

# Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust

## Minutes of Meeting of Trustees held on Monday 15 April 2009 at 7:15 p.m. at Duireaskin

**Present,** Paul Jarvis (Chairman), Tim Fison (acting Minute Secretary), Julie Gardiner, Ben Henderson, Margaret Jarvis (Treasurer), Richard Paul, June Riddell.

1. **Apologies:** Rob Coope, Gordon Evans, Clare Thomas, Margaret Gimblett.
2. PJ welcomed newly elected Trustees BH and JR and commented that it is good to see new faces.
3. **Minutes of previous meeting of 2 February 2009:** Approved; proposed MJ, seconded JG.
4. **Matters Arising:**

It was agreed that the AGM was satisfactory; and JG was congratulated for producing the Newsletter in time for it.

Unfortunately, the nomination papers for election of BH as a Trustee arrived at the office of J. & H. Mitchell two days too late to comply with the Articles, and although approved at the AGM, he must therefore be considered as a co-opted Trustee for the current year.

MJ showed the three flower books bought from the donation from the visiting Perth walking group last year. They will be kept in the OEF.

Because of the delayed arrival of the tree seedlings, the S3 and S4 students from Pitlochry HS and those from Perth College have so far been unable to take part in any planting. RP will liase with Stuart Downie to make this happen in the near future.

PJ has spoken with Charlie Taylor about FC sharing the cost of repairing the common fence. CT admitted the joint responsibility for a stock proof line and guardedly said that he might be able to provide some assistance next year.

BH has obtained a combination-lock box and fixed it near the door to hold the OEF key. The number has been made known to Trustees and in due course contact phone numbers will be displayed to enable public access.

PJ wrote to the insurers regarding the current cover but no response has been forthcoming. Renewal occurs in May, when the opportunity will arise to obtain clarification and updating.

With respect to Visitors and Working Parties, particularly school pupils, HPCLT needs its own general risk assessment document, plus additional ones for each activity, such as tree planting or fencing. RP will carry this forward with JG, and with input from Stuart Downie.

### 5. Reports from groups:

#### *Woodlands and Grants:*

JG informed the meeting that the tree seedlings have arrived in plastic bags and these have been placed in the hut for the time being. There are some 4000 birch and the same number of Scots pine. JG made an urgent plea for help with planting out and expressed her strong

opinion that professional help should be sought in order to complete the planting by the end of May. Beyond this time they will be starting to dry out and will have to be heeled in at the edge of the sacrificial crop to await the back end. The cost of the trees is approximately £2000 and we should take care to use them properly.

Kenny Dewar has ploughed the area in the field for the sacrificial crop, but didn't leave a trench for putting the trees into. He will be returning to drill the seeds.

The trees will be planted out in areas SP3, BL10, SP4 and anywhere else suitable above (i.e. to the north of the bridle path). Planting should be in grassy areas preferably or in heather up to 15 cm in height: not in bracken. The seedlings will need screefing in so the job will take a bit longer. JG will endeavour to meet with the students on a Tuesday to demonstrate the planting technique. RP and SD will liaise with her over this. JG undertook to set out some planting instructions in case she is unable to supervise this herself. JG will definitely be planting out on Saturday April 18<sup>th</sup> and invited any other Trustees to join her. Also, provisionally, May 2<sup>nd</sup> was set as a general planting day (10.00 a.m. start at the car park). PJ will contact Highland Safaris about this as they have promised to assist with the planting as part of a carbon offset.

BH will contact Willy Shorthouse to obtain a quote for a planting contract and to check his availability.

PJ has applied to register the whole of DC with ICAS, the government authority responsible from all land use in the Scottish countryside, with a view to being eligible for further funding.

#### *Maintenance, fencing and RSS*

MJ suggested that we remove redundant fencing in the vicinity of the hut and southern RSS area. PJ relayed RC's opinion that we should smarten up the fencing near the car park and along the Glengoulandie road to promote a better image of HPCLT. However, RC feels that he and BH can get on top of the deer situation by an intense period of culling rather than by investing in new fencing along the northern march. Between them they have shot 9 roe and one hind recently.

JG is keen that we should harvest seed from our own trees and set up a nursery in the sacrificial crop area (increased to more than the usual half hectare this year to accommodate this) later on and this will need to be fenced.

#### *Keltneyburn Hydro Scheme (KBH)*

PJ gave a summary of the current state of play following a meeting he had with Jimmy Stewart. Work on laying the pipeline and the track began on Dec 19<sup>th</sup> 2008 and proceeded rapidly. Activities at the upper end have now ceased due to a 2-month restriction imposed relating to the nesting period of Merlin and other birds. Attention has shifted to the lower end where the turbine house is being built.

A key issue has been the quartzite rock on John Fry's land, which was found to be too hard to dig down through and this has led to complications of contouring a continuous fall along the pipeline, and has necessitated additional valves for releasing airlocks. At a late stage the need to move the intake to a higher point on the Allt Mor, and to raise the height of the weir itself, became evident. After discussions with KBH, PJ feels that this is something we must just accept, unless we wish to jeopardise the whole enterprise. The eventual landscaping of the inlet will be all important.

Major access to the Intake Site is through the ground of John Fry and Garth Estate along a farm road, for which planning consent has now been given for extension to the Intake Site.

This in turn affects the extent to which KBH will require to utilise the 'Small Access Route' (i.e. the bridle path) which will be accessed across a bridge over the Glengoulandie Burn. PJ was unclear of the precise agreement/commitment with KBH with respect to construction of the proposed new bridge to replace the one washed away: JG stressed the importance, in her view, of this issue and urged PJ to clarify the situation with Jimmy Stewart. PJ undertook to do this.

With J & H Mitchell we have made small final (?) changes to the latest format of the contract between KBH and HPCLT and it has been passed back to Bell & Scott. PJ thought it likely that the contracts between all the Landlords and the Tenant will be signed within the next two weeks, although some present were very sceptical (especially JG). PJ is confident that we shall receive the first payment within two months and, in any case, in the meantime it has been accruing interest at 4% over the base rate, since 19<sup>th</sup> December, the day work started. JG proposed a vote of appreciation for the efforts of PJ, BH and AP over the years of negotiation on HPCLT's behalf.

Finally, we discussed the loan from the Volant trust. PJ explained that the Volant Trust's lawyers, Turcan Connell, hold the Dun Coillich title deeds as security for our loan from the Trust, and hence their involvement with and objections to some of the clauses in the KBH contract. HPCLT intends to repay the loan when it is due in October 2009, according to the agreement. Should we default on this, we stand to face a 5% annual interest charge on the outstanding balance.

Information on further developments will be circulated by e-mail as and when they occur.

## **6. Visitor Access**

The pre-fabricated materials for two new stiles to be installed in the Schiehallion fence are still residing in the Jarvis garage awaiting a suitable means of getting them on site. The four assembled 'ladders' are each quite heavy. PJ will inform us when help will be needed.

## **7. Treasurer's report**

MJ showed her account summary to the meeting: there is approximately £63,125 in the Reserve A/C, of which £57,000 is earmarked for repaying the Volant Trust loan. There are £3456 in the Current A/C and £5417 under the Visitor Centre A/C. There was some vehement discussion as to whether we had sufficient funds to pay for the tree planting. It was finally agreed that we do. PJ pointed out that the insurance premium and our lawyer's fees have yet to be paid.

**8. AOB:** after the extensive discussion re KBH summarised above, none was raised.

**9. Date of next meeting:** Wednesday June 24<sup>th</sup> at 19.15 hrs at the OEF.