

# Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust

Minutes of Meeting of Trustees held on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2004, at Duireaskin, Aberfeldy at 7.15 p.m.

**Present:**, Ruth Atkinson, Marjorie Finlayson, Julie Gardiner, Bill Hoare, Marjorie Keddie, Robin Hull, Paul Jarvis (Chairman), Hamish Nicholson, Innes Smith, Margaret Jarvis (Minutes Secretary).

1. **Apologies:** Lynnette Borradaile, Gordon Evans.
2. **Minutes of previous meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> October:** approved.
3. **Matters arising:** PJ has not yet obtained quotes for car park fences. IS suggested that Willy Shorthouse would be a good person to ask. JG asked for a copy of the specifications; she will then get a bid from a contact.
4. **Ravens over the Hill. Launch:** PJ spoke for everyone in congratulating Robin and Gillian Hull on an excellent evening in all respects; social, food, drink, publicity for the Trust (Newsletters and membership application forms had been available). The venue was also praised. 68 people had come. Malcolm Appleby has designed a raven but the details are not yet finalised. The publishers were pleased with the sale of 37 copies of the book. Today's Courier had included a report. The publisher has paid for the hire of the hall; costs had been £180 and donations £205, generating a profit of £25. Donations will be paid to HPCLT so that gift aid can be claimed; RH will then claim the cost from the Treasurer. RH reminded us that HPCLT can buy the book at cost (£3.75) and sell at £9.95.
5. **Woodland Project:** Mounding began last week, using two machines; there will soon be three operating. Contracts have been exchanged. PJ has put out about 60 marker canes; he feels happy about the contactors' sensitivity to our requirements. JG has also been on site and is also favourably impressed. She thought the position of the mounds was sensitive to the lie of the land and she liked the fact that the mounds were at the side of the holes so that any spoil fell back in. She thought some of the mounds were too regularly spaced and too close together; this criticism has now been addressed. PJ made the point that there would be locally wet areas that would not be mounded so that the average would be acceptable. The visual impact of the mounding is generally small and there has been no heather burning because the weather has been too wet. The spec for the mounds was clarified; it is 0.5 m by 0.5 m by 0.3 m depth. There is now good access to the hill through the Forestry Commission plantation; it is possible to drive in most of the way. There is a culvert for the burn, paid for by the FC, and a gap in the fence. BH pointed out that this is the route agreed with FC to link with their path network. Hamish Murray has intimated his willingness to attend a Trustees' meeting if desired. HN asked when planting might start; JG said next autumn at the earliest; to allow the mounds to settle. Trees should be ordered and she was authorised to do this. **ACTION JG.**
6. **RSS:** Details of the agreement had been circulated by IS. The cost of the management plan has been refunded in full. About £1200 will be paid in arrears annually in September for management. £512 has already been received by the Treasurer as this year's payment for the scrapes, the payment for which is annualised over five years. The scrapes, at least 700 square metres of dug out area, must be constructed this winter. IS expressed his strong feeling that when we have a digger on site to dig the scrapes we should use it to do as much else as possible, for example clearing the old sheep fank. Digging a hole and burying the debris would take only a few hours. (A big digger will cost about £20 per hour). IS proposed that we should allocate a sum of money and then get as much done as possible. **The decision was made to allocate £2500.** RH circulated his drawings of the scrapes, which should have a gradual slope on the west side; the drawings also show the proposed hide and a sunken path from the proposed car park site. The spoil should be used to separate the ponds from the burn. BH emphasised the need to prioritise and to have instructions in writing. He pointed out the need to retain the ford for occasional quad bike access. The priorities were set: scrapes and fank first; seeded crop area next; followed by sunken path and car park levelling. **A subgroup, RH, IS, JG will meet on site at 9 a.m. on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November to re-assess the situation on the ground. ACTION RH, IS, JG.** The group was authorised to make any necessary decisions and proceed as they think best so that delays are minimised. IS will obtain estimates of cost of the work; JG will find out the cost of the seed mix (rape, clover, mustard etc), probably about £200, for the sown area (about half a hectare). **ACTION IS, JG.** This will need to be sown in spring 2005. IS said the normal practice is to plough and then sow

on the following day. BH wondered if this would need to be fenced but IS and JG said not; there was no requirement laid down for quality of the crop. JG also pointed out that the sown area could be anywhere within the meadow area, avoiding the trees already growing there.

- 6. Work Parties:** There had been no organised work parties since the last meeting. There is now a heavy bag of old wire by the pinewood. It can be dragged down easily when there is snow cover. Sandy Mc Adam has not been available recently but is willing to help. He recognises that the joint fence along the head-dyke needs attention to keep his stock in and has proposed joint action. He is also willing to help repair the damaged water gate. Only half of the water gate is still there. Alternatives to simple replacement were discussed; possibly chains could be hung from the cable, which is in good condition.

There are old fence remains between the car park area and the ford which need to be removed. BH has had a discussion with Alec Murray, following on this year's grazing; AM would like to have 10 to 12 bulling heifers on the area next year.

BH has seen three hinds recently, plus two goats in the south outside the deer fence. JG and IS thought this level of grazing was too low to require any protection for the regenerating trees. (IS said that four deer per square km would be enough to be worrying, i.e. ten to twelve on Dun Coillich). BH will contact Sandy McAdam about the goats, which are likely to be his; it was considered that such an informal approach was sufficient at present.

**7. Any other business:**

*Miscellaneous*

The Treasurer had reported that £7567 is in the bank account at present; this includes £515 of recently paid-in RSS money.

PJ has a quote of £520 for fire insurance, additional to the £340 for third party cover. This is advisable to protect the natural regeneration as well as the planted trees, but it was agreed to wait until the spring before implementing this.

JG suggested that she should contact Mike Strachan about the grant due for natural regeneration. It was agreed that our data on this should be submitted to him even though the seedlings are rather short at present (mostly 25 cm rather than the required 50 cm height). PJ pointed out that there is little or no regeneration where there is dense bracken, so that the bracken areas should not be included, and that it will be necessary to control bracken next year to facilitate regeneration. **ACTION JG**

PJ pointed out that the financial year ends on 30<sup>th</sup> November; the AGM will be at the end of March so ideas for speakers are needed now. RH suggested Sir John Lister-Kaye. PJ will contact him.

**ACTION PJ**

*The bridging loan from the Volant Trust*

**The Trustees agreed unanimously to the following (proposed by MF, seconded by BH):** (i) the borrowing of funds from the Volant Trust; (ii) the granting of the *Standard Security*, i.e., Dun Coillich; and (iii) adoption of the terms of the *Minute of Agreement*.

Secondly, the Trustees authorised (retrospectively) J. & H. Mitchell to proceed with the loan.

In discussion it was noted that Interest will be 5% over bank rate if the loan is not repaid within five years but that no interest will be charged in the meantime. PJ emphasised that income should exceed expenditure within five years. It was noted that each Party will pay its own costs; the cost to HPCLT so far has been £102 to register the *Standard Security* and *Minute of Agreement* in the Land Register.

The Trustees acknowledged the assistance of Colin Liddell in arranging the agreement.

**Date of Next Meeting: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2005.**