

## Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust

Minutes of Meeting of Trustees held on Monday, 22nd March 2004, at Duireaskin, Aberfeldy at 7.15 p.m.

Present: Paul Jarvis (chairman), Ruth Atkinson, Beryl Coope, Marjory Finlayson, Bill Hoare, Robin Hull, Hamish Nicholson Andrew Pointer, Ian Riddell, Margaret Jarvis (Minutes secretary).

**1. Apologies:** Julie Gardiner, Innes Smith.

**2. Minutes of previous meeting on 23rd February 2004:** approved and signed

**3. Matters arising: ESA:** Two years' outstanding payments, totalling £3200, had been received. Further discussion of the change to RSS was deferred as IS and JG were not present.

**4. Poisoned rabbits:** Four poisoned rabbits, a dead buzzard and a buzzard head had been found on Dun Coillich since BH found the first one on 10<sup>th</sup> March. Contact with Alan Stewart, the Police Wildlife Officer is being maintained. The first rabbit has been confirmed as laced with Carbofuran – the dark purple crystals were visible on the carcass. The other finds are also being tested forensically. BH had been informed that another rabbit, and a buzzard, had been found on a different property in the area. BH listed three things to consider:

1. How should we inform people locally? The situation is by now quite widely known locally. Staff of FC and JMT have been informed and a number of members of the Schiehallion Group are aware of the situation; Wendy Mattingly had earlier suggested that searches should also be made on Schiehallion. RH made the point that we could be held responsible if we failed to warn people. Putting up warning notices on gates into DC was agreed. BH will draft a notice and discuss it with RH, laminate copies of it and place them on the gates into DC (*done*). Agreement of Nigel Hawkins, Director of JMT, will be sought to put warning notices in the Schiehallion car park or on the new path as soon as possible. BH will liase with Nigel Hawkins, and the temporary Chairman of the Schiehallion Group, William Miller. AP suggested including the Police Crimestopper telephone number that allows anonymous phone calls about anything suspicious (*done*). **Action BH.**
2. Should we have more publicity? The police had agreed that more publicity at a local level would be fine. RH has already written a general piece for 'Comment' about the poisoning of predators. He will amend this to include the facts so far. BC suggested asking for the opinions of members at the AGM. Further publicity at a national level will be delayed until results of the forensic examination of the carcasses. RH and BH will liase and decide on the timing and form that further publicity will take. AP will update the original press release and put it on the website. **Action BH, AP and RH.**
3. What steps should be taken to search for more carcasses? Paths around Glengoulandie, the peat track, the pinewood, Dun Beag and the route over the saddle had been searched so far, but not the bridle track. Various suggestions were discussed. It was agreed that that BH would speak to this at the AGM and ask for volunteers to help search the ground, probably on the following day. **Action BH**

### **5. Arrangements for AGM:**

*Election of Trustees.* There are five nominations for Trustees and five vacancies so an election will not be necessary. RH suggested that new Trustees should be given the opportunity to introduce themselves. This was agreed.

*Refreshments.* MJ will take tea, coffee, milk, sugar and biscuits. MF and JG have offered help with the refreshments.

*Tables:* MJ will contact the caretaker and arrange for tables to be available around the hall for the display materials, at the end of the hall for refreshments and at the door for collecting subscriptions and completed membership forms. **Action MJ**

*Raffle.* RH will ask Malcolm Appleby about a possible prize for a draw to be available to all current members and also to new members. This will probably have a rabbit motif. **Action RH (done)**

*Exhibitions:*

AP will mount a display based on the newly updated website;

RH will have one on history and one on the bird survey;

BH will have one on the walks, with photographs; and another on the poisoned carcasses found recently. This would be a simple statement of facts, also with some photographs.

JG had prepared a draft of a display on the RSS, comprising four panels. BH made the point that a map showing the location of the relevant areas was an essential addition. These areas, a total of 10.5 hectares, must be well defined. AP (or JG) will get such a map from IS. It was also suggested that the text should relate more clearly to possible expansion of diversity in association with the existing areas, should we try to transfer our ESA status to the RSS. **Action AP, RH, BH.**

PJ has a CD of the study of natural regeneration along the Allt Mor done by students. He will make a poster or set this up as a slide show. He hopes also to have an A3-size map of the areas to be planted with trees. Unfortunately this had been delayed by the non-delivery by the Post Office of the signed application forms to the Forestry Commission. **Action PJ**

There may be a display about the Keltneyburn Hydro scheme; BH will check on this. **Action BH**

**6. Recommendations of Bird Report:** RH summarised the Bird Report. It contains a list of 74 species that had been recorded on the property. There are also lists of species previously recorded and of possible future species; suggestions of changes that might be implemented to encourage more species; and of factors that might cause disturbance. Recommendations include the encouragement of wet-land around the sheep fank by excavation. Excavations there would increase penetration of water and lead to development of marsh. This would encourage reed buntings, reed warblers etc. The common reed, *Phragmites communis*, would be particularly beneficial and could be encouraged. This idea met with enthusiasm and was agreed in principle. The excavation would need to be done in late summer.. RH will mark the possible area with stakes. It is possible that it might be paid for by the RSS. PJ was also enthusiastic about blocking drainage ditches near the peat track in order to increase the extent of wet ground in the area of former peat diggings. BC pointed out that this would benefit dragonflies as well as birds. PJ suggested identifying all such areas on a large-scale map. RA has a copy of the 1:10,000 map, which may not be copied but could be used internally to delimit such areas. Decision was deferred on the offer by the Keltneyburn Hydro scheme to make a scrape in the vicinity of their construction site when its usefulness had finished. This would encourage snipe and other waders to feed there. People, and dogs in particular, should be discouraged from walking in sensitive areas in the bird breeding season.

IR has a second copy of the bird report and will pass it to BH. **Action IR**

**7. Summer Event:** Discussion was deferred until after the AGM. AP was keen to have an event but thought it must have a focus, such as a walk. The decision was made not to combine a social occasion with a work party. BH has already publicised dates for three work parties; 13<sup>th</sup> March; 7<sup>th</sup> May and 4<sup>th</sup> July. In connection with the idea of clearing up the sheep fank it was pointed out that the concrete base might be useful in future for hard standing, e.g. for wheel chairs.

## **8. Any other business**

RH said that the publication of his book still needs more money. He has an 'Awards for All' application form and will return to the subject after the AGM.

BC warned that there might be some hostile questions asked at the AGM, in the aftermath of the recent Schiehallion Group AGM. RH suggested asking for such questions to be submitted in writing so that they could be given carefully considered answers. PJ read a letter from Bill Scott that is generally hostile to conservationists.

BH had received a letter from Kirsty Partridge, a neighbour, informing HPCLT that she would be setting Larson traps for hoodies.

The Keltneyburn Hydro scheme had sent a draft lease to Colin Liddell. A meeting between Colin Liddell and all the leasees of the proposed Keltneyburn Hydro scheme had been arranged for 2<sup>nd</sup> April at 2 p.m. to discuss common issues and concerns. CL had assessed the HPCLT draft lease and sent his comments to us. BH emphasised the thoroughness of CL's input. The draft lease, together with CL's comments, had been seen by four Trustees (BH, JG, AP and PJ), who had added their own comments. These will be collated by PJ before

the meeting. **Action PJ.** PJ had asked CL for a meeting with HPCLT representatives before this but had not yet heard back, since CL has been away. *(This has now been deferred until after the meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> April)*

**Next meeting:** Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April. 2004, Duireaskin, 7.15 pm