

Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust

Minutes of Meeting of Trustees held on Wednesday 24 June 2009 at 7:15 p.m. The Observation and Education Facility (OEF), Dun Collich

Present: Paul Jarvis (Chairman), Rob Coope, Tim Fison, Julie Gardiner, Margaret Gimblett, Margaret Jarvis, Ann Partridge (Minutes), Richard Paul, June Riddell, Clare Thomas,

The Chairman welcomed Margaret Gimblett to her first Trustees' meeting.

1. Apologies: Gordon Evans, Ben Henderson

2. Minutes of previous meeting of 15 April 2009: Approved by JG, seconded by MJ.

3. Matters Arising:

CT is preparing a risk assessment document for the visit of the Beavers and Cubs. **Action: CT & RP**

The sacrificial crop planting has now been done.

The stiles are ready to be transported to the site for installation. **Action: PJ & RC**

4. Reports from Groups:

[Note added by the Chairman. In the past, Groups have held their own small meetings in-between the quarterly meetings of all Trustees. It would be helpful if the new Trustees would suggest to which of the Groups they would like to affiliate. Groups may also contain Members who are not current Trustees. The Treasurer (MJ) is ex-officio party to all Groups]

a. Woodlands and WGS (JG,PJ)

A final report of all the planting is currently being prepared by JG and PJ for Tim Barrett (FC Perth Office), for delivery before the 30th June. This report denotes the end of the initial five-year period of the WGS grant. This final report comprises an accurate map of the planting and an accurate assessment of the areas planted, with an assessment of the situation and plans for the future. In essence, 182 hectares have been planted of Scots pine or mixtures of native broadleaves.

On some areas the planting has been a success, with up to a ninety percent survival rate, with the broad-leaves doing better than the pine. In other areas, however, where browsing has been a major problem, survival is less good and an ongoing programme of tree replacement is necessary. The intensification of deer control by RC and BH over the last six months has substantially reduced the deer population so that now there are just two or three deer left on the hill. This situation will continue to be monitored and culling will be continued. BH and RC were thanked for their efforts and it was agreed that they should apply to be reimbursed for their expenses. **Action BH and RC.**

A small, first phase, final payment has still to be made by FC, but payments will then cease. The success of the planting will be assessed by the FC five years after the planting of each compartment took place, when further final payments may be made (or they could ask for their money back!). Thus, it is crucial to continue to protect the trees and to replace dead and heavily browsed trees. The full support of all Trustees and active Members will be needed for this second phase.

This process of 'beating up' may involve further expenditure on plants. JG recommended that an area on the RSS of 12 by 20 metres be fenced off to make a tree nursery, so that we can grow our own stock for beating up to minimise future costs. This would not only be economical, but it might also provide good projects for visiting school groups, etc. All agreed that this should be done. **Action: JG, PJ.**

b. Visitor Access including Car Park (PJ, WH, TF,)

A camper van had been observed as a possible overnight parker in our car park. No one thought overnight parking to be a problem unless irresponsibility was involved, which was not the case in this instance.

Just a few people showed up for the SWT walk of DC.

The question of access over the burn was discussed at some length. Bill Hoare is working on having a footbridge constructed further up the burn, but in the meantime, everyone agreed that substantial stepping-stones near the scrapes should be installed, so that visitors, particularly school-children could safely cross the burn. The stones should be just downstream from the present vehicle access crossing. Possibly Sandy McAdam would be willing to build the steppingstones. **Action: TF.**

c. Observation and Education Facility (RH,WH)

A new bench in the OEF is much appreciated. No-one present knew who had donated it.

A question arose as to the amount of use the OEF has had. No-one has yet phoned to ask for access to it, but it is very useful for visiting groups, such as school, cubs/beavers etc. RP suggested that a toilet nearby would be of great help for visitors, especially when a working group spends several hours nearby. A discussion followed on composting toilets. Rob and Julie will investigate what types of toilets could be bought or built. **Action: JG, RC.**

d. RSS (TF, JG, MJ)

RSS money is given for increasing the biodiversity of an area. There are four RSS areas at DC, three at the lower end, near the OEF, and one at Whitebridge. Although work has been carried out in the lower areas, such as the scrapes and the sacrificial crop, little has so far been undertaken at Whitebridge. As with the WGS, arrangement and relevant codes, such as 'business reference number' have been reformulated with respect to the reorganisation of funding for all activities in the countryside; details are currently held by MJ, who has been applying for the grant money. After discussion, it was decided that the RS sub-committee should be re-constituted, consisting of JG, MG, RP, MJ and RC, and would discuss possibilities for Whitebridge and come up with a recommended management plan. **Action: JG, MG, RP, MJ & RC.**

[At this point, a hen-harrier was spotted flying down the strath right to left, which created a happy diversion!]

e. Maintenance and Fencing (TF, RC, PJ,)

RC suggested that there was no need to do anything with respect to the northern boundary fence at the present time, because the roe deer population on Dun Coillich was now under control, and, secondly, on the northern side of the fence FC were re-stocking and consequently reducing the deer pressure on the fence. RC offered help with his trailer to get the prefabricated stiles on site. **(Action RC, PJ)**

f. Natural and Cultural Heritage (CT)

There was nothing new to report at this time.

g. Keltneyburn Hydroscheme (PJ, TF, GE)

The Treasurer reported that we have received payment of £3,070.50 for the first year's rent from December 19, 2008, the official Date of Entry, from the Keltneyburn Hydro Ltd.

Payment comes in two parts. The first part is the annual 'rent' of the site, paid at the start of the year (i.e., the 'entry date 19th December); the second part depends on the amount of electricity generated and is to be paid at the end of each year.

The 'Offer' document was finally approved and returned to the Edinburgh firm acting for KBH by J & H Mitchell WS, but the final 'Contract' (to be signed by Trustees) has not yet been received, but hopefully will come soon (no guarantees on past performance of the Edinburgh lawyers acting for KBH)! For the benefit of the new Trustees present, a brief resume and discussion ensued about our involvement in the hydro-scheme and the delays and frustrations that the promoters had experienced.

h. Education Activities (RP, TF, CT)

RP reported that the two visits in May of Pitlochry HS groups went very well. A toilet for future visits would be a great help. There will probably be another visit on September 10 from Pitlochry HS students, aged between 11 and 12 years. They hope to plant trees. They are all John Muir Trust award students, and the visit to Dun Coilich will be part of a three-day event for them. There will be about 30 students.

JG made three points. First: she thought the school visits were great and hoped there would be more. Second, she suggested that students be told ahead of time to bring sturdy shoes or wellie boots, particularly when the Goulandie Burn is full. And, third, she explained that, although she is happy to instruct anyone in tree planting, she can not take time off from work to do so, except in special circumstances, since she has to make up the time at work. She can give instruction to others, however, who can then teach the school children, when they come to DC. All agreed that this was a good plan.

CT announced that on June 30 there will be a visit of Cubs and Beavers from Aberfeldy (about 40 in all, in groups of 6) at 5 p.m. The new Risk Assessment Form, which she has already sent out to the trustees on email, should be passed on to the leaders of this group. Tim will see to this. **Action: TF.**

i. Public Relations and Website:

MJ announced that her daughter, who manages our website, needs more news about events for putting on the site. Anyone can send news to the website and are urged us all to do so. Send news to Alice at the following address: tr_aj@mweb.com.na **Action: All**

5. Treasurer's Report:

Reserve account	£ 63,156.06
OEF account	5,417.57
Current account	3,870.52

Spread sheets showing income and expenditure items since the beginning of the financial year had been circulated by email. Copies were passed around. The loan from the Volant Trust, of which £57,000 has been drawn upon, is scheduled to be repaid in October this year.

The first payment for rent from the KBH of £3073 is included in the current account. So also is a donation from Highland Safaris of £350 for planting trees to offset their carbon footprint. A suggestion was made to invite Donald Riddell of Highland Safaris to put information on our website. **Action: MJ.**

6. Any Other Business: None.

7. Future Meetings: Tuesday 1 September 2009 at 7:15 p.m. at GE's house. (Subject to confirmation)

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.