first time. [Other current elected Trustees have been elected more recently (BH, GE, AnnP, RC)]. All current trustees are eligible for re-election. ‘Notice’ of the AGM’ must go out a clear 21 days before the meeting and therefore **PJ would like to hear from all those who will be retiring at the AGM whether** they shall be seeking re-election.

Nominations for election/re-election must be lodged with J&H Mitchell a clear 7 days before the AGM. The question was raised as to when PC would return to the UK. **GE will try to contact PC and ask him whether he would stand for re-election.**

It was agreed that we need new trustees up for election. **BH will approach two different members in Pitlochry, to see if either might be interested in becoming a trustee. All trustees are urged to seek new nominees for trustees for the future.** The maximum number of trustees allowed is 15. We have normally operated with 12.

Publicity for AGM: **BH will handle the publicity** by putting articles into: *News Round North* (Jan 25), *Comment* (1 Feb), and *Quair* (13 Feb), and to the website. **PJ will send BH information on Aubrey Manning.**

5. Reports from Groups:

a). Woodlands PJ has a list of plants for beating up, which he will order from Woodbury. He needs to check the size of the area not planted. We can plant the area ourselves if it is smaller than about 10 hectares. If larger, then Willie Shorthouse will do the planting. Planting will be done between March and May. Maybe volunteers for planting could be found at the AGM. The WGS grant has not yet been received. (?)

b). Visitor Access and Car Park BH is getting technical advice about using the poles for the bridge. The poles are very large. Some planting will be done this spring around the car park, but no decision has been made yet as to exactly where.

c). Observation and Educational Facility (OEF) RH reported that the “Ruska” hut is up, but there are still jobs to do: A door into the OEF needs to be constructed. Observation hatches are being worked on. Joiners say the building needs to be anchored to protect it from gales. No decision has been made yet as to how to do this. Difficulties can arise because the timbers may swell with rain. It might be possible to throw a net over the whole structure and hold the net down with boulders, as is seen in the Hebrides. Guy ropes bolted to the structure and then staked to the ground was another suggestion. These technicalities will be referred to the OEF subcommittee, which will be meeting soon. The subcommittee will also consider what type of non-skid floor to use inside, and what kind of furniture to acquire, as well as what to use outside on the bare boards to stop slipping. Chicken wire or vinyl were two suggestions.

The windows are at present a bit high, but the west facing one may be widened and lowered, and the south facing one left as is, but used with a stool.

Another consideration must be about security for the OEF. A discussion ensued about whether the OEF should be open all the time, or be manned by volunteers. Should there be a lockable area for equipment? Perhaps the hide should be open all the time (this seemed to be favoured by most) but also have a lockable area? Although most thought that optics should not be introduced, maybe some cheap binoculars could be left chained in the hide. Possibly volunteers could be there at peak times to answer questions? Before planning can go forward, we need to know how we anticipate the OEF being used. **ACTION. All should think over these questions and make suggestions to RH about planning for the future.**

RH also reported that a party is planned for the official opening of the OEF in the spring. All sponsors and members would be invited and someone would be invited to cut the tape. Plans need to start soon for this event.

The trustees congratulated RH and his committee for all their work in making the OEF a reality.

d). Maintenance, Fencing and RSS BH reported that walkers on DC had seen three red deer last week, close to the stile. Nothing has been done about these deer yet. The question was raised as to whether Ben Henderson could deal with the deer. **BH will talk to Andy P and Ben Henderson.** CT recommended that if he cannot get the carcasses off the hill, he should cut them open and leave them. BH will walk the perimeter next week, weather permitting, to look at the fences. There is nothing new on the RSS. The grazing animals have gone. The grazing was too late this year and therefore ineffective.

e). Natural and Cultural Heritage CT reported that she had received from Alastair Godfrey, Perth Society for Natural Sciences, a copy of their survey and observations following the visit by their Botanical Section to Dun Coillich on Monday 30 July 2007. **CT will email the report to trustees.**

f). Keltneyburn Hydro Scheme PJ said there will be no news for about 9 months..

g). Education Activities TF reported (in writing) that he has been in touch with Richard Paul, biology teacher at Pitlochry, who is an SWT member and keen birder. TF suggested to him that he might consider DC as a teaching resource in the future. RH suggested Richard Paul might make a future trustee. **RH will talk to him at the AGM.**

h). Public Relations and Website The revised website is now up and running. The Jarvis' daughter, Alice, spent 35 hours doing the required work. She was reimbursed for half of this; the remainder was a donation for which we are very grateful. Everyone is pleased the website is now up-to-date and **all are encouraged to use it.** Information for the inclusion in the website should be sent to Alice at: tr_aj@mweb.com.na.

JG distributed drafts of the upcoming newsletter. The final version will be sent to all members in the AGM mailing. One hundred and fifty copies will be printed. **PJ will send JG updated information about the status of trustees for page three of the newsletter.**

BH reported that he will conduct a DC walk on 9 June 2008 at 10:00 a.m. as part of the SWT Wildlife week.

RH reported that he has contributed an article to the February issue of an Australian magazine, *Scots*, (Journal of the Scots Heritage Society of Australia) about DC. All congratulated RH on this accomplishment.

6. Treasurer's Report

Bank balance: Total balance: £77,000. Outstanding loan: £57,000. EOF balance: £8,296.

7. Any Other Business Planning Permission for two neighbour developments. PJ reported that since the permission is not yet validated, we can do nothing at present. PJ and BH are working on a draft objection. Colin Liddell has been consulted. The general feeling is that the houses may be all right, but that the chalets probably will be intrusive. It is possible that the chalets may be different from the present "country lodges". At the appropriate time, **BH will inform Sandy McAdam that we intend to object.**

The wildlife policeman in Perth, Alan Stewart, has written a very good book, *Wildlife Detective*, on his experiences. GE suggested he would make a good AGM speaker for the future. All concurred.

8. Future Meeting The next meeting will be held on **Monday 11 February 2008** at 7:15 p.m. at the home of the Jarvises.

The meeting ended at 9:25 p.m.